



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, May 29, 2019

Day 5

The Honourable Nathan Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

First Session

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

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Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UCP)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,
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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
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Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
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Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),
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Fir, Hon. Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UCP)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UCP)
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
Gottfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UCP)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horner, Nate S., Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., Taber-Warner (UCP)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
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Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UCP)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UCP),
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LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UCP)
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Madu, Hon. Kaycee, Edmonton-South West (UCP)
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),
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Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UCP)
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Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
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Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UCP)
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
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Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Tyler Shandro	Minister of Health
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Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

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Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary of Immigration
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Vacant

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Smith
Turton
Yaseen

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Statement by the Speaker

Member's 10th Anniversary of Election

The Speaker: Before we do introductions of visitors and guests today, I would like to acknowledge that we have the 10th anniversary of an elected member in this Assembly, so if I might take this time to welcome the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West to the dais. I have a small presentation.

While he comes here, feel free to take your seats if you would like.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West: today marks his 10th anniversary of serving as a member. While he had a small break in service during his tenure and service to the public of Alberta, today marks very close to his 10th anniversary.

I also understand you may have some family here with you today. We'd just like to express our sincerest thanks and appreciation to you for all of the efforts and sacrifices that you and the rest of the extended family have made in order to be able to provide the hon. member an opportunity to serve his constituents and the rest of Alberta.

On behalf of all members of the Assembly thank you and congratulations.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Yao: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Christina Gordon public school. These students are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Gavin Rutledge, Mrs. Erin Andrews, Mrs. Wendy Torranceville, and also chaperone Ms Kelly Anne Nash. I'd like them to rise now and please receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly students from the Landing Trail intermediate school. They are accompanied by their teachers, Jeff Semenchuk, Treana Michalski, and chaperone Shelly LaBoucane. If I could ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my wife, Somboon Eggen, and my eldest daughter, Genevieve Eggen. They're here of course to see me on the occasion of receiving my 10th anniversary pin. As you said before, I sort of had a gap in between, so really I first was elected in 2004. My family has put up with a lot for me to be doing this since 2004. I think when Gen was here the first time, she was 12 years old. Now she is a nurse at the neonatal intensive care unit at the University of Alberta. Somboon – I won't say how old she was when she was here first – works at the Royal Alex

hospital in one of the units there. On behalf of my family thank you for the opportunity to be here.

Again, I think I would like to stress the importance of having these introductions as a way by which we can reach out and learn about each other – right? – learn about our families, learn about the understanding that comes from that, and it helps us to be, I believe, better legislators. On behalf of my family if you could please give them the traditional warm welcome of the Legislature.

The Speaker: The Member for Airdrie-East.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and pleasure to rise here today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two strong, Conservative women that I've come to know in this last little while, Mrs. Kara Barker and Ms Lily Le. They are both women that are dedicated to our province and certainly to their own communities. Would they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood has an introduction.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you my mom, Anne Irwin, and her partner, Eugene Orr. They are both big supporters of mine.

I'd also like to introduce a proud constituent and friend in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, Jessica Aubé, who I'll be making a statement about shortly. They're seated in the public gallery, and I ask these three very important people in my life to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I introduce my guests, I just want to take moment to thank Dr. Glenn Feltham, who has resigned this morning as the president of NAIT here in Edmonton. He's been in that role since 2011, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and introduce to you and through to all members of this Assembly Dr. Ian Brodie. Dr. Brodie is an associate professor in the department of political science at the University of Calgary. Dr. Brodie served as well as chief of staff to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. His recent book *At the Centre of Government: The Prime Minister and the Limits on Political Power* is an Amazon bestseller, and despite the fact that I've not yet had the opportunity to read it, I'm sure it won't disappoint. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Dr. Brodie is a constituent of Calgary-Bow. I do ask that he rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have three guests seated in the public gallery today. I ask that they rise. There is Sinan Leylek, Rebecca Bock-Freeman, and Jean-Marc Prevost. They are awesome Albertans who care deeply about the public services that matter to all of us, and I'm really grateful to have them here today to see their Official Opposition fight for the things that matter to them. Thank you for being here.

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former member of the EMS Foundation I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you four paramedics who represent that very best values of emergency responders in our health care system. Every day across

this province emergency service providers are there for us. They have our back in some of life's most chaotic moments. Paramedics embody the trust that is the heart of our health care system. When you need it, they are there to help you.

Mr. Speaker, this week is National Paramedic Services Week, and across the province there are free events and demonstrations of their work, and I encourage all Albertans to attend one of these events to personally thank our paramedics. It's an honour and privilege to meet them today and welcome four of them here to the House. I will note as well that tomorrow there's a ceremony, a ceremony in which 33 members of the Edmonton zone will be awarded the exemplary service medal. It's a national medal, and two of our guests today will be receiving that medal tomorrow. Their names are Jeff Smith, Lisa Swanson, Carly Lehman, and Aaron Phillips. I ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Well, I couldn't agree with the minister's introduction any more, in fact. They provide a very critical service to our province and are very deserving of their medal.

I might encourage members to use other avenues to recognize members in the gallery. Perhaps you could have someone do a member's statement as opposed to using introductions at such length.

1:40

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you three members of the Moen family: Lynette, Kris, and Taryn Moen. Kris is an oil and gas accountant in downtown Calgary and Lynette is a customer service representative with a Calgary grocery store. Their daughter, Taryn, is a grade 3 student at Citadel Park elementary school. Having grown up in southwest Edmonton, Kris is proudly showing this building to Taryn, and he's eager to witness the live demonstrations of the Westminster parliamentary traditions. I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Chamber Mr. Mike Yuzwenko, a classmate of mine from Queen Elizabeth composite high school, who was then known to us only as Zeke, very affectionately. After 32 years as a social studies and music teacher Mr. Yuzwenko recently retired, and that was all spent at Riverbend school. I now ask Mr. Yuzwenko to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Jessica Aubé

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and offer my first member's statement. I want to talk today about my friend Jessica Aubé, who's up in the gallery. I met Jessica many months ago while I was out door-knocking in the McCauley neighbourhood of our Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood riding. She shouted at me from her car that I could put a sign on her lawn, and I knew right away that I liked her. I walked over to her and asked her what her name was. We talked a little while. We shot the breeze like old friends. I asked her then what she did for work and she said: early retirement. She then pulled off her hat and revealed her bald head, pointed to it, and said with a smile: terminal.

Jessica's not much older than me, but she's had an amazing life to date. A proud Métis woman, Jessica has worked all over Canada in indigenous relations. In her work she often observed workers being brought in from the south to do work in northern and remote communities. She wanted to change that, so Jessica set out to build relationships with indigenous communities in an effort to bring jobs and employment to these regions. But at age 31, in the midst of her work, Jessica was diagnosed with breast cancer.

When she returned to work after treatments, she wanted to make a difference. She was able to establish a joint venture with four indigenous land corporations in the Sahtu region. Together they successfully negotiated a sole-source contract for environmental work at Norman Wells. But now the cancer has returned, this time to her brain, bones, and lung. Jessica is hopeful she'll return to the north. She's made friends around the world. She just got back from volunteering at a camp in Hawaii for young people with cancer.

She reminds me of the things that motivated me to run: the importance of a strong public health care system, LGBTQ rights, our relationships with indigenous neighbours. Most importantly, she's reminded me what really matters: the time we spend with the people in our lives. Thank you for being here today, Jessica, and thank you for all you do and will continue to do.

The Speaker: The Member for Airdrie-East.

Tow Truck Operator Safety

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In early March an almost deadly car crash happened on highway 2 just outside of Carstairs. Farmer and volunteer firefighter Jason Dyck was nearly killed while on the scene responding to the crash. An oncoming SUV failed to slow down while approaching the accident scene, slamming into the back end of the fire truck. Five people were injured, and thankfully they only suffered minor injuries. Jason Dyck only had seconds to react, jumping out of the way while the vehicle hurtled towards him, yet he still managed to yell at his team to brace for impact.

While most emergency vehicles are equipped with white, blue, or red lights, the lights on tow trucks are amber, which is similar to a roadside construction crew. Now, studies have shown that blue as well as white lights are the most apparent in low-visibility conditions, which are often the poor conditions that roadside operators are responding in. If oncoming drivers can't see the amber lights of a tow truck, how can we expect them to slow down to the legal 60 kilometres per hour when passing a potentially dangerous scene?

Making a regulatory change in the Traffic Safety Act would allow tow truck drivers to be fitted with blue as well as amber lights. This slight change in regulation can be an important piece in saving the lives of roadside assistance crews across Alberta. During the election and continuing to follow after, I have received quite a bit of feedback on this matter, from tow truck operators to firefighters.

Prior to the election my former colleague and MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti Wayne Drysdale recognized this dangerous issue and put forth a private member's bill to prompt this change. Unfortunately, it died on the Order Paper, but I won't let this important matter fade away. It is my constituents' hope that Mr. Drysdale's work will be continued on this matter.

I know that all members in this Assembly would agree that we should do whatever we can to ensure that all workers return home safely to their families.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has a statement.

Observance of Ramadan and Public Safety

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is on treaty lands largely covered by treaties 6, 7, and 8, and it's home to indigenous people, Métis people, and people of many different faiths and backgrounds. It is home to many Albertans of Muslim faith, who are observing and celebrating the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan Mubarak.

Ramadan is a time for self-reflection and spiritual renewal through prayers and fasting. It is a time for strengthening bonds with the Creator, with family, and with the community through various activities such as daily iftar events. These events also offer an opportunity for all Albertans to learn more about the diversity of faith and traditions in our province and build understanding.

Now more than ever it is important that we build bridges with one another. We have seen a disturbing rise in hate crimes, racism, Islamophobia, and violence at prayer places. We have seen a proliferation of hate groups and white nationalist groups in our neighbourhoods, such as Soldiers of Odin, Edmonton Infidels, Rebel media, and the like. We must stand up against hate and intolerance because every Albertan deserves to feel welcome and safe in this province and in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, on June 4 and 5 Albertans of Muslim faith will be offering Eid prayers at many different places across this province. I have heard concerns respecting safety and security from many of my constituents and faith leaders, and this just isn't right in a modern, accepting, and inclusive Alberta. That is why I call on this government to take action during this very holy time and ensure the safety and security of all Albertans in places of prayer and worship, because no Albertan should ever have to fear for their safety while practising their faith.

With that, Ramadan Mubarak to all those celebrating and also Eid Mubarak in advance.

Paramedics Water Supply in Highwood

Mr. Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, in honour of Paramedic Services Week I would like to start by acknowledging the service, dedication, and compassionate care that our paramedics provide every day. There is no higher form of public service than the commitment of front-line workers in maintaining public safety. My father was a paramedic for decades, and as I grew up, I could see the pride and compassion that was required for this work. As well, I also saw the difficulties and dangers and challenges of this extremely critical service. I'd like to commend this government's commitment to a heroes fund of \$1.5 million dedicated to our front-line workers.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to address the most pressing issue Highwood currently faces. After meeting and talking to all of the four municipalities, it is obvious the primary concern of the area is water. I understand that this is a complex issue and that water is a resource that needs to be carefully protected. Having said that, Highwood has already championed many initiatives and is dedicated to the ongoing stewardship of this valuable resource.

Many initiatives, incentives, and innovative ideas have already been implemented. Residential dwellings are now built with hot water circulation pumps to reduce tap run times, most homes utilize rain barrels, and xeriscaping rebate programs have led Highwood to be one of the lowest in water consumption per capita in the country. Highwood has worked tirelessly to set a benchmark in water stewardship. The largest municipality in Highwood currently has a consumption rate that is 25 per cent lower than the national average, with 80 per cent of the water returning to the treatment

plant. But even with these innovations, we have communities that have had to cap growth as their entire water licence has been allocated.

The need for water is key for the area of Highwood, and I look forward to working towards a solution that will allow Highwood to be a sustainable constituency now and in the future.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

2017 UCP Leadership Contest Investigation

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It has been four weeks since I first called on this Premier and this Attorney General to appoint a special prosecutor to oversee the investigation into UCP voter fraud. Now, as the appearance of a conflict of interest grows, so too do the number of people genuinely wondering why the Premier just won't do the obvious thing and appoint a special prosecutor. As long-time columnist Don Braid noted, special prosecutors have been appointed in Alberta for far less conflicted circumstances in the past. What exactly is the Premier trying to hide from?

Mr. Kenney: From absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. As we've pointed out in the past, police investigations of this nature engage in consultations with expert prosecutors in the specialized prosecutions branch, which is entirely independent of government. They make decisions on whether to recommend to go outside the Crown prosecution service. We respect their independent authority and their judgment.

Ms Notley: Well, as the Premier continues to deflect from this very serious matter, I am compelled to keep fighting for the integrity of our justice system.

Now, yesterday the Attorney General refused to answer when I asked him if he communicated with the Premier about the substance of his Sunday interview with the RCMP. So today I will ask the Premier. Your Attorney General was interviewed as a witness by the RCMP on Sunday. Has he communicated the substance of that interview to you either directly, indirectly, or through officials since that time?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I think that since that interview became a matter of public record, the minister spoke to my staff to advise them about it in the same way he has to this House. Once again we underscore that all prosecution decisions and police investigations are undertaken independently by the Crown prosecutor service, sometimes in reference to the specialized prosecutions branch and always in a completely independent fashion, which should be the case in our system.

Ms Notley: Well, okay. So they're talking about it, but if anything, that actually makes the problem much worse.

The Attorney General has flip-flopped on discussing this investigation publicly, speaking out when it comes to defending himself and his status as a suspect. Clearly, he can't be counted on to act without regard to his self-interest. Yesterday he wasn't even allowed to take a question, though, about who else in the government might be suspects. So we are literally watching the Premier and the Attorney General break the justice system as we speak. Why won't they do the obvious thing and appoint an independent prosecutor?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is now making outlandish claims. Once again, we respect, of course, the independence of the Crown prosecutor service, recognizing that in investigations of this nature they often consult with specialized prosecutors in the specialized prosecutors branch. They decide whether or not there's a need to go outside of that service. We respect their authority, their decision, and I wish the Leader of the Opposition would do the same thing.

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

Indigenous Treaty Rights

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. First Nations leaders in Alberta are disheartened by this government's refusal to acknowledge treaties between First Nations and the Crown. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes it clear that all Canadians as treaty people share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships. Premier, are you committed to the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and if so, why is your government refusing to acknowledge these treaties at public events?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I have to correct the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I, the ministers of this government, the government generally do acknowledge repeatedly the obligations of the Crown under the treaties. In fact, we did so at least twice in the throne speech that is now being debated in this Assembly. I'm pleased to announce that on June 10 we will hold, for the first time in nearly a decade, a daylong meeting between ministers of Executive Council and Alberta's elected treaty chiefs, something the NDP failed to do.

Ms Notley: Well, actually, that's not true.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, it's not a matter of randomly doing it when it's convenient in the occasional document; it's about whether you do it consistently as a matter of practice at all government of Alberta public events. Alberta is located on Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 territory. Last year, when members of Treaty 8 spoke out against the Premier's commitment to sell public land in Mackenzie county, his response was: Crown land is not treaty land. Does the Premier still believe that Crown land is not treaty land, and is that why he doesn't feel the need to acknowledge treaties or consult with members of First Nation communities on . . .

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, almost every element of that question was incorrect. First of all, the public service will confirm that the NDP government discontinued the long-standing practice of having an annual meeting between cabinet and the elected treaty chiefs. We will restore that tradition, that had been created by previous Progressive Conservative governments. Secondly, of course, we recognize the Crown's duty to consult with First Nations on the disposition of their territorial lands, as we would do with respect to any potential auction of public lands, something that the minister of the environment in the previous government was not going to do.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's government's current approach is disrespectful according to Grand Chief Willie Littlechild. Now, he served on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and is an internationally recognized, global expert on indigenous issues, and he says that abandonment of treaty acknowledgements by your government is a serious mistake that sets back all the good-faith efforts to advance reconciliation. Premier, land acknowledgements are not a flavour of the month. They matter. Will you direct all members of your caucus to revert

to the previous practice of land acknowledgements at all public events?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, we'll do so when appropriate. More importantly, we will give real, practical expression to the spirit of the treaties. Now, the NDP likes to talk a good game about this, but the most important thing for our First Nations people is that they are able to participate in prosperity. That is why this government will be launching the single most important initiative in Alberta history for the economic inclusion of First Nations people, the indigenous opportunities corporation, so that they can have an ownership stake in the development of the resources that lie below the lands that their ancestors first inhabited.

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition for her third set of questions.

Ms Notley: Call me crazy, Mr. Speaker, but I would suggest that it would be respectful to simply listen to what respected leaders in the indigenous communities are saying.

Corporate Taxation and Job Creation

Ms Notley: Anyway, yesterday the Finance minister rolled out his government's huge tax break to big business. Now, what we do know is that this tax cut will create a gaping 4 and a half billion dollar hole in the provincial budget, and we do know that it is not going to generate a dollar of economic return for two years at least. Yesterday we learned that what the Minister of Finance doesn't know is the period over which this risky plan will create their alleged 50,000 jobs. Maybe the Premier knows. To the Premier: in what year exactly will you hit your target of . . .

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, according to one of the most eminent economists in Canada, Professor Jack Mintz, former president of the C.D. Howe Institute, founding president of the University of Calgary School of Public Policy, a man of the highest integrity . . . [interjections] He's being heckled by the opposition. He projected that the job-creation tax cut will create at least 55,000 new full-time private-sector jobs by the time of its full implementation in 2022. Professor Dahlby, incidentally, separately projected that it will result in the creation of \$12.7 billion of incremental GDP and increase Alberta's per capita GDP by over 6 per cent.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Interestingly, the member's Finance minister was not able to provide 2022.

Now, what I will say is that given that our government was able to create over 100,000 jobs in less time than that, does the member opposite think that maybe there might be a bit more work that they need to do to provide jobs for Albertans other than creating a hole in the deficit and telling them that it's their job to get less education, less health care, and less benefits from the government that they elected?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, you can tell they've been out of opposition for a while because that's called leading with your chin. The NDP left Alberta with a jobs crisis, with fewer people employed now than when they came to office, just over four years ago. In fact, our economy shrank by 4 per cent under NDP economic mismanagement. They left behind over 180,000 unemployed Albertans and tens of thousands who gave up looking for work and so many who left this province in despair. Albertans

elected us to undo the damage of the NDP and turn Alberta into a job-creation engine again.

2:00

Ms Notley: Oh, Mr. Speaker. You know, sometimes the facts are so inconvenient for the member opposite. In fact, there were more people working in Alberta in April of 2019 than before the beginning of the oil price crash in early 2015, so at least get your facts straight.

However, we learned today that the Conference Board of Canada is actually predicting that Alberta is slipping back into a recession. Many leading economists argue that the government's corporate tax giveaway will only play around the edges in terms of attracting business. Why is the government committed to giving a big tax giveaway to profitable corporations at the same time he's lecturing Albertans . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier

Mr. Kenney: On the first point, it's true that the Alberta population grew, but if employment had kept up with population growth, we would have to see the creation of at least 65,000 additional jobs in order to see the same percentage of employment as when the NDP came to office, according to University of Calgary professor Trevor Tombe. Mr. Speaker, the NDP's jobs record is clear. It was a total disaster. That is why this government won the largest democratic mandate in Alberta electoral history, to get jobs going in Alberta once again.

The Speaker: I might just remind the Leader of the Official Opposition that questions are 35 seconds and answers are 35 seconds.

The Member for Edmonton-Glenora has a question.

Education Funding

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parents of students attending William Reid school in Calgary are being surveyed on how best to cut 6 per cent from their school's budget because of anticipated cuts from the UCP. School staff are so concerned that they're literally asking parents how to make this impossible decision. It's because the UCP government refuses to fund classrooms properly. Why won't the Minister of Education do the right thing, give these children the tools they need to succeed, so that parents and school staff don't have to sacrifice their futures by choosing between music or class sizes?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. We have continually reiterated that our government is going to maintain or increase funding for education. We've been very, very clear. I'm not sure what is unclear about that.

Thank you.

Ms Hoffman: Let me give that clarity. Fifteen thousand new kids are showing up to school next year, and when we have asked this minister and this Premier over and over again, "Will there be any new money for these new kids?" we have heard silence.

Schools are rightfully acting with caution. That means that a nearly 6 per cent cut to this school, William Reid school, is taking class sizes in grade 4 from 22 to 28 students or completely cutting the music program. It's simple. More kids, same resources, inadequate funding, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: what do you think these parents should do? Should they allow class sizes to skyrocket, or should they cut music?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: We are committed to maintaining or increasing education funding. We are going to build schools. We will continue to provide first-class education in Alberta, and we will fund it to the best of our ability.

Thank you.

Ms Hoffman: If you were a parent and you had 15,000 more kids you were responsible for, having no new resources would be irresponsible. As a government having 15,000 more students showing up to school and giving school boards and teachers no new resources is completely irresponsible. This letter goes on to say that because of the cuts to the classroom improvement fund and because of the failure to plan for increased enrolment, Mr. Speaker, they are going to have to make one of two very bad decisions. The minister was a former trustee. The minister knows the harm of these kinds of cuts. Why won't she do the right thing, stand up in this House and say that she will fund CIF and . . .

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. I absolutely respect the autonomy of school boards. I have consistently said that we are maintaining or increasing education funding, and we will continue to provide that messaging until we can provide further details.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika has a question.

Skilled Trades Competitions and Programs

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week students from across Canada are participating in the Skills Canada national competition in Halifax, Nova Scotia, including some of our very own Alberta students. Youth are the future of our province, and we must ensure that they have numerous opportunities available to them both before and after they finish their education. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education. Can the minister please explain to this House the role that competitions like Skills Canada play in encouraging and empowering our youth to become involved in skilled trades, and does the minister intend on expanding support for these?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The Skills Canada national competition, which began yesterday and continues into today, is the only national multitrade and technology competition for students and apprentices in the country. It brings together more than 500 students from across Canada to compete in over 40 skilled trade and technology-based competitions. These students have an incredible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities in front of industry experts and will ensure that they go on to have fulfilling and rewarding careers in the future.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Schow: Why, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this program is for students interested in the skilled trades and given that Alberta has seen a recent shortage of skilled trades workers, can the same minister please explain to this House exactly how he plans to

encourage organizations like Skills Canada to continue the great work that they do?

The Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for the follow-up question. He is indeed correct. Our government will be proactive, and we will take action in the coming years to address the retirement of skilled workers in Alberta. The department of labour estimates that from now until 2025 3,000 skilled workers will retire each and every year. To achieve this and to ensure that we'll be proactive, we will provide new scholarships for high school students who show promise in the trades. As well, we'll continue to work with organizations like Skills Canada and Careers: the Next Generation.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the importance of skilled trades to the economic prosperity of Alberta and given that the government in its election platform stated that they would be expanding apprenticeship and vocational programs, can the minister please explain how this government plans to support our postsecondary institutions in enrolling more trades students in the coming years?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Expanding apprenticeship opportunities is critical for our government, and we believe that a trades certificate should have as much value, weight, and worth as an academic degree. To help our institutions do this, we're going to do two things. First and foremost, we will work with our postsecondary institutions to reduce unnecessary red tape and bureaucratic rules and onerous reporting so that they can innovate and compete as they need to. As well, secondly, we'll work with our institutions to expand the apprenticeship model of education to other avenues.

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

Minimum Wage for Youth

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government's pick-your-pocket bill is unfairly targeting our youth, and there's no evidence to suggest that it's actually going to create jobs, quite the opposite, actually. The Calgary Stampede is now actively considering cutting the pay for about 500 youth workers before this year's exhibition begins, but the Stampede has given no indication that it intends to hire more workers as a result of this cut in pay. To the minister: can you please explain to me how retroactively cutting these workers' pay is supposed to help them?

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods for the question. The student job-creation wage is about creating jobs for Alberta's youth. When the minimum wage was increased by the previous government by over 50 per cent in a few short years in the face of one of Alberta's worst economic downturns, employers were forced to lay off workers, and unfortunately it often was at the cost of our youth. By reducing costs on employers, we can help students get their first job to develop skills and gain the experience that they need for the future.

Thank you.

Ms Gray: Given that one parent interviewed about this wage cut said that her daughter was saving her Stampede paycheques so that she wouldn't have to work while in school and given that this student and hundreds of others were hired on at \$15 per hour, not \$13 per hour, will the minister commit to not allowing organizations or corporations to retroactively cut wages that were already agreed upon between employers and employees?

2:10

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, this policy change, the student job-creation wage, is about creating jobs for Alberta youth. Between 2014 and 2018 unemployment among 15- to 19-year-olds rose from 14 to 18 per cent, and this was as a direct result of the policy changes made by the previous government. Again, by reducing costs on employers, we can help students get their first job, create more jobs for a larger number of students so they can actually save for their future.

Thank you.

Ms Gray: Given that this minister intends to have his youth wage cut in place in less than a month's time but given that many organizations like the Stampede have made commitments to employees at the current minimum wage levels, will the minister commit to slowing down this attack on youth workers and engaging in further study of the consequences of this rash move?

Mr. Copping: Again, our focus is on creating jobs for students. We wanted to make this change this summer so that we can get more students working and they can actually gain the skills and experience that they need for the future.

Thank you.

Renewable Energy Programs

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, global investment in solar energy in 2018 exceeded \$100 billion. In Alberta the solar industry grew by 500 per cent since our government took office in 2015, and it was about to attract \$10 billion of additional investment. Now the UCP plans to cut those programs and threaten all of this work. To the minister: how many of the money-making solar energy programs is he going to eliminate?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader is rising.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, our party was clear while campaigning that we will not be proceeding with the carbon tax that the NDP brought in when they were in power, where they focused on using hard-working taxpayer dollars to pay for things like shower heads and solar panels on houses that were not working. Instead, we're going to focus on technology, focus on working with our largest emitters, and actually tackle the problem.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that industry estimates suggest that there could be up to \$150 million worth of small-scale solar programs across the province that won't move forward under this government, can the minister please explain how cancelling these programs and rejecting billions of dollars in investment is good for the people of Alberta?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, this government has a focus of standing with Albertans. Albertans sent us here to get rid of the carbon tax. The NDP, when they were in power, focused on using taxpayer dollars on ridiculous subsidy programs, including solar in some cases. We will not be proceeding with those types of subsidy

programs. Instead, we will be investing in technology, working with our partnerships within industry, actually tackling the problem. What this government did when they were in power was all economic pain and no environmental gain. We won't be doing that to Albertans. We will focus on working on the environment while at the same time not taxing Albertans.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, I'm not sure how creating jobs and reducing emissions has no environmental gain or positive impact.

Given that KCP Energy estimates that up to 1,500 jobs in Calgary will be eliminated as a result of rejecting these programs and given that companies stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in work this summer alone due to this government's refusal to support Alberta's booming renewables industry, to the minister: will you include a report on all jobs lost due to your government's cancellation of renewable energy projects?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I won't be lectured by the opposition when it comes to job loss. This opposition, when they were in government, oversaw the largest job loss in the history of this province and then brought in a carbon tax, a punishing tax, on Albertans at the very time that they needed their government to help them. We have a different approach when it comes to climate change. We will not be taxing Albertans. We will be working on climate change, but we'll be focused on technology, we'll be focused on our largest emitters and working together with them to be able to overcome this problem. That is a big contrast to how the NDP used to approach this. They taxed fixed-income seniors. They taxed our social safety net. It's a ridiculous approach. We'll go a different way.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South is rising with a question

Red Deer Regional Hospital

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the prior government citizens of central Alberta only received a fraction in health care infrastructure funding compared to other areas of the province. That was not fair. To the Minister of Health: what will he do to ensure that the Red Deer regional hospital is a top priority, to now move towards more equitable health care funding for all Albertans?

Mr. Shandro: Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand the frustration of the people in Red Deer, and I appreciate the member's question on their behalf. Our government is committed to expanding capacity at the Red Deer hospital to meet the growing needs of central Alberta. I understand that the hospital fell off the AHS priority list under the previous government and then was put back on. I can't answer for those past decisions, but what I can say is that our government will support planning for long-term capacity increases in Red Deer as part of our commitment to maintain and strengthen the publicly funded health care system for all Albertans.

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

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta Health Services has recommended a cardiac cath lab for this hospital and given that every year central Albertans have heart attacks and related issues, the risks of which could have been mitigated by this lab and which the prior government failed to address, will the minister accept the Alberta Health Services recommendation and commit to expanding cardiac cath services for central Albertans as soon as possible?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government supports development of a cath lab in Red Deer as part of a long-term plan for Red Deer and for cardiac care in the province as well. The AHS needs assessment in 2018 sets out the priorities clearly. The top priority to save lives is prevention and to address the high rates of cardiac disease, especially in central Alberta. The next priority is to reach all Albertans in crisis within the recommended time with evidence-based care, either transport to a cath lab or clot-busting drugs. Our clinicians are leaders in Canada in this area. We'll plan to make decisions based on the advice of our clinicians.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the prior government's inequitable treatment of the Red Deer regional hospital was unfair to central Albertans, what will the minister do to ensure that, consistent with this government's platform, future health care funding decisions will focus on the public interest by putting patients at the heart of a sustainable health care system?

Mr. Shandro: Well, Mr. Speaker, we campaigned on maintaining and strengthening our publicly funded health care system. That's my mandate as Minister of Health. We're going to make decisions for Red Deer and for all Albertans based on what's best for patients, not on ideology, not on politics. That's the purpose of our review of AHS, the first since it was created 10 years ago. The review will look at the evidence and consider advice from experts. In the area of cardiac care those experts include some of the leading authorities in Canada. They have one priority, to ensure every Albertan gets care based on the best evidence and current standards. That's my priority for all Albertans.

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

Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has been noted, this is Paramedic Services Week. For years Conservative governments left our emergency medical services underfunded, leaving paramedics in a tough spot as they were forced to stand idly for hours in emergency rooms waiting to transfer their patients instead of attending other emergency calls. Now, our government invested \$29 million for new first responders in a pilot program with 16 hospital emergency liaisons to help receive patients from paramedics. To the Minister of Health: will you commit to providing the funding needed to allow that program to continue?

Mr. Shandro: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that starting this month, we are going to be initiating a review of AHS. It's going to be a review of all of Alberta Health and all of AHS. We are waiting for the results of that by the end of the year, in which case we will be able to understand and be able to make decisions like that.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that government members like the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry have expressed concerns about emergency room wait times in the Red Deer hospital and given that the hospital emergency liaison program was slated to expand to that hospital to help relieve that stress, to the same minister: will you commit to making this investment to support paramedics and residents in Red Deer and central Alberta?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, it's the same answer. We're going to be initiating a review. As we campaigned on during the campaign, it's our commitment to Albertans to be able to do a review of AHS and to be able to wait for those results and be able to understand what commitments we can be making in specific areas.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that last week the Minister of Finance said – and I quote – that there will be difficult decisions, that there will be sacrifice and given that when that minister was asked about public service wages, he pointed to private-sector workers who had seen pay cuts, to the Minister of Health: along with the cuts in the resources that they need to do their life-saving work or your current lack of commitment to provide those, should paramedics also be bracing for cuts in the salaries they rightfully earn for their life-saving work?

2:20

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, our commitment to Albertans during the campaign was that we would maintain or increase spending in the health care system. While we're taking lessons from the previous government and while we're looking at emergency services, I would like to note for all Albertans that the percentage of patients treated and discharged from emergency within four hours under that previous government dropped from 79 per cent to 76 per cent. We are going to start making decisions on funding based on the needs of patients. That's what we're going to be doing as a government.

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

Water and Waste-water Infrastructure

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The need for municipal water and waste-water infrastructure projects is well documented here in the province. As government we put a priority on all of these projects, committing \$131 million to them. To the Minister of Transportation: can you guarantee that every single one of these projects that we funded will be followed through on?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation is rising.

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question, but he asked it in an interesting way. He said: every one which was funded. I can assure the members of this House that the previous government announced a lot more projects than they funded.

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. McIver: I know it's a surprise.

Mr. Speaker, we're sorting through that. We're dealing with the \$60 billion in debt. We are going through a capital approval process and a budgeting process, and we are well aware of the many projects that are important. I can assure the hon. member we will take those priorities seriously because they matter.

Member Loyola: Promising things and not following through with them was the UCP for 44 years.

Mr. Speaker, given that it is also well known that the investment in these projects would help sustain approximately 900 jobs throughout the province, can the minister guarantee Albertans that they can continue to rely on these jobs so that they can continue to put food on the tables for their families?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see the other side has started to care about jobs. This is a good change. It's very positive.

Mr. Speaker, these projects are important. Municipalities listening need to know that we will listen to them. We understand that all of the water and waste-water projects that they have requested are important. We are within our budgeting and capital planning process. We'll approve what we can, and we will communicate that to the municipalities. We are open to other input that those municipalities give to us.

Member Loyola: Mr. Speaker, given that Albertans have been patiently waiting for many of these projects in their rural communities for decades and with many of the residents citing that it is vital for their continued health and welfare, will the minister work with the municipal councils and counties to complete these projects as quickly as possible, or are they going to have to wade through sewage before he listens to Albertans and gets the jobs done?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member probably won't even be offended when I disagree with him on this part as they're not patient at all. The municipalities are in a hurry to get these projects done, and I think he would even agree with me on that disagreement with him. The fact is, to answer his direct question directly, yes, we will listen to municipalities. We will take their advice, we will gather the evidence that they give to us, and we will prioritize their projects the best we can because we know that every single one of those requests is important. We take them all seriously, and we will do them in the order that we think is most important, and they will know why.

Municipal Funding

Mr. Neudorf: Mr. Speaker, given that municipalities across Alberta received almost \$9.6 billion in support from the municipal sustainability initiative program, launched in 2007, and that this initiative is set to end in 2021 without a replacement, municipalities across Alberta are concerned about the reliability of investment to their communities. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: will the government continue to bolster our municipalities through the administration of the municipal sustainability initiative?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Lethbridge-East. For four years the NDP ignored many municipalities. Our government won't do that. Within the first week of holding office, I met with the Rural Municipalities association and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. I heard how the NDP created uncertainty by failing to come up with a long-term funding program and how important it is to address this. That is why our government is committed to maintaining dollars promised to municipalities and ensuring they have predictable funding, whether it's from MSI or something else.

Mr. Neudorf: Mr. Speaker, given that municipalities across Alberta utilize this funding to facilitate the rehabilitation of transit systems, water processing plants, public transit facilities, and other local priorities, the continued investment to municipalities through this program is of immediate importance to our municipal communities. To the same minister: when will the government announce their plan to continue to strengthen our municipalities?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to finding the right solutions for municipalities. We are also committed to doing something the NDP is not, and that is consulting. I am consulting with local leaders and groups like the Rural Municipalities association and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to find out their needs and concerns. We have made no decisions about the future of the MSI program. However, we've only just begun this process. I can't say definitely when it would end, but it would be well in advance of the current deal expiring.

The Speaker: The Member for Lethbridge-East.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that municipalities face unique and differing challenges from community to community, consultation and collaboration with municipal representatives must be a key component in implementing further funding opportunities. Empowering local governments and strengthening their decision-making capacities must be a key part of the implementation process. To the same minister: how will the government ensure that funding for municipalities is disbursed in a way that allows for support that is meaningful and responsive to each eligible community?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Again, it's really disappointing. Had the NDP made municipalities outside of the two big cities a priority, they could have provided them with the predictable funding that they need. Our government is going to do better. We are consulting with the rural and mid-sized municipalities, and we will provide them with the most important thing they need for their budget, and that is predictability.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Glenora has a question.

Conversion Therapy Working Group

Ms Hoffman: Thank you. Two days ago the Minister of Health was unable to answer a simple question about whether or not he condemns the harmful and traumatizing practice of conversion therapy. The minister's press secretary said that the committee was cancelled. Then the minister tried to discredit the journalist that reported it. This morning the minister met with the co-chairs but failed to provide any clarity or support for their work, so I will ask again: does the minister commit to supporting this working group in implementing the recommendations so that we can put an end to this harmful practice in Alberta?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First, let me right off the bat say to all Albertans, especially to those who are in the gender and sexual diversity community in Alberta, for them to all understand, that we oppose conversion therapy. Thank you, through you, to the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs for meeting with me this morning with Dr. Lieb. My door is always open for anyone who wants to discuss this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms Hoffman: My question was about supporting the committee in implementing their recommendations.

Given that the working group was established with the support of a secretariat within the Department of Health to provide a meeting space, administrative support, modest compensation for committee members who may have to travel or take time away from their jobs

in order to participate, will the minister commit to maintaining this government support for the working group through the Department of Health? If he refuses, will he just admit that he has in fact made a decision to disband the working group?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise again and get another opportunity to again just hammer home to every Albertan listening that we oppose conversion therapy. My door is always open. I had a fantastic conversation with Dr. Lieb and with the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs. I thank them for taking the time to meet with me, to be able to speak with me. My door, as I said, is always open not just to them but to all Albertans who want to discuss this issue.

Ms Hoffman: Given the anxiety and fear that the minister has created in the LGBTQ-plus community and given that St. Albert is moving their own motion to ban this practice in their local community because they can't count on the government to do it and given the Trans Equality Society of Alberta, a group that was established when a former Conservative government decided to save money by cutting funding for gender confirmation surgery, there is a lot of concern in the community, Minister. Will you commit to supporting this working group in implementing their recommendations? It sounds like a no. Just say it if it is.

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, after not acting on this issue for four years, the NDP formed a time-limited ad hoc group in the weeks before the election. This was an ad hoc group put together by the previous minister to meet a few times over five months. It was a time-limited ad hoc group. Let me be clear again, now that I have the chance to rise here again in this Assembly, and say that we as a government oppose conversion therapy. My door is open to anyone who wants to discuss this issue with me.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-South.

2:30

Hospital Construction

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, the NDP government announced the first hospital here in Edmonton since the Oilers won a Stanley Cup. Given that south Edmonton is one of the fastest growing areas in the province and given that Edmontonians need these essential public services, to the Minister of Infrastructure: will you commit to funding this life-saving facility as a public project on the original timeline?

The Speaker: The Minister of Infrastructure is rising.

Mr. Panda: Thank you to the Member for Edmonton-South for the question, Mr. Speaker. Our government was elected to efficiently deliver public transport that's required to get Albertans back to work, and we are committed to maintaining the former government's capital plan. Currently, as the Minister of Transportation said, we are going through the budgeting process and capital project planning, and when it is done, the member will know.

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

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, very clearly they've already thrown out health projects, and they're looking to do it again.

To that same minister: given that our government followed through on approving and funding the long-needed Calgary cancer centre after years of Conservative neglect and given that the centre will add 100 patient exam rooms, 160 in-patient beds, 100

chemotherapy chairs, and much more, will the minister commit here and now that the Calgary cancer centre will still open on time in 2023?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report through you that I actually toured that hospital and discussed with the staff and the contractor and asked for their current plan. It is on schedule. I mean, at least the Ministry of Infrastructure will finish the construction on time and turn it over to Health.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, I'm wondering, then, given that your Premier is already waffling with his blue-ribbon panel and given that his chair of the panel approved blowing up hospitals all over Saskatchewan and given that our population continues to grow and our hospitals continue to age, to the same minister: will you commit to all of the hospital projects committed to by our government, and if not, why not?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, as the minister said previously, the previous government announced more projects than what they funded, so our government is going through every project carefully on the capital list, and we are doing our due diligence. All those projects will be funded based on the needs but not by the ideology.

The Speaker: The Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat would like to ask a question.

Greenhouse Industry Regulation and Support

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the constituency of Brooks-Medicine Hat agriculture is vitally important to our local economy. Greenhouses are a powerhouse for job creation and putting food in the mouths of Albertans and those around the world. Under the previous NDP government greenhouses were classified as industrial under employment standards codes, adding an abundance of costs for our greenhouse producers and local job creators. Can the minister of labour commit today that greenhouses will be classified as agricultural operations?

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration has the call.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat for the question. My hon. colleague the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry will be engaging with farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers, greenhouses, and others on how best to reduce red tape and costs for the agricultural industry and balance the unique economic pressures for farming with the need for a common-sense, flexible farm safety regime. The goal of this engagement is to develop recommendations for the introduction of the farm freedom and safety act, which will be passed into law in 2019. We expect that groups like greenhouses will be engaged through their industry association, the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister of labour: can you please provide a timeline for when this necessary change will take place?

The Speaker: The minister of labour.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government understands that agriculture is a part of the economic and cultural

fabric of our province. Ministry staff are meeting with the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association in early June to discuss their needs. The association has a special variance in place for greenhouse operators, for overtime hours, that expires in June 2020, and our ministry expects to work towards a more permanent solution prior to that date.

The Speaker: The member.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister of labour: what support can these greenhouses expect from this UCP government after hard years under the last NDP government?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is taking a number of steps to help undo the hardship that Alberta's businesses have experienced due to the job-killing policies of the former government. Bills 1, 2, and 3 will help greenhouses by scrapping the carbon tax, bringing balance back to Alberta's labour laws, introducing a youth minimum wage, and cutting the corporate tax rate. We are willing to listen to the concerns of greenhouse owners and work with them to find common-sense solutions.

Thank you.

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

Home Construction Consumer Protection

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A young firefighter started working in Fort McMurray and purchased an apartment condo in the Penhorwood complex. Not even two years later he, alongside 167 other units, would be evacuated shortly before midnight on a wintry night in 2011 due to the discovery of faulty construction. Questions surrounding the quality and the assurances of building and construction code inspections prevail to this day while people are still paying these empty mortgages off eight years later. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs: what assurances does this government have to ensure that this will not happen again?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that question. This is a tragic situation for those involved, including this young man. As a result of the situation in Fort McMurray my department has implemented several new requirements under the New Home Buyer Protection Act to protect homebuyers from major construction defects. The act now ensures that warranty coverage is mandatory and that buildings are built to codes and standards established in collaboration with national code bodies and industry. Despite this, we will continue working to improve the system for homebuyers.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, the litigation process was over six years long, and while the affected residents had to wait for any restitution, they watched the builder of Penhorwood continue to build in other communities in Alberta after he finished the Penhorwood complex. To the Minister of Justice: what is your ministry doing to ensure that these court cases which affect so many are more promptly addressed?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that this is a private matter that's being litigated between two parties. I'm unaware of the details of it. But I can advise this Assembly that we are working to make sure that we have a fairer, faster, and more

responsive justice system. We are working to fill vacancies on our courts, and we're going to make sure that our justice system has the tools it needs to provide the services needed by Albertans.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, this young man then purchased a home in Hillview Park condos in 2012. In 2016 that burned down. It's been three years, and this complex still is not yet rebuilt as the condominium board chose a builder that even the province recognized was an unwise choice due to its financial and litigious history. Additional cash calls for unforeseen expenses eventually led our young friend, with two empty mortgages and the need for another home, to file for bankruptcy at the age of 28, with his new wife and newborn child. To the Minister of Service Alberta: what is your ministry doing to ensure that these concerns are addressed?

The Speaker: The Minister of Service Alberta.

Mr. Glubish: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for both the important question and his tireless support and advocacy for Fort McMurray. I appreciated having a meeting with the member on this subject just two weeks ago. I am very sympathetic to those who have been impacted by these circumstances, and our government understands the difficult situation they are in. While there's no easy or quick solution here, I am committed to working with both of the members from Fort McMurray to understand what went wrong so we can ensure that this situation does not happen again.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows is rising.

Racism and Hate Crime Prevention

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this is my first opportunity rising in this House, I would like to congratulate you on your election.

Alberta is a diverse and welcoming province, yet our province sometimes hosts ugly displays of racism. These incidents have no place here, and there's clearly more work to be done. To the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women: could you please provide this House with an update on the progress of the important work you are leading to combat racism in Alberta?

The Speaker: The minister of multiculturalism.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you so much for the question, through you, Mr. Speaker. We've had the absolute pleasure of meeting with some of the folks from the council, and we are looking very forward to having more conversations. Thank you for the question.

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

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the recent studies indicate a significant increase in reported hate crimes in Alberta and the growing concern from all Albertans about the impact of hate and extremism in Canada and given that the government must take immediate steps to show Albertans that our province will continue to stand against extremists and their hateful views, again to the minister: what steps are you taking to arrest the rise of hate crimes and extremism in Alberta? Please be specific.

2:40

The Speaker: The Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very, very honoured to actually answer this question. In our platform we are very specific around ideas for making sure that we are providing security for people who are practising their faith. As we know, there have been many situations around the world where people are having to look over their shoulders to practise their faith. It is one of the fundamental freedoms of this country. Again, we're looking very forward to working with so many people, especially our faith-based communities, to make sure that they're protected.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that earlier this year a group of community leaders representing every corner of this province formed Alberta's first Anti-racism Advisory Council, to the minister: are you going to continue to work with this council, and when is the next meeting to continue their important work?

Mrs. Aheer: As I had previously mentioned, we've had a meeting with a few of the folks. We're bringing over the original people, that were actually dedicated to Education, into the multicultural ministry. Again, as the days go forward, we're looking very forward to meeting with those people and having a deeper understanding. As you may know, there's also quite a bit of work that's actually already been done in Alberta. We have 122 different groups across Alberta that actually work on these exact things right across the province. We're very proud. Albertans are extremely inclusive people.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Members, in 30 seconds or less we will continue with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Government Policies

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I want to thank the voters from the Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock constituency for entrusting me to be their voice in this Legislature. I will serve them to the best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on what Albertans elected us to do. Albertans spoke loud and clear in this spring election. The reckless ideological policies of the previous NDP government, costing Albertans billions and saddling the next generation with massive debt and taxation, were soundly rejected by voters. Albertans voted in favour of our government's platform, a platform designed to stimulate investment, create jobs, and stand up for Alberta.

Our plan will be to implement strategies that will send signals to the marketplace that Alberta is open for business once again. The NDP raised taxes and chased investment away. Instead of raising taxes on employers, we will lower taxes on these job creators, and instead of increasing red tape and regulatory burden, as the NDP have done, our government has appointed an Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the role we play in maintaining a globally competitive resource-based economy. Our legislation and policies will focus on enabling our agriculture, energy, forestry, and tourism industries to compete with all other jurisdictions. As well, our government will stand up for a fair deal

within Canada and challenge those who have misrepresented the truth about our energy industry.

Mr. Speaker, the spring of renewal has begun. There is reason for hope in Alberta, and I along with all of my United Conservative colleagues will work tirelessly to renew an Alberta that is strong and free.

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

Coal Phase-out in Hanna

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm standing here wondering if there's a second town named Hanna in this province. Yesterday the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford stated that this government will be taking money away from communities hardest hit by the NDP's poorly-thought-out carbon tax. While the previous government spins anecdotes of Conservative neglect, NDP stewardship has cost the people of Hanna their jobs, savings, and livelihood.

According to the mayor of Hanna, Chris Warwick, the only funding the town of Hanna received from the government of Alberta directly as a coal-affected community was \$455,000 for an initiative called the community action to create diversification, a program to assist local community action teams to move their projects and ideas forward. Two reasonable requests by local action teams to NDP ministers, \$179,000 for a regional social needs assessment and \$100,000 for a seniors' housing project, were both denied funding. This is yet another example of the previous government trying to throw money at a problem, with no regard for the outcome. The development of commissions to explore diversification potential, followed by denial of funding for their recommendations, accomplishes nothing in real terms aside from gathering stakeholders to share their grievances. Hanna is a community where roughly \$100 million in carbon tax revenue was generated from the Sheerness power plant per year, yet the NDP government could only scrape together a paltry half-million dollars of diversification funding.

We are accused of leaving these communities that are most affected by climate policy in a state of neglect. I would like to offer the people of these communities a message of hope. Our government will not forget you nor neglect your needs. We hear that you are struggling, and we empathize. We will do better than our predecessors.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 4

Red Tape Reduction Act

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today to introduce Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act, on behalf of the hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

This bill will enable government to achieve regulatory excellence through the development of strategies and initiatives to reduce red tape. We've heard from entrepreneurs, businesses, nonprofits, and the public sector that red tape is adding to the burden of doing business in Alberta. Unnecessary costs in the form of extra time, money, and resources are threatening jobs, and Albertans are paying the price. Through this bill we are taking action to reverse this trend and make life better for Albertans. While we won't change this landscape overnight, this bill will enable us to take deliberate steps to eliminate unnecessary regulations and processes

while protecting the environment, upholding fiscal accountability, and ensuring the health and safety of Albertans.

An efficient regulatory environment will speed up approvals and boost Alberta's competitiveness. It will spur economic growth and innovation. It will bring investment back, and it will reduce the burden on job creators, freeing them up to get more Albertans back to work. We're taking bold action on red tape reduction to make Alberta one of the freest and fastest moving economies in the world.

I now move, Mr. Speaker, first reading of Bill 4. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 4 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Mr. Carson: Mr. Speaker, I rise to table the requisite five copies of a document I referenced yesterday in the Bill 1 debate entitled *Cracking Open the Carbon Tax: A Look at Where the Money Has Been Spent*.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Do any other members have tablings today? I see the Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table a letter that the mayor of the town of Hanna submitted to the former minister of economic development and trade, and I have the requisite number of copies.

2:50

Orders of the Day

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.

A2. Mr. Shepherd moved that Government Motion 11 be amended in part A, in section 8, by striking out the proposed Standing Order 32(5) and (8).

[Adjourned debate on the amendment May 28: Ms Sweet]

The Speaker: Are there members who would like to speak to Government Motion 11? I see the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to be able to rise to speak to this motion, which is not actually a pleasure to see in front of us. Unfortunately, it includes a number of elements which, I would suggest, significantly undermine the role of members in this House through a number of different strategies.

We just saw the Member for Edmonton-North West get his 10-year pin earlier today. I actually got mine about six or seven months ago; I think it was last fall. So I’ve been around for a while, and I’ve seen how these things work. I’ve seen the many ways in which, particularly under previous governments up to 2015, prior to our government, limited the opportunity for private members to participate in a meaningful way in this House.

If I recall, I can count on one hand the number of private members’ bills that were meaningful that actually passed. I can certainly count on one hand the number of private members’ bills that I as a member of the Official Opposition got to put forward, and I’ll tell you how many there were: zero. I know that there were a number of other strategies that were used that resulted in the voices of private members, outside of Executive Council, on both sides of the House being stymied quite significantly. There are a number of proposals within this motion which appear to seek to do just that.

I will say that when I first looked at them, my first thought was: wow, we’re really clamping down on the opposition’s ability to do their job there. Then when I looked at it a little bit more, I thought: “Hmm. No. You know, it’s actually not so much the opposition whose ability to do their job is getting clamped down on. It’s actually the free speech of the private members on the government side who did not get the nod to be in Executive Council.” In many ways what we’re seeing here are limits on those members who are not members of the Executive Council to speak and initiate issues in this House in any way, shape, or form. As members of the opposition we do have additional ways to do that, but certainly members of the government who are not members of the Executive Council have a much more restricted group of tools at their disposal, and thanks to this motion that group of tools will be even further restricted.

What it says to me is that, in fact, the folks putting forward this suite of amendments don’t have a whole lot of confidence in the caucus as a whole and are a little bit worried about people saying a few too many things that might be embarrassing. There be it. Nonetheless, notwithstanding their discomfort with their caucus as a whole, I would suggest that all members of the House should not be called upon to pay the price.

Let’s talk a little bit about some of the matters that concern me. Now, I think the Member for Edmonton-North West did in fact send a letter to all members of the House outlining in general the concerns that we had, but let me go through them in a bit more detail. He spoke today and in his letter about the issue of introductions. I can tell you that in the past the ability to introduce guests was an opportunity to raise very briefly an issue and, more importantly, to ensure that people who came to this Assembly who had concerns that were great enough to propel them to come to this Assembly and entertain themselves with the activities here – of course, I’m surprised that anybody could ever turn away from it because it is, in fact, so entertaining. That they would come here to listen to us speak, typically, was because they had deep feelings, deep concerns, a deep desire to express agency within their democracy in one form or another. So for them to come and then

not be recognized by the members on this floor is, as a starting point, very, very disrespectful to the people of this province.

When you come to this House, there's a whole range of reasons that you may come. Civil society does not begin and end on the floor of this House. The floor of this House is a wonderful, beautiful representation of civil society, but in no way, shape, or form should any of us be so arrogant as to believe that it begins and ends right here. The people of this province who engage in the activities of being part of civil society see this as one part of that, and when they connect with this body, their connection should be reflected on the record of this body, which is *Hansard*. Of course, that is not a thing that we are going to see happening anymore. So the first group of people who are deeply disrespected by this particular element in the standing orders are, in fact, Albertans. There's item 1.

Now, the second group of people, of course, who are disrespected by the banning of introductions are, in fact, the members in this House because many people very much want to be able to introduce their constituents. They want to be able to introduce their family members. They want to be able to introduce stakeholders who they have been working with on behalf of all Albertans. They want to introduce staff. You know, it's a long list of people who, through the work that they have done and their relationship with the member, as I say, should be introduced in this House and whose names should be reflected in *Hansard*. It is part of the work that we do as MLAs to make what we do in this House relevant to our constituents and the people of this province. We reach out to those people, and we bring them in here.

It is incredibly disrespectful to each and every member of this House to suggest that the people of this province who come to listen to us debate on issues and who care about issues or who want to watch their MLA in action and, let's say, hold them accountable – hold them accountable – for what they do and say in the House, that those people not be reflected on the record of the proceedings of this House, something that has happened for years and years and years. The first thing that this new UCP government does is that they say: "No. The people of Alberta are inconvenient; they take up too much time. They don't need to be reflected on our record. And MLAs don't need to have this sort of systemic process that encourages them to bring people to the House and have their people introduced to other members of the House." Sometimes for a good MLA, the best thing an MLA can do – back in the day, when I was sitting way over there, I often joked that they were about to move my seat right into that little cupboard back there because they kept pushing it so far back. I would have members of my constituency come.

Mr. McIver: That was right across from us.

Ms Notley: Yeah. It was a great place over there.

The point is that I would have members of my constituency come, and the best job that I could do as an MLA, even an opposition MLA sitting over there, who was constantly threatened to go sit outside with the commissionaires, who are lovely people – I mean, it was that close sometimes – is that I can introduce them to the decision-makers in this House, and I can make sure that the decision-makers in this House know who my constituent is and what their concern is and that they've come all the way here to have their concern heard. So rather than having that person play, you know, phone tag or e-mail tag or whatever it is, to try to get an appointment with a decision-maker, as their MLA what I can do is introduce them to other members of the House. In theory isn't that the way things are supposed to work? I mean, I do have the occasional example of where as an opposition MLA I was able to connect constituents and stakeholders of mine with ministers, and I

was able to accelerate a process where a good decision could be made and people could be helped. Isn't that really what we're all, in theory, here to do?

3:00

That's another element of the whole introductory process, but we've just arbitrarily decided that that work is not relevant and that the history of that work is not important and that the people of this province who will see their names wiped from the record of this Assembly from here on, going forward, are not important either. So I suppose it won't surprise you to hear me say, then, that we are very much opposed to this very sort of heavy-handed and, I would suggest, deeply arrogant, exclusive initiative on the part of this government that excludes both Albertans and members of this House.

The next things that trouble me are the series of proposals around what constitutes a vote of confidence and also the series of proposals around the ability to abstain from voting. Now, again, going back to what I was saying before, what is our job? What is our job here in this Assembly? It is to represent the people of this province, and it may well be that there will be times when, even though we've been elected as members of, say, the government, the actions of the government devolve to a point where members start to question whether they have confidence in that government any further.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Of course, you see examples of that in parliamentary democracies all over the world. Therefore, even members of the government caucus should be able to express where they are coming to a lack of confidence in their government. Yet what we have here is a set of proposals that will limit the matters on which members of this Assembly could articulate a lack of confidence in their government. So what are we doing? We are limiting the rights of members, yet another initiative on the part of this government to restrict the role and rights of members.

Again, having been here as long as I have and having sat through a transition from one, two, three, four Conservative Premiers in roughly six years, I know that things can get pretty crazy. I know that times will come where government members will very much question whether they have confidence in the government. What I see in this set of amendments is a plan to very much limit the ability of those government members to express that, should that belief reoccur, again not something that is respectful to members and their rights.

Now, the other thing, though, which I'm concerned about in this section is this whole idea of importing one of many Ottawa traditions to the Alberta Legislature. I've got to say, you know, just for a moment that this is some rich stuff here. For a party that ran in the last election primarily – I mean, if you were to sum up quite honestly the single most compelling element of their platform, it was: we hate Ottawa, and we know Albertans are suffering and upset because of the drop in the price of oil, so we are going to create a common enemy, and then we are going to campaign against Ottawa, and we are going to use this age-old strategy to get ourselves back into office. It appeared to be a reasonably successful strategy, but it is then deeply ironic that, first of all, of course, the Premier's first act is to rush back to Ottawa and to apparently weekend there – but anyway, that's a whole different issue – but to then try to inject into this House, which has been operating for over 100 years, parliamentary traditions that were developed in Ottawa at the expense of traditions which have worked just fine for the

people of Alberta and the elected representatives of Alberta for over 100 years. That's strange.

In any event, in this particular case this whole idea of abstentions goes back to this first issue that I raised, which is simply that I think a lot of the elements in this particular standing order changes package are really actually focused on the government caucus members because the last thing they want to deal with is having to manage all the accountability for many of the votes that members in their caucus would take which are politically inconvenient for the Executive Council of government. We all know the classic example when the Member for Calgary-Hays was at one of their conventions – I guess it was the UCP convention – and begged the members not to vote to reject GSAs and reject protection from outing for LGBTQ kids. You know, he stood at the mic, and he said: please don't do this; it's going to be another lake of fire moment. Indeed, although they successfully managed to get themselves re-elected on their anti-Ottawa thing, I think it is fair to say that there have been more than a few days where it's been very awkward for members of the Executive Council to explain away some of the more extreme views of many of the members of the government caucus. Of course, it makes perfect sense, then, that the plan would be to allow them to abstain so that no one needs to have any of these questions debated in public and we can suppress the inherent division and suppress the inherent extremism that members of the Executive Council understand would be very unpopular with the majority of Albertans.

The challenge with that, though, is that, I would argue, it undermines the accountability that each and every one of us has to the people of this province. I'll tell you something. I've gotten up, and I have voted. I've been at one or two votes – actually, I can't even count the number of times I have been one or two votes in this House against something that the previous Conservative government was going for. Sometimes I did that, and it wasn't very popular, but you know what? I knew where I stood. My constituents knew where I stood. Albertans knew where I stood. They knew they could trust me. They knew that what I said, I did and that that was what I had talked to them about and that they didn't have to worry about me splitting hairs and playing a whole bunch of sneaky little games to avoid accountability for the beliefs that I have. I find that – just a word of advice for some of the new MLAs there – it's a really good way to embark on politics. Do what you believe. Say what you believe. Act on what you believe. It becomes a lot less complicated. There's a lot less ducking and diving and running around scrums when you're actually quite proud of what you believe in and what you're running on and what you're doing. This abstention thing is part of a package of ducking and diving. It's not honest. It doesn't appear honest. Albertans won't see it as honest. They will see it as a trick, an Ottawa-imported trick. That's why we are not in favour of that.

Now, another thing is more, I guess, pragmatic and organizational, but, again, it does go, I think, to the heart, a little bit, of maybe the difference that we have between our caucuses. This is this issue of – it seems simple on the surface – giving the House leader the opportunity to change his mind about whether we're going to have morning sittings in the evening the night before. I've got to tell you that that's really a mess. That's a big disaster. The guys are wheeling and dealing at 11:30 at night. Maybe a couple of them have had a few drinks, and they're all trying to figure out, "Oh, you know, maybe we'll have this guy talk and this one talk," and "Oh, hey, I'll tell you what; if you promise to not have that long-winded human that looks a lot like, for instance, the Leader of the Official Opposition, talk, then in return you guys don't have to come back tomorrow morning, and we'll only be here for seven or eight hours; maybe we'll only go an extra hour tomorrow night." There's all this kind of wheeling and dealing.

3:10

The problem with that is that over here we believe very strongly that we need to have more women involved in politics and that those women should actually, preferably, be under 50 and that in many cases they should have kids because by doing that, it would be great to have that voice here. Not every woman can afford a nanny on a 24-hour cycle to deal with an unpredictable schedule. That is why our government moved to morning sittings in the last Assembly, when we were in power. It's why we tried as much as possible to create a predictable, regular schedule, so that the people in this Assembly who had other obligations outside of this House could manage those obligations, so that you didn't have to be someone that was almost at retirement age, and you didn't have to be, you know, someone who was blessed with a spouse who could afford to stay home and be the primary child care giver regardless of when you were working or how you were working or all those things. It was all part of a family-friendly suite of amendments that we made.

This one undoes that. What this does is that we get back into the: "Who knows? Maybe we're there; maybe we're not. You know, maybe we'll stay late now, and then we won't go in the morning." Meanwhile, an MLA has just committed to their child care centre or to their child care provider that they are working that morning, but it turns out: "Oh, no. I guess we're not working that morning, but, oh, in return for that, you're going to actually have to work at night." So now you're paying more money. Jeez, suddenly we find it really hard to recruit women, primarily, to run for office. Then we end up in this ridiculous situation that we have in this House, where we have a significant minority of women in this Legislature, which is an utter failure on the part collectively of the Assembly, and it's not good for Albertans at all. That particular amendment may not have been designed to have that outcome, but from experience I will tell you that that is exactly the outcome that it will have and that we are moving away from setting up a situation where people who have significant obligations outside of the House can actually manage them in a predictable fashion.

Another concern that I have here is the issue of what this government proposes to do with private members' bills. Now, again, in theory, it might not be a bad idea, depending on what our schedules were normally like, to have private members' bills go to committee, but here's the thing. We often don't sit that many weeks, and if you are lucky enough to have your private member's bill come up in the last three or four weeks before the House is set to rise, what it means is that your private member's bill is likely not going to get debated back in this House. That undermines the rights of private members.

Now, again, having been in opposition from 2008 to 2015, I can tell you that I never once had a private member's bill get debated, not once. It's pretty darn exciting when you actually get the draw and you find that you're in the top 10: oh, my gosh; it's actually possible that my bill might make it onto the floor of this House, and people might actually have to vote on it.

Interestingly, one of the few examples of an opposition private member's bill that did that was, of course, the well-known bill around gay-straight alliances, which, as we know, turned the previous Conservative government inside out with the acrobatics that they did to try to deal with that bill. It's rare that the opposition will get an opportunity to get a bill up, but it's also rare just as a member of the House for private members to get a bill up. So if what happens is that it comes up and then it automatically gets delayed for three weeks, then we just significantly reduce the number of bills that get debated. Now, I suppose that if we don't

have a throne speech every year, it might ultimately be a problem that gets fixed over two years or three years, but the start will be that private members' bills get debated less.

Moreover, it's not clear in here what happens if the committee is unable to meet and address the bill and come up with a plan within the three-week period. Will the committee get the opportunity to play around with it so that the bill never comes back and so that private members' bills, particularly the opposition private members' bills or embarrassing bills to the government by government members who are not part of Executive Council, get shifted off to committee? It's not clear to me what happens in the committee and what happens if the committee is unable to make a recommendation and fully debate that bill within the three-week time. I would suggest to you that it's unlikely that that will happen in many cases. It's a system that ultimately is going to once again take away the voice of private members on both sides of the House, basically everyone other than Executive Council. That's not a thing that we can agree to.

At this point, we would suggest that that piece get shipped away for more deliberation and not agreed to until we have a much stronger understanding of what happens in committee and what guarantees we have that that bill always comes back to the House for debate. In the absence of that, then you need to see this for exactly what it is, which is a plan to further take away the voice of private members on both sides of the House, who are not members of Executive Council.

The final thing that I will speak to is simply the issue that goes back to this whole matter of bringing Ottawa to Edmonton, because I know – I'm pretty sure – you guys have been talking about: "Oh, well, you know, Albertans voted for this, and they voted for that. Everything that we're doing is what Albertans voted for." I'm pretty sure there was no point in the election campaign where the now Premier got up and said: jeez, what we need is more Ottawa in Edmonton. I'm quite sure that was not a part of anybody's platform. Quite sure. In fact, I think there were a lot of memes to the opposite there. Yet what we're doing is bringing more Ottawa to Edmonton. I don't know if we're going to end up with finger bowls at some point on our desks as well. I don't know. I'm not a finger bowl girl personally, but I know some of the folks over there are quite comfortable using them.

Nonetheless, I don't know why it is that we would feel the need to bring Ottawa to Alberta. Clapping versus desk thumping has as much to do with the overall decorum in this House as whether the sun is out or whether it's raining. At the end of the day, there will be decorum if the debates are respectful, and there will not be decorum if things become more polarized. But desks versus clapping is simply a demonstration of control, and more to the point, it is in fact the imposition of Ottawa on over 100 years of Alberta tradition. So I don't see why. Now, at the end of the day, you know, it's not a hill to die on. It's just a sad departure from tradition that is disconnected from any kind of logical objective because, as I've said, it has absolutely nothing to do with decorum.

I would urge people to watch the House of Commons in the U.K., where they don't have desks to thump, they do clap, and I'll tell you that while far more entertaining than we are, decorum is not the first thing that comes to mind when you watch that. It's just a false argument. It's disingenuous, and that's not what it's about. Obviously, we're not in support of it, and I'm not entirely sure why folks over there are so committed to bringing more Ottawa to Edmonton, but so be it. I'm sure this won't be the first time.

3:20

Anyway, those are overall the reasons why we don't support this particular group of amendments. The overarching theme is this. We

think that there are strong traditions in this House, which have served to give the citizens of this province a voice and to include them in the proceedings. They are traditions that have been in place, in many cases, for a long time, and while there are many things that we could do to promote the rights of private members, none of them are included in this particular package.

What I will say, too, is that many of you may recall the scandal around the so-called no-meet committee. That committee actually historically did meet once every four years. What it did was that that committee sat down and, over the course of several weeks, worked on a multiparty basis to work through the elements of the standing orders, and then that committee made recommendations to the House, and the House then voted on the standing orders and on any changes to the standing orders. That committee, of course, was completely bypassed here. Just speaking there again to the rights of private members, this whole process is starting by spurning and thwarting the rights of private members, so it is hardly surprising that the substance of it is also designed to undermine the rights of private members.

I know there are a lot of folks here that are new and aren't aware of how little opportunity they have to participate here, but it will become increasingly clear. In the meantime I'm pretty sure it goes against what many Albertans thought that the members opposite were running to bring into place.

Nonetheless, that is why we will not be voting in favour of these amendments. It is why we will be very clear in our conversations with our constituents and anybody else who wishes to speak with us that the first package of things brought in by this government very clearly worked to undermine access and representation of the people of Alberta within this institution and on the record as well as to undermine the ability of individually elected private members in this House, separate and apart from the members of Executive Council, who were selected to be in that role over those other members there, particularly on the government side.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would now move that we adjourn debate on this matter.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Ms Glasgow moved, seconded by Ms Rosin, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate May 29: Ms Goodridge]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak?

Sorry. Would the hon. Government House Leader like to close debate?

Mr. Jason Nixon: On the throne speech?

The Deputy Speaker: On the throne speech.

Mr. Jason Nixon: No. I'm talking on it.

The Deputy Speaker: You want to speak to the throne speech?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yeah. You bet.

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

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's great to have an opportunity today to rise to discuss the throne speech today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to it. I know that I'm looking forward to watching some other members give a maiden speech . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, I hesitate to interrupt you. Unfortunately, you've already spoken to that.

Mr. Jason Nixon: I thought that might happen, Madam Speaker, so I'm looking forward to hearing somebody else speak on the throne speech in the next few minutes.

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak to the Speech from the Throne, that was last week at the beginning of the session. In general, this speech sets out the priorities for the government, their work for the coming session, and all those things that matter to Albertans, matter to our constituents. It's an important document.

However, I think the start of the speech rests on three things: first, the relentless focus on policies that are designed to create jobs; the province's right to control their natural resources; and third, making life better for Albertans by supporting health and education for the most vulnerable in our society. But when we look at these three things in a week, I think their relentless focus has remained on policies that do exactly the opposite of creating jobs. Their focus has been relentless on policies that do exactly the opposite of promoting growth. Their focus has been relentless on policies that do exactly the opposite of economic diversification. Their focus has been relentless to destroy investor confidence.

Why do I say that? We can look at their bills. The carbon tax repeal act: they said that this bill somehow creates 6,000 jobs. In the last session of the 29th Legislature they would always come up with numbers about how many Albertans are unemployed. Depending on the day, they will use any number, but the number they would use was 180,000 Albertans unemployed. With that plan, the climate leadership plan, there were 7,300 jobs that have been put at risk, so somewhere 187,000 Albertans now are out of a job.

In terms of economic diversification, just take our energy industry. We focused on making sure that we get value for our products and that we find new markets, and by repealing that climate leadership plan, we are risking the approval, we are risking progress on the Trans Mountain pipeline, which will give us access to the west coast and other markets. They said that they will focus on diversification, but their actions so far are just taking us away from diversification.

The second priority. They said that they will stand for the province's right to control and develop natural resources freely. This requires accessing, securing pipeline. As I said, for a long time even before our government, Conservatives were here in this province, for 44 years. They were in federal government before this government for 10 years, and they were not able to secure a pipeline. The reason for that can be seen in court decisions with respect to Energy East and many other cases. Two themes will emerge. One is that their efforts have fallen short with respect to the environment. They never took concrete action on the environment that will lead to securing Alberta a pipeline. They also walked roughshod on indigenous rights. Their consultation always fell short. These are the two major things that were always in the way of us securing the pipeline.

3:30

Now, again, finally, when we had a climate leadership plan that was getting the job done, that was putting a cap on emissions, that involved working with industry, and that came up with a plan that will help us secure the pipeline, now we are seeing that they are reversing all that progress, and that will certainly not help them achieve the priorities that they said that their government will focus on. Their focus so far in a week has been completely in the opposite direction.

With respect to getting our resources to market, we signed a deal which involved having more railcars so that we can ship somewhere close to 125,000 barrels a day to market. Those agreements were worth billions of dollars in terms of economic return for Albertans, somewhere around \$6 billion, and they're threatening to cancel those contracts. Again, by cancelling those contracts, what will happen? We will not have the takeaway capacity that our industry needs. We will not be able to access markets because in our pipeline system we do not have enough capacity.

Those were the things that were helping us get our resources freely and fairly to the national and international markets. They are taking all those steps that will keep us away from those markets. Again, it's disappointing that they said in the throne speech what they will do and that so far what they have done is completely the opposite of what has been stated there in the throne speech.

They said that they will make "life better for all Albertans by ensuring the quality and effectiveness of our public services, especially in health care and education, and by supporting the most vulnerable in our society." Let's unpack that one. One thing is for sure: whatever they have done so far, that's not making life better for all Albertans. Their legislation that's before the House that proposes to cut taxes from 12 per cent to 8 per cent, giving \$4 billion plus in corporate tax breaks: that is not for all Albertans; it's just going to a few wealthy corporations, profitable corporations, profitable Albertans. There's nothing in that tax break for 90-plus per cent of Albertans living in this province.

They said that they will maintain quality public services, especially in health and education. We have seen on at least three different occasions that the opposition has asked the Minister of Education whether they will fund the 15,000 new students who are walking through our doors, and every time the answer we hear is, "We will either maintain or increase," whatever that means. But maintaining funding is effectively a cut because 15,000 new students are coming through our school doors and we are saying that we will not provide more dollars for their educational resources. I'm not sure how that's making life better for all Albertans. In fact, by these actions, by not funding education, we are not at all making life better for those who are entering our school system. For those parents, we are actually making them concerned about the future of their kids, about the education of their children, and that's not, by any stretch, making life better for these Albertans.

With respect to health care we heard the same thing, that either they will maintain or they will increase, but they don't know. For all these decisions – Albertans gave them a mandate, elected them – they put together a panel, so the panel will look at all these things and make decisions for them.

When we were in charge of Treasury, the member who was our Minister of Finance then, the MLA for Calgary-Buffalo, before every session would himself consult with Albertans across this province, and he would ask all the members of Executive Council then to reach out to their respective stakeholders and ask about their priorities, ask about their concerns, ask about their issues, ask them what they want to see in the budget. That's how we were setting budgets.

But to just have somebody – they got help from someone in Saskatchewan who has a very firm track record of blowing up hospitals across that province. They're waiting for that report. At that point they will tell the school system, the board of trustees, and all those parents whether they will be able to fund education or not.

With these three priorities, three pillars, from what they have done so far, from what they have indicated so far, they are doing exactly the opposite of what they said in the throne speech that they will do.

Then they also identified that they will bring in certain bills. They brought forward Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, as indicated in the throne speech. What that bill did: it will, if passed, reverse the progress that was made under the previous government. Somehow it says that it's providing \$1.4 billion in tax relief and making everything more affordable for Albertans. But what it doesn't say here is that it will take away \$600 million to \$700 million, two-thirds of what everyday Albertans were getting in rebates, that was making their lives affordable. They are taking away those rebates from Albertans. It's taking away from many organizations who have invested in renewable energy projects. It's driving investment away that was coming to Alberta in renewables, that was coming to Alberta in green tech and all those projects. That bill: they promised it, they brought it, but this is the impact of that bill that Albertans have to live with.

Then it also says that it will take legal action to protect Albertans from the federal carbon tax. Madam Speaker, a week ago or so we heard from the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, the province of Saskatchewan, exactly that, that they wanted to challenge the authority of the federal government on whether they can bring in the carbon tax and impose that carbon tax on provinces as backstop legislation. The way the federal legislation works, if some provinces have their own climate leadership plan that is somewhat equivalent to what the federal government wants to do, that will stand. Otherwise, federal legislation applies as a backstop.

So Saskatchewan did the same thing. They brought a reference to their Court of Appeal, the highest court within the province, and the court ruled that, yes, the federal government can do that. And if we were to ask the same question, because it's the same analysis, whether the federal government has power or not . . .

3:40

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

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the Member for Calgary-McCall for his thoughtful comments in response to Her Majesty's Speech from the Throne, and I want to congratulate the Member for Calgary-McCall on his re-election. Certainly, it was a tough re-election for many in our caucus, but he was one of the few who increased the percentage of the vote in his riding. I think that's a testament to the good work that he's done in representing the people of Calgary-McCall, and he should be commended for that. I want the people of Alberta to know what an excellent representative the people of Calgary-McCall have in this member.

I want to take this time to thank the former Minister of Community and Social Services for the work that he did to legislate increases in AISH and seniors' benefits and learners' benefits. Madam Speaker, perhaps you had this same experience, but certainly if I had to list the top two reasons that people in Edmonton-Gold Bar contacted my constituency at the very beginning of my term, the first was complaints about the WCB, and the second was complaints about AISH.

I'm proud of the record that our government had in addressing both of those complaints. By significantly revising the WCB system, the number of complaints to my office dropped to virtually zero by the end of that term. Certainly, by this member, when he was minister, introducing legislation to increase payments to AISH recipients and other benefit recipients and link those to the consumer price index, he's done a significant service for the most vulnerable people in the province of Alberta. They will continue to rely on annual increases in their benefits so that they won't fall behind, like they were left to do under the Conservative government prior to our election in 2015.

Madam Speaker, I can't really overstate how critically important that this work is done has been to the members of my constituency who receive AISH payments. You know, people on AISH have a hard time making ends meet. Certainly, they get trapped in the cycle of poverty. They fall into circumstances where they're severely handicapped through no fault of their own and need to rely on the support of the province to be able to look after themselves and their families. With the benefits that they received prior to us linking those to consumer price index increases, all of those people were left behind. They couldn't afford to make the rent. They couldn't afford to eat. If they had children, they couldn't afford to send them to school and certainly couldn't afford to provide their kids with a lot of the extras that their neighbours expected from schools, things like field trips, pizza lunches, those kinds of things that enhance the student experience. Parents on AISH weren't able to provide those things to students.

I just want to take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to thank the Member for Calgary-McCall for making life better for the AISH recipients in my constituency, and I know that that single piece of legislation will have an impact on a generation of people in Alberta and make their lives better. So thank you for that. I also want to recognize that he increased the Alberta seniors' benefit and linked that to consumer price index increases as well.

Madam Speaker, Edmonton-Gold Bar has more seniors than any other urban riding in the entire province of Alberta, and many of those seniors rely on the Alberta seniors' benefit to make ends meet as well. Being able to rely on annual consumer price index increases will mean that seniors in my constituency will be able to afford a few nice things, the odd trip to the store. They'll be able to buy their grandkids and their great-grandchildren extra gifts at Christmastime and for birthdays when maybe they weren't able to do that. Certainly, they'll be better able to look after themselves. We know that the cost of prescription medications is skyrocketing out of control for many seniors. The cost of a number of medical services that they rely on that aren't covered by Alberta health insurance becomes hard for them to afford, so a lot of seniors will be able to use those annual increases for their own good.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the Speech from the Throne? The Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Member Ceci: Thank you for recognizing me, Madam Speaker. You know, as I rise to speak in this Chamber with regard to the throne speech, I just want to say that one of the reasons, the main reason that got me into politics back in 1995 was a desire to help improve the quality of life of the constituents in the east end of Calgary. I ran. I was a social worker in the east end of Calgary, and I saw that their condition was worsening, not everyone, of course, but those who were vulnerable, those who were without means, who were relying on government supports. I saw that their condition was worsening as a result of the government of the day

bringing in an austerity program, and that program cut somewhere between 5 and 10 per cent out of the provincial budget and affected many people who needed that support from the provincial government at that time in their lives.

That politicized me, Madam Speaker. I remember very well the first time that I took part in a protest, my first in my life, in 1993, '94, right out here on the steps of the Legislature, where I with about 5,000 people said: "That shouldn't happen. Our government should look to support people when they need those supports." When they do, of course, then they contribute back into the social fabric of this province with their tax dollars and their contributions in their social capacity.

But this throne speech: I preface my comments on the throne speech with that story because I found this throne speech to be small in stature and not broad enough to include all of the necessary, important actions government can make, should make to address the needs of their population, Albertans. I think there are things missing from this throne speech that weren't missing from the government that I was a part of in their throne speeches, particularly the needs of women, the needs of the vulnerable, the LGBTQ community, and indigenous persons.

I found that the single focus in this throne speech was around a job. While a job is terribly important, of course, for a person's mental and emotional and physical well-being, it's not the only thing in life. This throne speech seemed to reduce in a way, distill down: the only thing the government would be focused on is a person's employment. I can tell you that while employment is tremendous, it does not round out the whole of a person's existence.

What I want to take an opportunity to say is that, you know, I think this throne speech missed the opportunity to say what the government was going to do with respect to women in this province to support them, for instance, in this Chamber. The previous government that I was a part of had an equal number of women who were a part of the Executive Council with men in the Executive Council. I am tremendously proud in all of that. I think this throne speech misses entirely. As the former Premier was saying earlier, we don't have the breadth of policy development when we don't include younger women, when we don't include woman generally in that development, and this Chamber is devoid of enough women to make a difference in some respects.

I also know that when I was listening to the throne speech, I was wondering if it would really speak to Albertans beyond the information that's in here with regard to the economy. I think it fails in that regard as well.

3:50

I know that, you know, this has been a really difficult time in this province, since late 2014, when the economy took a nosedive in this province as a result of the precipitous drop of the world price of oil and the pain that that has caused Albertans and the corporations that keep Albertans employed. I know that as a government we were really focused on ensuring that Albertans had the supports, and we had their backs through that recession, that lasted far too long for any of us, I'm sure. We had Albertans' backs, and as a result of having their backs, the former Minister of Community and Social Services – it was called human services at one point, too, I think – came to me as the Minister of Finance in our Executive Council and said: look, I need a lot more resources because Albertans are coming off their EI and they're needing supports. We upped the budgets for Albertans in income support programs, AISH programs, and other programs a lot to address the need that was coming forward, that was being experienced by Albertans through that horrible recession.

You know, those kinds of things aren't talked about in this throne speech. Having Albertans' backs in that regard is not talked about in this throne speech. There are lots of things, of course, around repealing this and changing that and cutting corporate taxes, as was introduced the other day, but I just want the people in this Chamber to know that Alberta, at 12 per cent, had corporate taxes on par with most of the provinces in this country. We weren't out in front of provinces in this country. We had about a \$12 billion tax advantage on the closest other province in terms of taxation in this country, and that Alberta tax advantage stayed strong through the entire course of the previous government that I was proud to be a part of.

Also, we of course wanted to make sure that the focus was on young people in this province, so we did important things, like recently we were able to address the minimum wage and bring that up for all Albertans to \$15 an hour. Of course, the throne speech talks about repealing that as well, and I think that's in the wrong direction, Madam Speaker. I think, you know, I and others around here have said repeatedly that a minimum wage is a minimum wage is a minimum wage, and of course this throne speech undoes that as well. That advantage won't be for young people; it'll be for businesses.

The balance just seems to be wrong in this throne speech. Where the balance could have been pretty equal for citizens and others in this province, entities, corporations, it swings far too much, in my estimation and the estimation of many Albertans, away from the needs of citizens in this province. Be that as it may, we'll continue to raise that issue with Albertans whenever they ask and whenever I have the opportunity.

The other thing that I wanted to point out, Madam Speaker, is that, you know, it does talk about the indigenous opportunities corporation here, and we heard that again from the Premier today in terms of how he believes that that's groundbreaking. But I know that the former Indigenous Relations minister was also breaking ground in that regard in building, through his adherence to the truth and reconciliation principles, connections across this province with our First Nations communities and our Métis communities. I was just really impressed with the single-minded focus he had to reach out to First Nations, our indigenous citizens in this province. He told me once that at the end of his four-year term he had visited every First Nation community in this province – and there are 48 – and he had visited every Métis settlement in this province, and there are eight.

I was very impressed because, Madam Speaker, that kind of commitment to go directly, sit down with people in their communities, and listen to them around the issues they have and the needs that they wanted to bring forward to their minister – I don't think any Indigenous Relations minister in this province ever has outreached to the extent that the previous Indigenous Relations minister had. I want to commend him for his work in that regard.

I also started out with a little story about, you know, what brought me to politics. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that if there's an unwinding, as we're seeing on some of these bills that are identified in this throne speech, of the necessary supports Albertans are currently getting from their government, income supports and AISH, PDD supports, which I think would be very hard to do – but it's not impossible. Frankly, I'm concerned that the current government may see those monies as an unnecessary expenditure and reduce them. If that takes place, I think we'll be into the same sort of citizen protest that originally got me into politics back in 1993 and '94, when there was an austerity program of drastic cuts brought in by the PC government of the day. I think that's in the wrong direction.

Albertans can rightly be proud of the supports and services that are in this province today. They can be rightly proud of the

increases to AISH and income support programs that were championed by the former Minister of Community and Social Services. Going in the wrong direction to bring in austerity to needed programs and services would be un-Albertan. It would be small-minded and churlish. We can get back to balance, Madam Speaker, but we should not do it on the backs of the vulnerable.

I know some of my colleagues across the floor, and I don't think they want to do those things, but they do have a single-minded focus to get to balance, as we did. My fear is that they'll try and get to balance by cutting programs and services that Albertans can rightly be proud of today but won't be if they start to see them be pulled back under their feet.

The work of the previous government was – you know, I've got to add up the number of bills that were brought in in the four years that the previous government was in place that I was proud to be a part of. The number 60-plus is in my mind. I really have to find out the exact number of bills that were brought before this House because across the floor there have been some folks who have said, for instance, in the area of fiscal framework agreements with municipalities – well, there is one that exists with Calgary and Edmonton at this time. The other approximately 340 . . .

4:00

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? The hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank the hon. member across the way for his discussion around this. I just wanted to bring up a few things. He mentioned a single-minded focus on what may or may not be happening on this side of the House. I will tell you that I do have a single-minded focus, and that's listening to Albertans.

One of the biggest privileges, especially in this last election cycle, was to have such a large mandate. That mandate was built on a very transparent piece of information that came across that was – actually, a good chunk of it came out prewrit, in fact, and had the opportunity to be put out at the doors day after day by thousands of volunteers and people who, I'm sure, like the opposition, spent countless hours at the doors talking to Albertans about their priorities.

I'm sorry. I'm sad in many aspects that my friend across the way would suggest that a single-minded notion of what is important to Albertans would be considered something that is not important to everybody in this province.

Mr. McIver: It's called focus.

Mrs. Aheer: It is. It is a direct, laser-minded focus on the priorities of Albertans.

The hon. member spoke about vulnerable Albertans. As a mother of a vulnerable Albertan I can honestly tell you that people came to this province for years. Coming originally from a party that joined eventually with the ruling party at that time, the PCs, one of the things that I have to say, in that time period having had a vulnerable child in this situation, is that Alberta was the gold star for any sort of services that were necessary for children, especially like my child, with a cognitive disability. We had people just flocking to this province for our services. The best people, the best services, the best ability to pull children out of autism – that's what we called it back in the day – looking at these cognitive disabilities and having the very, very best people in this province.

I find it – I'm searching for a word. It's very disappointing to me to hear a government that had the privilege of having this province for four years in any way speak disrespectfully of the people in

service, public servants, or anybody else relative to the growth of the work that was done in this province on behalf of our most vulnerable, because I have to say, having been a mother who was so blessed to have those services, that my son now drives a vehicle, has a job, is a beautiful, amazing, contributing member of society. That is definitely related to the amount of incredible help that he had along the way as he was pulled out of this by speech pathologists, OT, PT, people who spent countless hours and days in my house, every day helping me to understand and to find the strategies to help create this beautiful human being who is my youngest son.

It is imperative that we look at these situations. There are always ways that we can improve. Absolutely. Again, I am not willing to mortgage the future of my children and my grandchildren. You want to call that a laser focus? You got it. That's exactly why I'm here. That laser focus has so many pieces to it, but I can honestly tell you, Madam Speaker, that we spoke about it with honesty and transparency every day at the doors. Every day. We didn't hide from that. We didn't make up some sort of grand plan about something that's not possible. We actually talked to Albertans about what their priorities were. I'm sure you have them memorized. We said them a gazillion times: jobs, economy, pipelines. Why? All of those things contribute to the things that the member was just talking about.

If you want to take care of our most vulnerable people, we have to have a healthy economy. We have to have the ability to take care of these incredible people, to be able to build the programs and to have the services, all of the things that all of us hold so dear in this province where we are so blessed and incredibly prosperous. We've had two governments in the last four years that have actively attacked our economy, our energy industry, and the people in this province.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in response to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's throne speech. Like many of us, I am new to this place and this role. For those of you I have not had the pleasure to meet yet, my name is Roger Reid. Today I am humbled, proud, and grateful to stand in this Legislature as the newly elected Member for Livingstone-Macleod. This is a tremendous honour, and I will strive to represent my constituents in a way that is respectful and that honours them for the next four years. This is the opportunity of a lifetime, to represent my friends, my family, and my neighbours from a constituency that truly represents the hard-working prairie spirit that Albertans are known for.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

Livingstone-Macleod is home to a vast, amazingly diverse geography, people, and industries. It has a fantastic array of geography, stretching from the heights of the Rocky Mountains to the grasslands of the prairies. My constituency is nestled in the very southwest corner of the province, bordering both our provincial neighbour, British Columbia, to the west and our international neighbour, the United States, to the south. It encompasses part of Alberta's foothills and the Porcupine Hills and, of course, Alberta's native grasslands.

I would certainly be remiss to not honour our First Nations people, so I would like to give special mention to both the Piikani people from the south of my riding and the Stoney Nakoda people in the north end. The First Nations people who live in what is now known as Livingstone-Macleod, because of their great contributions

to the west, cannot be ignored because we have great sites like our UNESCO world heritage site, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, where the history, culture, and stories of our First Nations are shared with visitors from across Alberta and around the world. Just as these nations have been an important part of our past, I'm excited to be part of a government that will also work to include them to be an important part of our future as we share in the prosperity of this great province with our First Nations people.

With the recent riding redistribution Livingstone-Macleod has gained Waterton, a town and pristine national park along the northern end of the American border, and the town of High River and the communities around it. To the people of Waterton and High River I'd like to say: welcome to Livingstone-Macleod. I hope that I will be able to represent you as well as your previous representatives have in the past.

Livingstone-Macleod is home to people just as amazing as its geography. My constituents are incredibly hard working and embody the entrepreneurial spirit that we as a society praise so greatly. Farming and ranching are classic Alberta industries, and they play an important role in my constituency's economy, but they are not the only crucial industries. My constituents are involved in commerce, tourism, resource development, forestry, and film. They all play crucial roles, providing well-paying jobs for thousands of hard-working constituents so they can provide for themselves and their families.

Like many in Livingstone-Macleod, my family has been living in this fantastic area of our province that we call home for over 110 years. My family has been living in the area, and I am now the fifth generation to be raised there. Much like all of our neighbours in the riding, we grew up as stewards of the land, hard-working farmers and ranchers, constantly looking for ways to improve the ways we care for our land, that has brought prosperity to our families for generations. The hard-working people of Livingstone-Macleod, like my parents and grandparents, are always looking for ways to improve our homes, our businesses, and our livelihoods to provide for our families, and it's that very innovative spirit that brings me great joy to call myself a resident of Livingstone-Macleod.

Of course, I can't ignore my own hometown, the beautiful town of Claresholm. I am not the first MLA from Claresholm, nor will I be the last. Of course, like every single person in this Legislature, I will strive to represent my constituents the best that I can. This may be a difficult task, though, considering the prestige of some of my predecessors who have hailed from the communities of Livingstone-Macleod, including William Moffatt, who was the first resident and mayor of Claresholm, who served in the Third Legislature. In 1917 he was defeated by another Claresholm resident, the Hon. Louise McKinney, a member of Canada's own Famous Five and, more importantly, the first woman elected to a Legislature in the British empire. They would all be succeeded by William Aberhart from High River, who was this province's seventh Premier, and just as impressively, from Little Bow Mr. Ray Speaker, who served in this very Chamber and federally for 34 years and never was defeated in an election. As a side note, I opted to share his desk with him. I have some big shoes to fill, but I can safely say that I'm extremely excited to get to work to grow into these shoes.

4:10

In the coming weeks we all face late nights, long hours, and more than a few last-minute House duty trades as we work to fulfill our constituents' wishes in this Legislature. With that in mind, I'd like to tell the House what my constituents are hoping to see me accomplish over the next four years. First of all, we must create a well-thought-out plan for the stewardship of our land. As

Conservatives we are conservative by nature. The people of Livingstone-Macleod live where they live because of our backyard, which in this case is the beautiful countryside of our province. For us, this countryside acts as a source of recreation, sustenance, and prosperity. We need to ensure this access for future generations so that they can continue to explore and enjoy it the way previous generations have. We must become world leaders in this regard to preserve the landscape and access for all future generations.

However, we can't do that at the expense of the province's economy. As a small-business owner myself I know that we must ensure economic benefit and success for small businesses in the rural communities of my constituency for it to remain as prosperous as it has been. We must develop and grow the economy in order to provide opportunities for our youth, both today and tomorrow, so they can gain critical skills in that very important first job and so that they can later create more opportunities in the very communities where they've been raised.

Innovation and diversity in our agricultural industry and business are essential for this, and as we move further into the digital age, so is making sure that every rural community has access to high-speed Internet so that rural Albertans can continue to keep up with our urban neighbours.

Lastly, rural areas such as Livingstone-Macleod are wonderfully attractive for retiring Albertans. After all, who doesn't like the quiet, idyllic country life? In fact, it's been said that all the cars are in the city, but all the good parking is in the country. With this, though, we must also work to ensure that our seniors have access to the great health care that those in urban areas have access to, the same opportunities for long-term palliative and hospice care that our urban neighbours enjoy. The need to maintain and adapt our health care system is vital to ensuring that we can maintain our rural health care systems and adapt to changing times as it is crucial for helping our seniors as they enjoy their well-earned retirement.

Last but not least, the people of Livingstone-Macleod have some concerns related to some of our available infrastructure, and what we need is to upgrade and modernize in the coming years. Our schools must be modernized in order to equip rural students for the coming needs of the digital age and the hurdles they will face as they grow up in this new era. Just as importantly, we must follow through on the proposals to do things like twin highway 3 in order to improve both road safety and the economics in the area. I'm glad that the government is committed to working with all municipalities to create predictable and sustainable funding for these events to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your time, just as I'd like to thank my constituents for their overwhelming support in this past election. Just as importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Darlene, and my children – Elisabeth, Allison, and Aaron – for their constant support and backing as I've taken on this difficult journey. I would not be here today without them, just as I would not be here without the trust and hard work of my neighbours in Livingstone-Macleod. There's no better place in this world than my constituency, and I will always be grateful to be from such a fantastic area of our beautiful province.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) I see the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, I was touched by the Member for Livingstone-Macleod's maiden speech. I think he did an amazing job. As a rancher I'm kind of jealous of his constituency. I think it's some of the most beautiful ranchland in the entire province, and I thought you painted the picture well. From

the Rockies to the grasslands to the prairies, that riding has a little bit of everything.

A real fond memory for me: we used to go to Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump as kids for many a year. I still have the arrowheads that we made there. We'd make and eat bannock and camp. It's a really wonderful site, one of the most special in Alberta. I think you did an amazing job painting that picture.

In response to the Speech from the Throne, I know we have a lot of great policies coming forward, and I was wondering if you, as a small-business owner, would just go a little deeper into some of the policies that you're most excited about.

Mr. Reid: I'd like to thank the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler. We're both country boys, so we tend to be a little informal, so you'll have to bear with us. Being a small-business owner was a huge motivation for me to run in this election and seek to serve the people of Livingstone-Macleod in this House. As somebody who spent his life generally working for other people, I never totally understood how the decisions by government would affect me every day. As someone who became a small-business owner and was all of a sudden responsible not just for my paycheque and my family but responsible for the 65 people that we employ, I began to take a much closer interest in what government decisions did to affect the lives of those who work for me, who are really like family because we spend so much time together, to take time to address poorly-thought-out policies or poorly executed policies that I believe probably had great intentions but in terms of the end result were not necessarily beneficial for working Albertans.

I'm excited that this government is focused on getting Albertans back to work. We've seen our own businesses shrink in terms of the employees that we hire simply because it has gotten very expensive with the labour changes that have happened under the previous government. We had compassion for our employees – like I said, they're like family – so we never laid anybody off because we knew their livelihood was dependent on it, but we also made sure that we were very cautious when we rehired and when we filled positions when people moved on to other opportunities, because at the end of the day we still needed to make a profit to keep the doors open and keep those people employed.

I'm excited that we have a focus on reducing red tape that makes it simpler for entrepreneurs and businesses to get up and running quicker and to be able to provide and create those jobs for Albertans who want to work. We heard that again and again at the doors from those who had lost their jobs. Albertans were not looking for handouts; they're looking for opportunity. They're looking for those opportunities to get out and work hard, support their neighbourhoods, support their families, pay their mortgages, and contribute to their communities.

I think it's very important that we have the focus that we have because, at the end of the day, when our economy thrives, we're able to support those things that are important to my constituents in our rural communities, things like great, world-class, affordable, publicly funded health care, absolutely essential in rural Alberta; funding our schools so that we modernize them; that we hire and attract the best teachers and assistants to work in the schools so that our rural communities have every advantage that our urban students have. Those things cannot happen without a robust economy, without a way to attract new people, new businesses, new workers into our rural communities. That focus of this government, I think, is an important part about how that's going to happen in the next four years.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any other members who would like to take this opportunity to speak? I see the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont standing.

Mr. Rutherford: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise today for the very first time as I address the Assembly. I am humbled by the support of the constituents of Leduc-Beaumont, and it's an honour to be here representing them today. It's not lost on me, the expectation of my constituents to see the economy grow, to see job opportunities increase, and to have more stability in every sector of our economy.

As I travelled across my constituency, I talked to many hard-working Albertans, and I was saddened to hear from so many who had lost their jobs, had sporadic employment, and had completely lost trust in the now previous government. These stories motivated me to work harder. It motivated me to ensure that a government was elected that would focus on the economy, oil and gas investment, jobs, and pipelines, a government that believed in creating opportunities and choice.

I will make sure that as a member of the governing caucus we remain focused on improving the lives of all Albertans, that we build an economy that works for all Albertans, and that we remain humble and stay true to the people we serve. With so many constituents tied directly or indirectly to the oil and gas industry, it is clear that the residents of Leduc-Beaumont were looking for a change. They were looking for an advocate for pipelines and prosperity. They were looking for a positive vision under the United Conservatives.

4:20

From my own background in policing I have seen first-hand the struggles that many Albertans are facing with tougher economic times and higher rates of criminal activity. When I joined the Edmonton Police Service, I had an image of what the job was and what a day would be like. I went out on ride-alongs. I talked to senior members. I believed I had a grasp of what a day in the life of an officer was like, and in the end I was only partially right.

We certainly fight crime, arrest bad guys, investigate criminal allegations, but the majority of the job was mediation, listening, understanding where people were coming from and what had brought us together. The number of calls involving domestic violence and family fights: it's staggering, Mr. Speaker. These calls for help come in all day, every day, so I'm proud to see a government that is acting on implementing Clare's law.

Mr. Speaker, Clare's law will provide additional protections for women in the form of information and allow those who choose to seek the information the ability to make a more informed decision on their relationships. This is an additional tool that can be used to help prevent and lower the incidents of domestic violence. The commitment to increased funding for electronic monitoring is a great step forward to help victims. Being comfortable in your own home and community should not be a luxury. This will also be a tool that will allow police to react faster to those who are breaching their release conditions. There are so many incidents where this technology would have prevented revictimization as so many victims of domestic violence are taunted by their abusers in an effort to further control them and end their bid for justice and a peaceful future.

Equally important will be the saving the girl next door act. That will provide additional protections for victims of human trafficking. Having investigated this type of crime, the stories of violence, abuse, manipulation, and fear are heart-wrenching. The extent that

some people will go to to profit off another human being is deplorable, and that it still happens in our province and our country is tragic.

I will also advocate for a more responsive court system that will end needless delays and adjournments and a system that puts victims first and realizes the bravery of those who come to testify and face those they have accused of a crime. The commitment from the government to hire additional prosecutors will certainly help alleviate court delays and reduce the workload on prosecutors, allowing them to give more attention to their cases as they represent not only the victims but all of society in a court of law.

Another aspect of policing is the amount of time spent dealing with and trying to help those with mental health conditions. The stigma of having a mental health condition can still lead many to not seek help, and deteriorating mental health is a significant issue for those experiencing addiction, homelessness, suicidal thoughts, or else are struggling to find a place in daily society. This government has made commitments to support those with mental health conditions, including appointing an Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, and has laid out a mental health and addictions strategy. Reducing the stigma and increasing the support for those suffering from mental health conditions must be a priority. All of us in this Assembly will know someone with a mental health condition, and this must be a nonpartisan issue that we work on together.

Mr. Speaker, as I went door to door in Leduc-Beaumont, it was clear that not only was the economy a significant issue but that crime was also a concern, and I'm proud to be part of a governing caucus that will take these issues seriously and put forward legislation to help prevent people from becoming victims, a government that will put victims first and implement a rural crime strategy to help those who find themselves too often the only thing that stands between their family, their property, and a criminal.

Mr. Speaker, there is no public opinion poll that performs better than being in the community and going door to door asking residents what they're concerned about. The economy was the number one issue in the riding of Leduc-Beaumont. I heard calls for pipelines, support for the oil and gas sector, increased investment in the province, more job opportunities, and a need for a government that listened to people, a government that would listen to the concerns of the constituents of Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of the biggest questions Albertans asked themselves when they voted was which leader, which party, which candidate, and which vision could get the economy booming again. The constituents of Leduc-Beaumont believed in me and the United Conservatives' positive vision, and I will fight for them every day. As we move forward on legislation to reignite our economy, know that we are doing what we can to show the people of Alberta that we serve them, that we will fight to restore investor confidence, and that we'll bring back prosperity.

The riding of Leduc-Beaumont has a long and rich history in agriculture and oil and gas, and although this election the riding has changed to one that is nearly all urban, the connection that many residents have to the farming community runs deep through personal and family ties. One only needs to stop at the A&W in Leduc and you can speak to many current and former farmers, retirees, and those still working hard in the community. We call them the senators, and they know exactly what is top of mind for the riding that day, and conveniently they also know exactly what to do about it, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that these groups meet across the province every day.

The communities in the riding are strong. Both the cities of Leduc and Beaumont have a small-town feel to them, and a deep sense of commitment to the community is amazing to see. The number of

people who volunteer, fund raise for the community, and work to support one another is outstanding, and it inspires me. The constituency has achieved so much, yet there is potential for so much more. Collaboration and co-operation have increased in order to achieve common goals for mutual prosperity. I really do admire that the municipalities in and outside of the riding are partners, not adversaries, in attracting investment and meeting goals.

One example is the airport, which I was recently able to tour, that has achieved so much. The recent private-sector investment alone at the airport exceeds \$700 million, and the EIA generates over \$3 billion in economic activity every year from the movement of passengers, cargo, and local economic development. With a 24-hour airport, the QE II, rail lines, Nisku and Leduc industrial parks, and having a diversified and skilled workforce, this constituency is truly a part of the economic engine of Alberta, and when Leduc-Beaumont is doing well, Alberta is doing well.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I'll be proud to support Leduc, Beaumont, and Leduc county and be their representative in the Legislature to advocate for infrastructure projects, schools, investment, and to support legislation that will reignite our economy. I will unapologetically defend our resource development not only for the benefit of Leduc-Beaumont but for all Albertans.

In policing I have helped many people in a variety of ways, and I've never asked for thanks or acknowledgement of it. I just came in every day to work, I did my job, and I helped those who asked, many who called about a crime and many who called because they didn't know who else to turn to.

Ronald Reagan once said, "There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit." I'm not here for credit. I'm here to do a job to help the people of Alberta get to a more prosperous future by growing our economy, balancing the budget, growing job opportunities, supporting our oil and gas sector, and increasing the confidence of Albertans as a whole, Canadians, and those around the world who invest in our province. I'm here to serve the people of Alberta.

As I close, I'd like to thank the constituents of Leduc-Beaumont, for placing their trust in me, and the campaign volunteers, who worked so hard to make this a reality. I've always said that it may be my name on the ballot, but it'll be our win, and their support was amazing. Also, a big thanks to my entire family for their love and support throughout this whole process.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

The Chair: I would like to call the committee to order.

Bill 1 An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

The Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. It is my pleasure to rise and speak at Committee of the Whole to Bill 1, which we

should refer to as the Implementation of the Trudeau Carbon Tax Act on the People of Alberta.

Madam Chair, during debate on second reading of this bill I, of course, raised the fact that there is not a single Albertan in this province who will be happy with the bill as it stands. The people who voted in favour of maintaining the climate leadership plan and moving forward on action on climate change, of course, will be significantly disappointed with the nature of this bill. It marks a significant step backwards in tackling climate change, which is the most urgent crisis that humanity faces today.

4:30

But not only that, Madam Chair, not only are the people who are looking to the provincial government to provide leadership on tackling climate change going to be disappointed with this bill; the people who thought that the carbon tax was going to be repealed are also going to be disappointed. Of course, as you know, once we repeal our made-in-Alberta carbon tax, the very next day Justin Trudeau and his government will impose their made-in-Ottawa carbon tax on the people of Alberta.

Not only is the fact that we're scrapping a made-in-Alberta plan concerning to a lot of the constituents that I represent in Edmonton-Gold Bar; it's concerning to people all across the province. They don't really know what the impact of the federal carbon tax is going to be on the province of Alberta because the government has done no consultation on that.

You know, the Member for Calgary-Lougheed and the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre like to boast about the election victory as consultation. Certainly, it was a referendum on the carbon tax, and I will agree with the members for Calgary-Lougheed and Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre that the people of Alberta have rejected the idea of a carbon tax.

But what they haven't rejected, Madam Chair, is action on climate change. In fact, all of the programs that we funded with revenue from the carbon tax were incredibly popular. The energy efficiency programs – and I know that the members opposite like to mock the idea of free light bulbs and free shower heads and free thermostats. However, hundreds of thousands of people in Alberta signed up for the program, and we had to close it on virtually the very first day that we rolled it out because it was so popular.

The other programs that Energy Efficiency Alberta has implemented since that program came to a close include energy efficiency upgrades in homes, rebates for solar panels, a number of initiatives to help commercial enterprises and not-for-profit enterprises improve their energy efficiency. All of those were fully subscribed to, basically, on the day that they were rolled out. We're also funding a number of programs, like I said, that help municipalities to improve their renewable energy generation capacity and energy efficiency.

We're helping farmers improve their energy efficiency and helping them shift to renewable energy. We're helping school boards move to sources of renewable energy. Every single one of those programs that we introduced as a result of our climate leadership plan was oversubscribed on, basically, the day that they were announced.

You know, I think it's fair to say that the people of Alberta have rejected the idea of a carbon tax, but they haven't rejected the idea of taking action on climate change. When offered programs to help them take meaningful action on climate change in their own homes, Albertans will jump at the chance. Madam Chair, now that we are repealing the carbon tax and implementing the federal carbon tax in its place, all of the funding for those programs that have been incredibly popular is up in the air.

We know a little bit about what the federal program is going to be. It means that 90 per cent of the carbon tax revenue that's collected in the province of Alberta will be returned to the people of Alberta in the form of rebates, which, you know, we didn't think was a good idea. It's not fair for millionaires and billionaires to get rebates on the carbon taxes that they pay at the same rate that, you know, people making the now lower minimum wage get. That's grossly unfair. Also, 90 per cent of the money that was collected will go to the people of Alberta in the form of rebates, meaning that there's only 10 per cent left to fund all of these other programs, Madam Chair, that have been wildly popular with Albertans.

What's the plan, then? How are we going to take meaningful action on climate change if all of the money that's been collected to take action on climate change is being returned to the people of Alberta in the form of rebates? The members opposite like to state that when we were elected, we didn't mention a carbon tax. While technically true, of course, in our platform in 2015 we did say that we were going to take meaningful action to tackle climate change. In fact, that was one of the first actions that we took as a government: we appointed a panel on looking at climate change. That panel was headed by Andrew Leach, a popular whipping boy of the members opposite. I have to say that Mr. Leach is a constituent of mine, and I think the people here in this Chamber who like to attack him on Twitter and other means of social media should be ashamed of themselves for the way they treat somebody who so selflessly gives of his work and his time to create better public policy for all of the people of Canada. I really hope that Mr. Leach can expect to have better treatment from the members in this Chamber than he has had in the past. But that's an aside, Madam Chair.

I just want to refer to a part of the climate leadership panel's recommendation report to the minister on engagement. The members opposite like to say that we introduced the carbon tax without engaging with Albertans. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. I quote from the document itself. It's available online; the government hasn't yet taken down those websites. I'm sure they won't be up for much longer, but while it's still there, the document is available to all of the people of Alberta. It says under Public Engagement:

An online survey encouraged thousands of Albertans to participate in the climate change discussion. Over 25,000 responses were collected.

In addition:

The Panel also received 535 online submissions, including submissions from members of the public, industry, non-governmental organizations and academics.

They conducted technical engagement sessions.

The Panel held 10 sessions with approximately 350 stakeholders representing diverse perspectives across multiple sectors of Alberta's economy . . .

The Panel held meetings with Aboriginal peoples in Calgary, Edmonton and Fort McMurray.

In summary, we had an extensive program of consultation with every representative group in the province of Alberta, and that's what informed the recommendations that the climate leadership panel made to government in 2015. Now, contrast that with the consultation that the federal government has had with the people of Alberta on their carbon tax. They've conducted no consultation. So the federal government has no idea what kinds of energy efficiency initiatives the people of Alberta are looking for. They have no idea whether or not the rebate structure that they're offering is fair. They have no idea whether the plan to deal with heavy emitters is even compliant with the federal government's expectations. There are a whole host of things missing in repealing this carbon tax.

In the spirit of helping the members opposite do their job better – because we're not sent here by the people of Alberta to just oppose things blindly. We are here, Madam Chair, to help the government do a better job. In that spirit, I offer this amendment, which I would like to table at this time. I have an appropriate number of copies here.

4:40

The Chair: This will be referred to as amendment A1.

Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, please proceed.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is amendment A1. I move that Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, be amended by adding the following after section 1:

Consultation

- 1.1(1) On the coming into force of section 1, the Minister of Environment and Parks shall commence consultations with the public, industry and academic and scientific experts regarding the development of a comprehensive action plan for Alberta to address climate change.
- (2) Consultations under subsection (1) must be completed within nine months of the day on which they are commenced.

And then:

- (3) The minister shall make public a report summarizing the consultations conducted under this section within 120 days of the completion of consultations.

Madam Chair, I'd like to provide a little bit of reasoning as to why our caucus is putting forward this amendment. I alluded to it a little bit in my comments before I introduced the amendment. Essentially, the federal government has not consulted with the people of Alberta about their federal carbon tax, and I think it's fair to say that the government itself didn't really consult with the people of Alberta on whether or not they wanted the federal carbon tax. They promised them that they would repeal the carbon tax entirely. That's not what they're getting. What they're getting in its place is the federal carbon tax which is made for Alberta. I would appreciate it if any of the members here from the government caucus would actually, you know, have the courage and the convictions to actually admit that to the people of Alberta, that they're bringing in the federal carbon tax.

Regardless, the federal carbon tax as it's structured will have significant impacts on the health, the well-being, the lives, the economy, and the jobs of the people of Alberta, and I think we need to know what those impacts will be. We also need to know whether or not there is any flexibility within the federal program to adjust the structure of the federal carbon tax funds that will be returned to the province of Alberta. I think it's fair to say that, you know, given the popularity of the programs that I mentioned, we need to go back to the people of Alberta and determine whether or not they want to see these programs continue.

You know, it was very concerning to me in question period earlier this afternoon when I asked the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre about whether or not he would be continuing to fund solar energy programs for small-scale solar energy systems. I don't have the benefit of the Blues in front of me, but I think he said something along the lines of: solar energy is ridiculous. That is very concerning.

I received an e-mail just this afternoon, actually, from somebody named Ryan Peckover. Now, Ryan is a constituent of mine, and he says that he works

in the fast growing solar industry in Alberta.

Alberta is a great energy producing province so please don't stall the growth of this promising industry by ending the Alberta Solar Rebate program.

We risk losing a lot of jobs to Saskatchewan . . .

And Lord knows they need the jobs because their conservative government there is doing everything they can to put people out of work. But, of course, we don't need Albertans to lose jobs as well, Madam Chair, just to benefit the Premier's friends in Saskatchewan.

Jobs such as electricians, electrical engineers, sales and marketing, project management and administration job are at risk here.

You know, I recall the Member for Calgary-Bow, who was asked about what he would do to support the development of the trades in this province. It seems to me that throwing electricians out of work is really closing the door on the opportunities for apprentice electricians to get valuable work experience and become journeyman electricians and work in an area that's set to grow exponentially over the next few years. You know, it's really in line with the government's own professed mandate to provide jobs. They certainly campaigned on jobs. I would think that they would be interested in consulting with the people of Alberta about how they can continue to support the job growth in renewable energy in this province.

The timelines that we're proposing are incredibly generous, Madam Chair. We're proposing that the timelines for this consultation be concluded in nine months and that three months after the consultations are concluded, a report be made public summarizing the results of the consultations, which is far more time than our original climate leadership panel had. They were struck sometime in May 2015 and reported their findings on November 20, 2015, so that's six months. We're giving the members opposite an additional three months to conduct their work because this work needs to be done, and it needs to be done thoroughly in order to adequately reflect the wishes of the people of Alberta.

Madam Chair, we're offering the government here a chance to demonstrate to the people of Alberta that they are actually going to take action on climate change. We've certainly heard mixed messages from the members opposite as to whether or not they even believe that climate change is real, that it's human caused, and that we have a responsibility to act. However, the indications that we have gotten are that they do intend to take some form of action. Of course, it's not top of their priority list. You know, we do absolutely have to give wealthy corporations a big tax cut first, and we do absolutely have to cut the wages of 17-year-olds by \$2 an hour. Those are their top priorities. Then, after that, we have to get to desk thumping because that's been the scourge of the people of Alberta, holding them back from achieving economic prosperity, apparently. And then today, of course, we see that we're going to reduce red tape by creating a bunch of reports on how to reduce red tape.

The Chair: Hon. member, we're on an amendment, not government motions.

Mr. Schmidt: Yes. I'm speaking to the amendment, of course, Madam Chair. I'm just highlighting the opportunity to improve Bill 1.

If the government says that it's a priority to tackle climate change, here's an amendment that makes their very first act as government setting the priority of tackling climate change. So no longer will I have to go to my constituents and ask them why the government isn't prioritizing climate change when, in fact, if the government adopts this amendment, they can say, honestly and truly, that they are prioritizing action on climate change ahead of all of the other things that I was mentioning in my comments.

Madam Chair, I truly hope that the members opposite give this amendment consideration, that they begin to roll up their sleeves and get to work on consulting with the people of Alberta about what

future action on climate change they expect their government to take, because the people of Alberta deserve that. They have expressed, of course, with their dollars and their actions over the past two or three years that they are eager to do everything they can to curb their own emissions, improve their own energy efficiency, improve their own capacity to generate renewable energy, and I think this government owes it to them to come up with a plan to continue to take those meaningful actions.

Madam Chair, I appreciate the debate that we are going to have on this incredibly well-thought-out amendment.

The Chair: Are there any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

4:50

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you so much. I'm certainly happy to stand in support of this amendment. It's fundamental to our province that we consult with our citizens, the stakeholders, those involved in this industry, and I just want to talk about the tremendous progress that we made during our NDP government's time in office. Significant changes were made.

You know, just in my own riding, just in one part of Alberta, I can just tell you resoundingly that Albertans want to have support to be able to do energy efficiency projects and that, of course, the climate leadership plan, that the current UCP government is wanting to repeal, paid for Energy Efficiency Alberta, which funded so many transformational programs for Albertans. As I said, I'm the representative for Edmonton-Riverview, and just here in my own riding there's I think pretty transformational, significant work that is being done by a very broad range of people and organizations; for example, Food4Good.

Food4Good is a community food centre that works to alleviate food insecurity in the west end of Edmonton. The neighbourhoods surrounding the food centre site experience higher than average levels of food insecurity and poverty. In this area household incomes are 2.5 times less than the city averages. Residents depend on food charity resources 3.5 times more than the city averages, and compared to other Edmonton neighbourhoods, this area has higher rates of chronic disease and mental health issues. The community food centre provides nutrition and food sustainability information and training for community members. Besides all of this, they are working to retrofit their current space. They're using technology that assures climate resistance such as solar panels, water recovery systems, and indoor garden units for regular food production when other systems fail.

Food4Good, this small nonprofit organization located in my riding, is taking advantage of this funding, and they endeavour to produce a facility that is actually energy neutral, that follows the standards required for LEED, leadership in energy and environmental design, certified buildings. Following these standards will mean that the building has minimal greenhouse gas outputs. That's just one example, one small nonprofit that's doing tremendous good in my community. What are we going to say to them now? That they can't go ahead with these initiatives? That the funding for that will no longer be provided by this government? It's disturbing to me because, you know, I'm really proud of the work of this particular group.

Here's another example, St. Paul's United church. They know that climate change is a critical issue that's becoming increasingly urgent, so the St. Paul's United church community got together. They're passionate about taking action to be more sustainable, in alignment with all levels of government. At the time when they were working on this initiative back in 2017, the federal government, the provincial government, and the municipal

government all were working collaboratively. We know climate change is real – there's no question about that – and these advocates want to make a difference in their community.

This project that they worked on has grid-connected solar panels, and it will provide 100 per cent of the church's electricity demand. That's so great: 100 per cent. The energy produced in excess of church demand will supply renewable power to the broader community. This will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel electricity generation in Alberta and provide renewable energy into the grid at a highly visible installation on a large rooftop located on a high-traffic avenue. It's on 76th Avenue, if anybody knows Edmonton very well, sort of in the university area. If you drive by St. Paul's United church, you'll see that their whole roof is covered by solar panels to take advantage of the power of the sun.

They're very proud that it's going to promote awareness of alternative/renewable energy initiatives and their viability and, hopefully, inspire others to investigate if not pursue renewable energy possibilities. This project will reduce emissions by up to 18 tonnes of CO₂ per year. By installing on an existing steep-pitch, unobstructed, south-facing roof, this project will generate the maximum amount of energy, with no incremental land use and very minimal cost.

St. Paul's United church believes that the time is right to proceed with this project given the policy commitments of all levels of government. As I said, this was back in 2017, when all levels of government – federal, provincial, and municipal – knew that climate change was real and had initiatives to move forward on it. Now we're missing a very key player, the provincial government of Alberta. It's really shameful.

They said at that time that the time was right for their community because they had already undertaken many of the low-hanging fruit energy efficiency initiatives. This community really cares. They want to make a difference. They want to make sure that they're not using more energy than they need to. They had installed insulation and new windows. These projects have gone well, and they're ready to undertake a more significant and visible project that will have a larger impact and make a statement to our community and to environmental sustainability.

I'm just very grateful for these forward-thinking members of my constituency, St. Paul's United church. I've gone there many times. Really, they've sort of transformed the neighbourhood. Not only are they taking care of themselves, using very minimal energy, but they even have sometimes more that can go back to the grid, so they're supporting their community. Thank you so much, St. Paul's United church.

Also, I have 13 community leagues in my riding. Edmonton has a great community league system. For people outside of Edmonton, these are neighbourhoods that are sort of geographical areas where communities get together for soccer, social events, all sorts of different activities. One of them is Crestwood Community League, and they, too, of course, you know, are wanting to be responsible citizens and be leaders in their communities and make sure that they are responsible. Crestwood Community League is actually one of the oldest continuously operating community leagues in Edmonton, and they are focused very much on making sure that the community league is being responsible in terms of the environment.

They have sort of a two-part project. The first stage installs solar panels on the hall roof and provides half of the community league's electricity needs. The community league will generate half of its electrical energy from the sun, lessen the annual utility costs, reduce dependence on high-emission coal and gas fuels, and model a working solar system for Crestwood and the broader community.

The other major project objective is for the league to take a proactive leadership role in demonstrating to 1,000 homes within

Crestwood, where much infill housing is taking place – it's an older neighbourhood; my riding has many mature neighbourhoods, so there's a lot of infill taking place now; it's a great opportunity for energy-efficient homes to be built – that solar power is an affordable, effective source of energy which must be broadly adopted for the sake of future collective health and well-being.

This community league, the leadership in this area: they know, too, that climate change is real. We must do something. We must step up, and we must be responsible. As the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar said, you know, this is a crisis. This isn't something that we can forget about and not do anything about. We need to move on this. We know that Canada is warming two times faster than other countries, so it's a very serious issue. Again I just want to say that this is just in my own riding, so it's not an extensive look at all across this province, but it's so fundamental, just the leadership and things that people are doing across Alberta. I'm very proud of what is happening in my own community.

5:00

Many community members in Edmonton agree that immediate action is required to help curb global warming and reduce the human impact on the environment. However, for many citizens it seems like a daunting goal that should be left to professionals, scientists, and policy-makers.

Alberta GEN: that's at the University of Alberta, which is also in my riding. Many innovative projects are coming out of the university, of course, and this particular one, Alberta GEN, has developed Sun in a Box. It's a portable, off-grid solar power device integrated with a Raspberry Pi. These are some things that I don't even quite know what they mean, but it is an initiative that makes it easier for the average citizen to be able to be effective and do things to ensure that energy efficiency programs and using less energy are supported.

They have an education program that they take out to K to 12 schools. They educate kids, and of course we all know that the younger kids learn about things, the more they understand them, and then that generation can come and be responsible and know what's important to do. This Sun in a Box goes to K to 12 students and community members through educational engagement sessions across Edmonton in schools and community halls. The goal of this project is to bring the scale of the climate change challenge down to something that can really inspire, engage students and adults alike to see the magic of power generated by the sun. In addition, seeing the creation of presentations from university students helps exemplify the accessibility of solar and renewable power for all citizens.

It's just another important project that, you know, will likely be going away because this government is not taking climate change seriously. They're not stepping up, and in fact they're turning the clock back, and it's really too late for that. We need to move forward. You know, the United Nations says that we only have 12 more years if we don't do something now. Other levels of government know that it's very important for us to be moving on this, and the constituents of Edmonton-Riverview know that, too.

Another very important initiative – and that's why this consultation suggested in the amendment is so important – is Next Up, which is through the Parkland Institute, which is also at the University of Alberta. Next Up has climate programs that help to build a deeper and broader platform of support within Alberta for climate change action and policy so that Alberta can become an international leader in climate action. Specifically, this helps to build a stronger and more diverse network of climate leadership in the city of Edmonton and connect it to provincial climate action efforts. The Next Up leadership events include three-day climate

leadership intensive training courses for newcomers; a four-day climate leadership intensive training for mothers with children who are in grade 6 or below; one weekend, a retreat series; a climate connections event that will bring together participants from each of the proceeding events along with other groups and people in Edmonton who are already working on climate change efforts to discuss this project and collaboration possibilities which will enhance and increase climate action in Edmonton.

All of the programming described in these projects targets people who are not necessarily current climate leaders. It helps develop that and helps people be focused on climate change through developing climate literacy, leadership skills among these participants. Next Up will build a more diverse climate leadership network that will bring conversations about action on climate change into their communities and organizations. Visible climate leadership from outside the environmental sector is needed to shift the perception that climate change is solely an environmental issue and highlight the ways relevant action can be taken across the province in multiple sectors.

This is just another example in my riding of how important it is to be connected to our communities and know what is happening and what kind of leadership is already under way. Certainly, the support of the NDP government, while in office, was significant, and this created an opportunity for many of these groups to move forward with their projects.

I'll just share one more of these projects in my small, you know, community here in Edmonton, and again it's a community league. It's Windsor Park Community League. Windsor Park is a community right next to the University of Alberta. In 2018 the Windsor Park Community League Sustainability Committee – this is a community league that has a committee that's about sustainability because they see this as a key issue in our province, indeed in our country and in the world – launched a series of monthly education seminars on environmental stewardship and sustainability. Hoping to lead by example, they have now installed a solar system on the community league building, and they've also installed an electric vehicle charging station so that people with electric vehicles can come to the community league and actually charge them. That's also very innovative.

They are also working with Yellowhead Tribal Development Foundation, that had their community building serve as a training centre for the solar design course run for indigenous youth. Using a design developed by students in the course, this project allowed for further development of students' skills in solar installation. Students will receive further training and understanding of this important work.

These few examples just really, I think, illustrate how important it is that we make sure we know what is happening in our communities and how much innovative thinking is already going on. I'm sure that each one of you could find many projects in your communities that, you know, if you go ahead with repealing this bill, you will actually be cutting the funding for, because Energy Efficiency Alberta funds that, and of course that's through the climate leadership plan.

I'd like to talk a little bit more about just when I was the Seniors and Housing minister in the previous government. As is already clear, our government took climate change seriously. We know that when homes are older, they may not have well-fitting windows, they have poor insulation, they have roofs where they lose a lot of the heat through them. Sadly, much of the public housing that is managed through the housing management body system in Alberta is older buildings, so they need to be retrofitted. There's a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done. Of course, forward thinking, our government was committed to making sure

that the housing management bodies had the supports they needed to move forward with that. Energy Efficiency Alberta gave us the funding to do that through the climate leadership plan.

I just want to acknowledge that there are 103 – that number may change a little bit – housing management bodies across this province that do significant work to support vulnerable Albertans from every border of our province. I was so grateful to be the minister and work with them for the last four years and see the transformational work they did for families.

Of course, having facilities that are old, that are not energy efficient is costly. It costs a lot of money to heat them because, as I said earlier in my example of some of the issues, the heat is going out the roof, out the window, out the door.

5:10

The Chair: Are there any members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the amendment before us, an amendment to change the nature of how we consider the repealing the carbon tax bill before us, an amendment which will force us to really think seriously about what the consequences are of the government's intention to repeal the carbon tax, because the cancelling of the carbon levy is simply not a solution without consequences.

The government seems to have rather simplistic solutions in mind when it comes to their approach to climate change, and in fact it doesn't appear as though they believe it's a serious problem. We believe it is, of course, on this side of the House and that it's an urgent issue for our society and the globe. With the government caucus, it seems as though the only thing they plan to replace the carbon tax with is a large-emitters levy. But what indeed that levy might generate in terms of revenue and what it might be used for is an open question that I think needs to be examined in great detail, and that will be allowed under the amendment proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, by referring it to proper consultations and allowing the government the opportunity to develop, as the amendment states, "a comprehensive action plan for Alberta to address climate change."

Now, the Minister of Environments and Parks is the one who is anticipated, under this notice of amendment, under the amendment proposed, to commence consultations with the public, and I think that's most appropriate. He's been given nine months to enter into these contemplated consultations and then report within 120 days.

I think it's really, really important that on a day, today, as we are sitting on – what? – the 29th of May, a 31- or 32-degree day outside in Edmonton, when a large community in northern Alberta is under threat of fire, has been evacuated and others have followed and the bush in Alberta has been described by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry as a tinderbox, on a day in springtime as dry and potentially dangerous as this, we take the whole concept of climate change much more seriously than this government appears to be taking it.

The two new pieces of art that we have in this Legislature, *Sunrise and Sunset*, created by our world-renowned artist and proud Albertan Mr. Alex Janvier, remind us of the importance that we give to every moment we have in this House when we consider the important debate that we're having on a daily basis on issues of any type of matter.

But right now we're talking about an issue that is of global importance, and it doesn't seem as though the government is taking it seriously. That's why this amendment is really, truly important, that the Minister of Environments and Parks be asked to

"commence consultations with the public, industry and academic and scientific experts regarding the development of a comprehensive action plan for Alberta to address climate change." The solutions put forward to replace the climate leadership plan simply are not adequate, they're very much open to question as to what efficacy they might have, and the details are really short, to say the least.

On this side of the House we know that the Climate Leadership Act was a comprehensive piece of legislation. It is something that this former NDP government was rightfully proud of. It established a carbon levy on transportation and heating fuels in Alberta. It provided exemptions from application of the levy. It set out the requirements for exemption certificates and licences. It provided for consumer rebates and biomethane credits. It set out the rules for remittance and recovery of the carbon levy and assessment of the levy and enforcement. It set out carbon levy rates for fuels. It was a very comprehensive piece of legislation with regulations that went along with it as well, yet what we're looking at with this government is a very simplistic approach to the replacement of our Climate Leadership Act with simply a large emitters levy and, bada bing bada boom, that seems to be it.

An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax proposes to repeal the Climate Leadership Act, eliminating the Alberta carbon tax, effective 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, May 30, 2019; end the Alberta climate leadership adjustment rebate, the carbon levy rebates by amending the Alberta Personal Income Tax Act; allow fuel resellers, for example gas stations and bulk fuel dealers, 30 days to apply for a refund on the carbon levy they paid on the fuel they hold in inventory at the time the levy is eliminated; amend the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act and the Fuel Tax Act to remove references to the Climate Leadership Act and carbon levy; shorten the time period for applying for rebates and refunds from four to two years; ensure that the government has administrative mechanisms to enforce transitional values. All revenues collected by the carbon levy will no longer be required to be used for environmental climate-related projects or programs, which begs the question: what does the government intend to use these funds for? Will they be aimed at the purposes that they were first collected for, and that is to address climate change issues and help people redirect their efforts at reducing their carbon footprint?

The UCP claim their bill will produce a \$1.4 billion tax cut for Albertans. They claim it'll cut taxes for 725,000 Alberta families. They claim it'll create 6,000 jobs across the province, and it'll save small businesses about \$4,500 annually. However, those claims in reality fall far short from what will actually happen. We know this bill will deliver a huge tax cut for wealthy and high-income Albertans; eliminate the revenue stream to support renewable energy efficiency and rebate programs; threaten funding for critical transition and infrastructure projects, including Springbank, and \$400 million which was promised to the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton for transit projects beginning in 2027; and also cancel construction and climate leadership plan jobs.

In short, Madam Chair, this proposal is something that we need to really drill down on to determine serious consequences that will result in simplistically going after the climate leadership plan, eliminating the carbon tax without knowing full well what in the heck we're going to replace it with. Will this large emitters levy that we hear proposed come anywhere near the amount of revenue that the climate leadership plan carbon levy had generated or anticipated it would have generated had it been maintained by this government, or is it simply going to be a large emitters levy that falls short of the revenue necessary to do the things contemplated under the climate leadership plan that would allow Alberta to become a leader in

global terms to reduce the carbon footprint of our industrial society and be an example to the rest of the world as to how to advance ourselves towards a lower carbon footprint and a lower emissions world and economy that is the way of the world right now?

The global tendency, the trend, the gallop, actually, is towards a lower carbon footprint in the world. The opposition is concerned that this new government is being blind to the fact that the world is moving away from carbon. The transition is something that any government who aspires to be serious leaders of the population they were elected by must take seriously. They must actually take action to deal with the climate changes, and that means reducing our carbon footprint. Every jurisdiction has that responsibility.

5:20

Now, the new government is difficult to understand when they talk about climate change because they really don't seem to believe it's happening. The UCP's plan seems to be similar to what the former Progressive Conservative plan was with respect to animal health in the Klein era. That was to shoot, shovel, and shut up; in other words, simply forget it, pretend it's not happening, ignore the problem, and walk Alberta into a dead end for our environment, our economy, and our future. They're paving the way for Ottawa to bring in a federal carbon tax, and it seems to be a bit of a trend. It seems to me that the current Premier is a little bit Ottawa-centric in terms of how he wants to change some of the standing order rules of the House and adopt many of the things that Ottawa does practise in their Parliament to satisfy some of his pet peeves that he developed after visiting our Legislature and realizing that he thought we'd be better off if we adopted Ottawa-centric rules and played that way in the Legislature here in Alberta.

Well, Madam Chair, I think that we do better in Alberta when we play by rules that we make for our own House and our own backyard. Paving the way for Ottawa to bring in a federal carbon tax while risking the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is simply bad politics. It's bad policy, and it's not something that Albertans in the long term will benefit by. I think that the UCP government is going to find that Albertans will soon start to question what their policies really will do in terms of advancing the ability of Alberta to become a world leader in energy production, which is looking towards lowering its carbon footprint.

Now, instead of focusing on our transition to more renewable energy and natural gas, their plan is to bring back coal pollution and hurt Alberta's health. Instead of providing low- and middle-income earners in Alberta with \$536 million in rebates annually, they're going to proceed with another UCP-endorsed plan where only the rich benefit. That's another reason, Madam Chair, why this amendment to An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax to have the Minister of Environment and Parks commence consultations with public, industry, and academic and scientific experts to develop a comprehensive action plan for Alberta to address climate change is so important. Instead of funding critical projects like the Calgary green line or projects or programs that help Albertans renovate their homes, they're wasting money on high-priced lawyers for frivolous lawsuits. The Premier should do the right thing and have a real plan to lower emissions. I'm certainly not convinced that the large emitters levy on its own as a simplistic solution will do the job.

Now, in November 2015 the former government of Alberta under the NDP government introduced the climate leadership plan as a made-in-Alberta strategy to reduce carbon emissions while diversifying our economy, creating jobs, and protecting our health and environment. A made-in-Alberta plan is something that the provincial government currently in power seems to want to abrogate to the federal government and allow the federal government to come in and implement their own carbon price

because we have gone ahead and eliminated our plan. The climate leadership plan involved four main policies: implementation of a new price on greenhouse gas emissions, also known as carbon pricing, which is the way of the world; phase out pollution from coal-generated electricity by 2030 and generate 30 per cent of electricity from renewable resources by 2030; cap oil sands emissions at 100 megatonnes per year, something that the current Premier realizes and has stated publicly would be a cap that wouldn't be reached for a long, long time into the future; reduce methane emissions from upstream oil and gas production by 45 per cent from 2014 levels by 2025.

Alberta was on track to cut more than 50 megatonnes of emissions over the next 10 years, the same as taking 10.6 million cars off the road or nearly half the passenger vehicles in all of Canada. It's like eliminating the emissions of the metro Vancouver area three times over.

Jobs. The climate leadership plan has supported more than 7,300 jobs in the first two years, and thousands of jobs were still to come with construction starting on CLP projects and innovation initiatives getting off the ground. These are the jobs that the UCP will put in danger. That was their whole political platform – jobs, jobs, jobs – yet the first act of this government with their repealing the carbon tax is an act that's going to axe thousands of jobs that would have happened as a result of it.

Small-business tax cut: \$220 million to finance a 33 per cent small-business tax cut. That reduction would have saved business owners more than half a billion dollars over three years.

Transit. We'd have invested \$3 billion over 10 years for light rail transit in Calgary and Edmonton from this climate leadership plan, including \$1.53 billion for Calgary's green line and \$1.47 billion to support Edmonton transit, including the west valley line. The budget also included \$967 million over GreenTRIP and other commonly used transit investments.

Rebates. More than \$700 million was rebated to a majority, two-thirds, of Albertans to make their lives more affordable and to offset carbon levy costs.

Infrastructure projects like the Springbank off-stream reservoir would have been funded out of the plan.

Upgrades at schools, universities, hospitals, and colleges: \$40 million had been invested in schools, universities, and colleges for projects that cut emissions and save operating costs such as the U of A district energy heating project, which allows the university to own and operate its own thermal energy, cutting 60,000 tonnes of emissions.

Energy Efficiency Alberta programs launched in 2017 have yielded \$510 million dollars in energy savings, Madam Chair; \$710 million in economic growth; 4.2 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emission reductions, which is about the same as taking about 722,000 vehicles off the road for a year; \$13.5 million in energy-efficient projects installed; 12 million cubic metres of water savings. For every \$1 invested into EEA programs, \$3.30 returned to Albertans' pockets. For the economic geniuses across the way, that's an ROI of 3.3, so that's a pretty good return on investment which will not be seen because of the repealing of the carbon tax.

I think we need to take a look at all of those things a little deeper by having the Minister of Environment and Parks commence consultations with the public and find expert opinions, academic opinions, get the experts of industry to come together and say: "Look, this is the consequence of your repeal. This is what's going to happen as a result of your act to repeal the carbon tax and not replace it with something that genuinely helps Alberta foster a strategy that gets us towards a lower carbon footprint over time and transitions to a lower carbon economy. That is the way of the world right now."

Indigenous climate leadership. Our former Minister of Indigenous Relations, now the critic for Indigenous Relations, the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, went on at length to describe exactly how much the indigenous communities in Alberta will lose out, a total slap in the face, as a result of the repealing of the carbon tax, something that I think they would have a large interest in coming towards in consultation with the Minister of Environment and Parks to determine exactly what their compensation might be in the face of this government repeal. I'm sure they'll have a lot to say to the minister in consultation as a result of the loss of economic prosperity that they are going to feel because they've lost all the benefits of the climate leadership plan that this government has decided was not useful.

The indigenous climate leadership effort saw that more than 65 indigenous communities in Alberta benefited from 125 indigenous climate leadership initiative projects since 2017, a huge boost to their local economies and their way of life in keeping with their relationship with the land and their way of life and their ideologies and philosophies.

Solar power. There's a huge area of industrial growth in Alberta, thousands of jobs. This industry has grown by nearly 500 per cent. Installed solar capacity has increased from six megawatts in 2015 to 35 megawatts in 2018. About 3,100 solar installations have been completed. More than 300 certified companies have installed solar projects across the province. Albertans have conserved enough energy to power a city the size of Leduc.

Madam Chair, this government has talked all during the campaign about job creation . . .

5:30

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to my colleague the MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar for bringing forward this very common-sense and practical amendment. What it's asking for is to consult with experts, academia, and all those who are concerned to address climate change. As was mentioned, we do recognize that the government was elected on this platform that they will repeal the carbon tax, but I don't think that with that Albertans provided carte blanche to walk roughshod over their environment. They still expect a solid plan to address climate change. I will be speaking in favour of this amendment, and I will provide reasons for that.

First and foremost, this amendment is asking ministers to consult with the public, with industry, with academia, and with experts. It's important that we all have a vested interest in protecting our environment, our water, our air for ourselves and for coming generations. It's important that all those who have the knowledge, who have the expertise, and who have a vested interest in having a comprehensive action plan to address climate change be consulted and that they be at the table. It will increase participation from the public and from industry in the process instead of just accepting the backstop legislation that Ottawa has prepared. I think this amendment will make sure that the work gets under way right away to bring forward a plan to address climate change that takes into account the realities of our province, the realities of our industry, and the realities of our people here.

The second thing is that I think repealing the carbon tax has many implications. The reason this amendment is important is that just repealing the carbon tax will have an impact on our access to markets, on our access to the west coast, and on our pipelines and the future of those pipelines. We know that when TMX or line 3 were approved, among other things, Alberta's climate leadership

plan was one of the key contributing factors. In the absence of that plan, I think it's important that the Minister of Environment and Parks commence consultation and come forward with a plan that can ensure access for our industry and can ensure that our pipeline will still go ahead.

We know that previously, even before us, certainly, there were 44 years of Conservative regime here and 10 years of federal Conservative governments, and we didn't get any pipelines to tidewater. If we look through the case law around Energy East, one of the key reasons is that we always fell short on the environment and plans to address climate change. These consultations will make sure that we are prepared for dealing with climate change and that we are paving our way to get our products to market and paving our way to get pipelines approved.

Then, third, this amendment is important for economic reasons as well because repealing this carbon tax has a huge impact on our economy in many different ways. There is a solid economic argument that we should do as suggested by my colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar, that we should consult with the public and industry and all those who are concerned to come up with a climate plan. We know from literature, we know from scientific evidence, and there is enough economic evidence that climate change is one of the key factors that we need to consider for any sustainable economic growth. That work was recognized last year when the Nobel prize for economic sciences was given to William Nordhaus and Paul Romer. Essentially, both of these professors worked on the interplay of economy and climate and certainly proved that, among other things, climate change is one of the key natural constraints that our economy is facing.

If we pass this amendment and do the consultation as proposed, I think that will be an opportunity for us to identify and tackle those climate constraints on our economy and prepare Alberta's economy for the future, prepare an economy that is sustainable, that can sustain an education system for our youth, that can sustain our health care system, that can sustain social services that Albertans rely on and deserve. It's important from an economic standpoint as well that we pass this very practical amendment and get the work under way right away to address climate change in a way that we can account for climate constraints on our economy as well and prepare Alberta's economy for the 21st century.

Then, another thing, during this debate and during the campaign as well we heard from the Premier about how Ottawa needs to stay out of our business and how we need to take more control of our resources. I think that if we are merely repealing the carbon tax act, then Ottawa does come in and their legislation does apply. This amendment is important for that reason as well, Madam Chair. If we want to keep Ottawa out of our business and if we want to take more control of our resources, of our economy, I think it's imperative that we pass this amendment and, again, consult with the public, industry, academia, and all those who are concerned.

I think we were told before that this amendment is more relevant now because facts have changed since the election. A couple of important developments. One was the constitutional challenge that was brought forward by the Saskatchewan government. Their Court of Appeal decided against what the Saskatchewan government wanted and in favour of the constitutionality of that tax imposed by the federal government. The government of Saskatchewan was asking whether it's constitutional for the federal government to impose an economy-wide carbon price in those provinces where they don't have their own plan, and the answer was a resounding yes, so that avenue is almost closed for us as well. So if we want to take control of our resources, if we want to take control of our economy, I think it's absolutely necessary that we commence this

work, we commence this consultation, and we develop a plan that can address climate change.

5:40

Then, I think public opinion since the election has also shifted. There was an editorial in the *Edmonton Journal* which was essentially advising this government that maybe keeping the Alberta climate plan is not a bad idea. The reasoning for that was the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal decision, in that referenced case, upholding the government of Canada's right to impose a federal carbon tax. In light of those realities even the editorial board of the *Edmonton Journal* thinks that leaving this climate leadership plan is a good thing. While we are not asking in this amendment to do that, what this amendment is asking to do is that we need to replace it with something that works for Alberta. We need to replace it so that it addresses climate change, and we need to replace it with a plan that can help us promote our products, that can help us transport our products, that can help us get ready for an economy that is alive to the environmental constraints.

Then, lastly, I think that under the climate leadership plan there were many major projects. In Calgary there were infrastructure projects, transit projects, and then there were many small projects everywhere across this province, in First Nation communities. The impact of those projects is that, actually, there is data to show that we were able to reduce emissions, we were able to address climate change. In the plan that we brought forward, that was working. Again, we are not asking to keep that one here. All we are asking is that in order to take control of our economy, in order to take control of our resources, it's absolutely necessary that we all consider this amendment in all due seriousness because this amendment can set us on a path to developing a climate plan that will help us build a pipeline, that will help us build the economy.

Based on all of these reasons, I think it's important that all of us rise above and beyond party lines and consider this amendment in the best interests of the future of our province, in the best interests of our economy, in the best interests of our coming generations because one thing is for sure: we cannot ignore climate change. I think we can all agree that climate change is real. I don't think that the other side is denying it. But not doing anything about it, I think, does give rise to questions of whether they're serious about climate action or not.

The timelines set out in this amendment are also very reasonable timelines. This gives the minister almost one year to do that work. At least if this amendment is embedded in legislation, Albertans will have a clear signal. They will have a clear message that this government takes the environment seriously and that they do have a time frame that is set in the legislation and that soon after passing this bill there will be work under way, there will be consultations.

It will also send the right signal to industry as well, to the investors as well. We do know that in Alberta our industry is very capital intensive. We compete for dollars not just in Alberta but in capital markets across Canada and across North America. So they also need to hear that the government here in Alberta is serious about climate change and has a plan, at least some timelines, to address climate change.

Also, when we look at this amendment from the standpoint of industry, we do know that in an international market when we are competing for clients and competing to sell our products, among many other things, the thing that is considered is the carbon intensity of our barrel. Under our climate leadership plan there were a number of things that were put in place that helped us reduce emissions, that helped us reduce the carbon intensity of our barrel, and that put us in a position where we were able to compete in California and in North American markets.

Again, while it's unfortunate that they're repealing the climate leadership plan, at least this amendment is the right thing to do in that it will clarify their position. It will send a good, clear message. It will set out a clear timeline. I think it's important that we have that because climate change is real, and sooner or later we have to take action. I think the choice we have as a government, as a society is that we take action, show leadership, or we will just get dragged along and there will be, I guess, consequences that we can avoid by having a good, thoughtful plan through the consultations.

I urge all the members of this House, all my colleagues, to vote in favour of this very common-sense and practical amendment. Thank you so much.

The Chair: Are there any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you. I appreciate that. I won't speak for very long. I just wanted to take a few moments to take this opportunity to speak to this amendment and to urge my colleagues on the other side to seriously consider it.

I spoke to this bill a couple of days ago, and I really wanted to highlight that I agree that we have to accept the outcome that this issue of repealing the carbon tax was an election issue. The members on the opposite side had a clear mandate on that, to repeal the carbon tax. I want to reiterate that none of us will be surprised that that is what happens. That was an election campaign promise that you had made, and I believe Albertans generally, although not in every riding, did resoundingly make a decision on that.

However, I want to reiterate the comments of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar in introducing this amendment, which I think is very thoughtful, which is that, yes, while Albertans did perhaps vote in favour of repealing the carbon tax, they did not vote in favour of doing nothing on climate change. I can tell you from personal experience during the campaign, as I was out speaking to the voters in my riding, that even those who had, you know, concerns and even were in favour of repealing the carbon tax repeatedly said: "We do need to take action. We want to see something on climate change. We need to see a plan."

Tied up with that very closely is the issue of diversification. What the voters in my riding were repeatedly saying is that it is important that we diversify the economy. The climate leadership plan was one way in which the NDP government was doing that.

I urge you on the other side to take that bold step forward and say – of course, keep your election promise. You had an election promise. You've got resounding support, generally, from Albertans on that issue, but that doesn't mean you have to take no action on climate change. There is an opportunity here. This is a very reasonable amendment. It is not a partisan amendment. It's meant to actually continue the conversation on climate change. I think this is a great opportunity for the members on the other side to keep their election promise but to also take action and take leadership on climate change and to show Albertans that we are moving forward and that you do have a vision for this province that includes addressing climate change and being a leader on climate change.

5:50

I just wanted to speak to that and say please. I know we are in a divided House. We're coming off of an election, and it's easy to fall back into our partisanship ways. But I'd really like to encourage you to strongly consider this. This is a way for the members on the opposite side to really show some bold leadership, not just sticking

to short-term goals but looking to a long-term vision for this province.

I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar for bringing forward this amendment. I think it's very thoughtful, very reasonable. I think Albertans would very much appreciate that all members in this House deeply consider it and look at it as an opportunity to bridge some of the divide that happened over the election and to talk about keeping promises but also moving forward. So I really urge you to consider this amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any other members on amendment A1?

The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Chair. Seeing the time, I would like to move that we rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 1. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed? So ordered.

The hon. deputy government whip.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Seeing as we are close to 6 p.m., I move that we call it 6 o'clock and adjourn until 7:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:54 p.m.]

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