



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday evening, 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

Aheer, Hon. Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UCP)
Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UCP)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UCP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP),
Official Opposition House Leader
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP),
Official Opposition Whip
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),
Government Whip
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
Fir, Hon. Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UCP)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UCP)
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
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),
Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Issik, Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UCP)
Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UCP)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UCP),
Premier
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UCP)
Loewen, Todd, Central Peace-Notley (UCP)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UCP)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, Edmonton-South West (UCP)
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader

Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UCP)
Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)
Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UCP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
(UCP), Government House Leader
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
Leader of the Official Opposition
Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UCP)
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UCP)
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UCP)
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)
Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)
Savage, Hon. Sonya, Calgary-North West (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, Calgary-North East (UCP)
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP),
Deputy Government Whip
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, Calgary-Shaw (UCP)
Schweitzer, Hon. Doug, Calgary-Elbow (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, Calgary-Acadia (UCP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UCP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Toews, Hon. Travis, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Shannon Dean, Clerk
Stephanie LeBlanc, Acting Law Clerk
and Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Trafton Koenig, Parliamentary Counsel

Philip Massolin, Manager of Research and
Committee Services
Nancy Robert, Research Officer
Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of
Alberta Hansard

Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms
Chris Caughell, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Tom Bell, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Paul Link, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Council

Jason Kenney	Premier, President of Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Relations
Leela Aheer	Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women
Jason Copping	Minister of Labour and Immigration
Devin Dreesen	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Tanya Fir	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism
Nate Glubish	Minister of Service Alberta
Grant Hunter	Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction
Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Education
Jason Luan	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Kaycee Madu	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Ric McIver	Minister of Transportation
Dale Nally	Associate Minister of Natural Gas
Demetrios Nicolaides	Minister of Advanced Education
Jason Nixon	Minister of Environment and Parks
Prasad Panda	Minister of Infrastructure
Josephine Pon	Minister of Seniors and Housing
Sonya Savage	Minister of Energy
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Community and Social Services
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Children's Services
Doug Schweitzer	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Tyler Shandro	Minister of Health
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

Parliamentary Secretary

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

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Gotfried
Deputy Chair: Mr. Orr

Allard
Eggen
Getson
Glasgo
Irwin
Jones
Nielsen

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. van Dijken
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

Allard
Barnes
Bilous
Dach
Dang
Gray
Horner
Issik
Jones
Reid
Rowswell
Stephan
Toor

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goodridge
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

Amery
Carson
Ganley
Glasgo
Guthrie
Irwin
Long
Neudorf
Nixon, Jeremy
Pancholi
Rutherford
Walker
Yao

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Ellis
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

Goodridge
Gray
Lovely
Nixon, Jeremy
Rutherford
Schmidt
Shepherd
Sigurdson, R.J.
Sweet

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Cooper
Deputy Chair: Mr. Ellis

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Dang
Deol
Goehring
Goodridge
Gotfried
Long
Sweet
Williams

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Ellis
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

Gotfried
Horner
Irwin
Neudorf
Nielsen
Nixon, Jeremy
Pancholi
Sigurdson, L.
Sigurdson, R.J.
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Smith
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

Carson
Deol
Ganley
Horner
Issik
Jones
Loyola
Neudorf
Rehn
Reid
Renaud
Turton
Yao

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Ms Phillips
Deputy Chair: Mr. Gotfried

Amery
Barnes
Dach
Feehan
Guthrie
Hoffman
Renaud
Rosin
Rowswell
Stephan
Toor
Turton
Walker

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Hanson
Deputy Chair: Member Ceci

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

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Statement by the Speaker

Table Officer Janet Schwegel

The Speaker: Hon. members, before we begin with the regular business of this evening, I'd like to just take a moment to recognize Janet Schwegel, who is seated at the table for the very first time this evening. I ask that we would all extend a little bit of patience and grace to the table, not that we'll need it because Janet holds a master of linguistics from the University of Alberta. She is multilingual, a self-published author, an avid cyclist. Early in her career Janet owned and managed a graphic design business, and she also taught English and communications courses at a postsecondary level. Janet joined the Legislative Assembly Office in 2003 as an editor with *Hansard*. She became the managing editor of *Hansard* in 2013, and since 2016 she's also been the manager of venue services. Basically, she knows every word that has ever been said inside the Legislative Assembly, so consider yourself warned. Please join me in welcoming Janet to the table.

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

52.011(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 29: Ms Notley]

The Speaker: Is there anyone wishing to speak to Government Motion 11, amendment A2?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A2 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 7:32 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Dang	Goehring	Nielsen
Deol	Gray	Renaud
Eggen	Irwin	Shepherd
Feehan	Loyola	

Against the motion:

Allard	LaGrange	Reid
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Loewen	Schweitzer
Copping	Long	Shandro
Ellis	Milliken	Toews
Getson	Nally	Toor
Glubish	Nicolaides	Turton
Goodridge	Nixon, Jason	van Dijken
Gotfried	Nixon, Jeremy	Williams
Guthrie	Orr	Yao
Issik	Panda	Yaseen
Jones	Pon	

Totals:	For – 11	Against – 32
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[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Speaker: Are there any others wishing to speak to Government Motion 11? I see the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka rising on debate.

7:50

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it. I rise to speak to Government Motion 11 with reference to the standing orders of the Legislature of Alberta for the next while here. It's definitely a long motion, and there's been considerable discussion with regard to the various points and where it will lead us.

In response to some of that discussion, I would like to propose an amendment. I move that Government Motion 11 be amended in part A in section 2, (a) by striking out clause (a), and (b) by striking out clause (b) and substituting the following:

- (b) by striking out suborder (3) and substituting the following:
 - (3) When Introduction of Guests is called, brief introductions may be made by the Speaker of groups of schoolchildren and, at the discretion of the Speaker, of other visitors in the galleries.

I have the original copy and enough copies for the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, the amendment will be referred to as A3.

The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka has 13 minutes and 52 seconds remaining if he would like to provide any additional comments. If not – he would.

Mr. Orr: Well, just to keep it very brief, I think in the interests of a positive atmosphere in the House, we all have contributed to the

discussion. I think it's a motion that I would encourage all members to support.

I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to speak to amendment A3?

Hon. Members: We haven't gotten it yet.

The Speaker: I'm happy to wait until you have one.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I appreciate the sentiment and, you know, the willingness to adjust this, you saw today that we had the Member for Edmonton-North West send out an e-mail just talking about the importance of being able to introduce guests as a member.

Obviously, I'm a brand new member, but I've had the opportunity now twice to introduce guests. Particularly today it was a very important thing for me. I got to introduce my mother and her husband and a good friend of mine who is battling cancer. You know, it's such a special thing, and I know the first time I was introduced years ago with a group – I think we forget how much of a privilege it is to be in this House, to sit in this House. I know I'm still star-struck and reminded of it every day, but I think that probably as you've sat in the House longer, you kind of forget that.

Mr. Eggen: You don't forget.

Member Irwin: You don't. There you go. So for people who get to come into this Legislature and have that opportunity of being introduced, it's a big deal. You know, I talked about the person I introduced today, Jessica. I talked to her afterwards, gave her a hug, got a photo, and she's just so honoured to have been introduced by me, her MLA, and now to have been entered into *Hansard* as part of this institution.

So I would urge my fellow members across the way to think about that. I also recognize that there are number of my fellow colleagues who have not yet had a chance to introduce someone, and I think you probably want to be able to introduce your parents, your family, whatever it may be. Please, please think about that personal element.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available if you have questions or comments.

Any others wishing to speak to amendment A3? The Member for Edmonton-North West is rising.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. I don't want to belabour the point, but as I had mentioned this afternoon, when I was very honoured to have my oldest daughter and my wife here on the occasion of my 10th anniversary in the House, it gives you a chance to see some of the humanity that people bring into the Legislature. By seeing those things and meaningfully interacting with those things, I believe that while we may not be, you know, creating lifelong friends and so forth, but it creates that sense of humanity and camaraderie that can help to make debates better in the House.

It's amazing to be introduced, and I'm sure that there are ways by which we can tighten it up – I know that I've seen over the last 10 years that people will sometimes use introductions and make great big long introductions and turn them into members' statements – if we made some practical rules around that. But the Speaker can do that – right? – from the chair, and we can keep it

tight around what people say and keeping to a strict time limit. That's probably the best way to do it.

I really do appreciate this amendment, actually. I can say on a personal level that I can see some sign of movement, and I want to encourage that kind of thing because, of course, if we can create opportunities to have a discussion – I sent out word today for people to just think about this and other things. Lo and behold, people have been thinking about it, so I'm really quite pleased by that. But I just feel that this doesn't quite catch what the essence and the importance of an introduction is, so I still have my reservations about it.

Indeed, it does have sort of a veto power by the Speaker to not allow an introduction at all. If I'm reading this correctly – if I can just ask the member if he can just look at me and shake his head – it's the Speaker that's doing the introductions still, right? Yeah. Yeah. I mean, again, you bring people up from High Level or something, and they come all the way down here and their MLA introduces them and it's an important moment. I would like to stick to the spirit of that, the essence of that, and while I appreciate the government and the hon. member for moving on the introduction concept, I just feel like this doesn't quite cut it for me.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to speak to amendment A3? The Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those of you that don't know, that are maybe new in this Chamber, one of the things that is actually quite special, particularly if you don't have a portfolio so you're in the backbench, is that you do get to speak and introduce people that are important to you or constituents, and you can actually get the introduction, the *Hansard* on a lovely scroll to send to people. It creates a memory for them to have been introduced by their MLA. It maybe doesn't sound like a big deal, but it actually is.

All due respect, Mr. Speaker, but I think that when I write something to introduce someone, whether it's a family member or a constituent, I'd like to use my own voice in this place to say the words that I write. I think it's important. I think that all too often in this place we don't get to say the things we want to say. We don't get to speak to the people that we want to speak to, and this is one small way for people that is fairly nonpartisan – I have seen some odd introductions, I'll be honest, some long ones – but I think that what it does is that it allows you as a representative of your community to stand up and to highlight, whether it's a group or a person or a family member, and it actually is special.

So I agree with my colleague that perhaps suggesting time limits would be good. I would certainly be okay with that. But I think it's important that we able to speak ourselves, to be heard ourselves, and to not have somebody speak the words that we write about people. I think it's incredibly personal to introduce someone and to talk a little bit about them, a little tiny bit about them. I think that is important. I think if this is about strengthening democracy, I would suggest that it's about having a voice and empowering people to have a voice in this place.

I would ask that you reconsider this. It is one small thing, but I think it's a fairly important thing. Thank you.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for anyone that would like to ask questions or comments of the Member for St. Albert.

Seeing none, are there others that would like to speak to A3? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore is rising.

8:00

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't make this very long. I have to agree with everything that has been said here thus far. The chance to introduce an individual in this House is a very, very special moment. I know that of all my colleagues here, with the exception of three, from the last Legislature – you know, I had a bit of a reputation: it was odd when I didn't have a guest to introduce. There were probably even a few members opposite from the last that would remember that as well.

You know, getting the opportunity to introduce someone who is 103 years old and has never visited the Legislature before: for her and her family, that was a memory, I heard from the family, that they will never ever forget. While I appreciate the amendment, I believe that there are other avenues that we can pursue, probably around timing of introductions. We did that much in the last Legislature, when Speaker Wanner really tried to get us to maybe keep our introductions to about 30 seconds. I would certainly hope that members in the House will give this some very serious consideration. Unfortunately, I cannot find myself supporting this at this time.

The Speaker: Any members under 29(2)(a) that have questions or comments?

I see finally the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, who has been trying to rise and bring his remarks to this important debate.

Mr. Feehan: Always just waiting my turn, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I just wanted to take a few moments to speak to this amendment. I feel like this is an attempt by the government to recover from an error, and it really is an inadequate attempt. The underlying error, of course, needs to be addressed in order for us to be able to speak about this amendment, so I'll begin by speaking a little bit about the underlying error.

The issue here is that it's been a long tradition here in the House for us to have an opportunity to represent our constituents by bringing them to the House and introducing them to all the members here, giving them an opportunity to see their government at work, giving them an opportunity to meet the people who they have elected in order to represent their views in the House. This is a personal relationship, as we all know. Many of us have arrived here in the House because we have built strong relationships in the community, and those community members feel a very intimate tie to us here in the House. That's why they would take the time out of their day to arrive here to spend time listening to people debate, sometimes on topics that are not exactly stimulating, although sometimes the debate can be interesting and stimulating, and I hope to make it so in a few minutes. I think it's very important that we honour that relationship with our constituents by actually speaking to them.

I notice that in the replies to the Speech from the Throne, that have been going on for the last little while, a number of members have taken the opportunity to thank their constituents for electing them and putting them in this place where they can speak to these particular issues. I notice that many people also speak to their families, as I did when I did my maiden speech, thanking perhaps our grandparents but almost assuredly our parents and our spouses and our children for the incredible support that they have given to us to be here. It would be absurd for us to say: "Well, why doesn't the Speaker just thank all the families? Why doesn't the Speaker just thank all the constituents that got us elected? Then we can save all that time that's being used up in the replies to the Speech from the Throne." Nobody would think to do that, because what is it about? It's about an individual speaking to their personal relationship with the people that brought them here.

Again, the government has decided that the people of Alberta do not matter as individuals, that they do not matter as people with whom we have unique and specific relationships, and that, as such, we can turn it into an administrative function. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that you would introduce them well. You're a clever Speaker, you're humorous, but it would not be the same as we ourselves making that introduction from a human relationship point of view.

So here I am, finding myself again expressing my disappointment at the government's attempt to separate us here in the House from the people that we need to represent by denying the nature of the relationship between us and the people that we represent.

I have to ask myself a little bit about why this amendment and the underlying motion itself would even be brought into this House, and I am fearful. I'm fearful – and perhaps one would call me cynical – because I think that the decision by government to bring this into the House was in and of itself a cynical move. I think the attempt to kind of meet us halfway in this particular change to the motion is, again, a cynical attempt to try to look like they're doing the right thing when they're not. The reason why I think it's cynical is because there is a very particular phenomenon here in this House, and that is that in the election the vast majority of the Edmonton people were elected to one party, and the government is only represented by one member here in this House.

We know that people who come to the Legislature are more likely to be people who live close by, who are in proximity, who find it easy to arrive here, and that cynical part of myself, which I'm sure you've experienced on more than one occasion, sees this as a relitigation of the election, as simply a decision: "How do we take the voice away from the opposition? How do we prevent the opposition from having an advantage in the House by being able to have more introductions by virtue of people living closer by?" As a result, it's actually an attack on our democratic ability to represent our constituents in this House merely because we might be perceived to have a slight advantage in this one particular case. Not that opposition has advantages very often in the House, but every once in a while some small thing creeps in, and that's what's happened in this case.

They did not take a look at the question that they say they took a look at; that is: does it change the decorum in the House? It doesn't. The decorum is uplifted by the presence of the very people who elect us. In fact, the issue is not about decorum at all. It's about suppressing the voice of the opposition and suppressing their opportunity to have a chance to introduce people and to help people feel connected to the Legislature. As a result, I feel this amendment is inadequate because it does not address the underlying problem here, the underlying problem being that this is not about decorum. This is about suppressing the voice of people who disagree with the government.

When we get a chance to talk about some of the other aspects of these standing order changes, I will address how this has been duplicated in a number of other areas. Right now I think we need to reject this amendment, and underneath that, we need to reject the whole approach of the government because it is intrinsically antidemocratic.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there questions and comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there others who wish to speak to the amendment?

[Motion on amendment A3 carried]

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to speak to Government Motion 11? I see the Member for Edmonton-North West rising.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the spirit of amendments and perhaps consensus, I too have a modest proposal here in the form of an amendment that I would like to distribute. If I could have some assistance with that, please.

8:10

The Speaker: Hon. member, if you just give us about two minutes to get the table ready to roll, and then I'll ask you to proceed once we have that.

Hon. members, the amendment will now be referred to as A4.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West has the call.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you can see, the amendment reads that I would move that Government Motion 11 be amended in part A, in section 10, by striking out the part that says: "or the Assembly is adjourned for want of quorum." The reason that I had cast a light on this section of the motion is that it's talking about the House having quorum and the government providing quorum. I think that on a categorical level it's very important to have that as an aspect of governance in a Westminster parliamentary democracy. The idea of quorum, of course, is a reflection of the representative government that this House does symbolize and the representation to the entire population of the province.

By setting and establishing quorum, it ensures that we are adhering to the idea that this is a representative Assembly, and that authority vested in us to make laws is symbolized by quorum. We use that not just in a Westminster system, but you use that for meetings and different structures and rules – let's say, Robert's rules for meetings and so forth – for a reason, right? You have to have a critical mass of representatives in order to make a decision that reflects the authority of that place.

Motion 11, the part that talks about quorum and then losing things off the Order Paper if a quorum is not represented in the House: I think that is a mistake. Again, you know, we talked about it. We've heard from a number of members here over the last couple of days that standing orders are a way to ensure and enshrine the authority vested in private members through the parliamentary democracy system. The Member for St. Albert is here to represent that city, and we need to make sure that all of those other places are represented, too, in a symbolic, representative form. If you change the value of quorum, you're changing the value of what it means to make decisions in this representative Assembly.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

My argument doesn't go very much past that, but I think it's a pretty darn strong argument. It really looks at you sitting in those chairs and that authority vested in you as a private member to represent those tens of thousands of people that you have. If quorum is not achieved, again, it's because if that person is not there or if some of the general people are not there, then you need to back off from that particular law or whatever you're debating and reassemble and start again, basically. It's as simple as that. I hope that everybody understands that argument clearly.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), are there any members with questions or comments?

Seeing none, other members wishing to speak on Government Motion 11, amendment A4? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure a lot of you have been on boards before, whether as a volunteer or as a designated board member. I certainly have. I've worked with a board. I've been on more boards than I can probably count. Having quorum was very important. If we didn't achieve that core number, we didn't proceed with certain work. There was a reason for that. It was about representation. I think that the job that we have here is about representation. It's about being here, and it's having a critical mass of the number of people here.

You know, I would actually support this amendment, and I thank the member for introducing it. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) are there any members with questions or comments?

Any other members wishing to speak?

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Any members wishing to speak on Government Motion 11? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak a little bit more about Motion 11 on the standing orders. I want to spend a little bit more time talking about the underlying cynicism of all of these standing order changes because I think they're intrinsically antidemocratic. I know they'll pass – it's the nature of the House here – but I think it'll be important that we put on the record my concerns that the intentions here are not honourable in the way that I wish they were.

[The Speaker in the chair]

If we look at the number of motions that are here, I think the underlying theme between these motions is to suppress the voice of the House. Now, we were all elected here, into this Legislature, to represent people and to speak on their behalf in this House. When decisions are made in this Chamber, it is supposed to be a reflection of the House, not simply a reflection of decisions being made by a small group of government cabinet members, executive members, sitting alone and then implementing or executing their decisions. It is supposed to be an opportunity for all of the representatives, regardless of the party to which they were elected, to speak to the issues that are important to citizens in the province of Alberta.

As I look through some of the motions that are put forward, as I mentioned, for example the inability now to speak to and address the very citizens who have elected us to this House, I see nothing but a cynical attempt to suppress what might be perceived to be an advantage to an Edmonton-based party, who would have more people to address. That's very disconcerting.

8:20

I also find that same cynical attitude underlying a number of the other decisions that are being made in this list of standing order changes, and I'd like to spend a moment to address a few of them.

For example, if we look at the amendment of Standing Order 3, in which the government can merely make a decision the day before whether or not we are to sit the next morning, I see an attempt to provide a political advantage to the government side of the House over the opposition side of the House because, of course, the opposition can only wait and find out at the last minute that the House is cancelled the next day, therefore being completely unable to set appointments with constituency members, being unable to organize and prepare to do the business of this House, being unable to represent the very people that we want to in those functions that we engage in outside of this House. That is not something that needs

to happen on the government side. They can be well aware of when they are going to cancel morning sittings. They can set appointments, they can meet with constituents because they know that is coming. Here again we have an antidemocratic motion that is just attempting to take power and voice away from people who did not elect this government. It's a punishment for people who do not agree with this government. It's an attempt to tell them that if they do not vote for this government, their voice will be suppressed and be removed from the House at every possible turn. I think that that is very disconcerting.

As I go through some of the other motions, I think I can find other examples of when these things become cynical. I think, for example, of the motion that directs us to refrain from pounding the table, or, as it's indicated here in section 4, "No Member shall disrupt the orderly conduct of the proceedings of the Assembly by loudly or repeatedly banging on a desk." This is again an attempt to stop something that right now is only happening by the opposition members because we respect, of course, the traditions of this House, as we do, for example, respect the person sitting in the chair, the Speaker. Now those traditions are up for question. No longer do we have to respect the traditions of this House if the government decides they do not want to respect the traditions of this House. That's a very dangerous step to take.

There are reasons why these traditions have been developed over a hundred years or more in the Westminster parliamentary system. One of the things that pounding the desk allows us to do is that it allows us to express our voice. Typically, when one is pounding the desk, you're expressing your voice in a positive, in a relational manner. Again, here I'm finding the government wanting to suppress our voice and to deny the nature of the relationship we have, in this case, with other members of the House, where we cannot congratulate them on their speaking, we cannot congratulate people who have come to visit us, we cannot be supportive of each other because they happen to have a different habit on the other side.

What we've learned from this one is that if you're on the government side, your every whim is now going to become rule and law. Any time your voice is different, you have a different thought, a different way of approaching a problem on the opposition side, they will seek ways to legislatively restrict your ability to act in the way that you'd like to act, the government trying to control our voices, our bodies, and our way of being, something I find very discouraging but also fairly consistent through their philosophy.

If I go through a little bit more in some of the other motions that are here, I'm very concerned to see that they are suggesting that you cannot change sides of the floor. If you're elected for one party and you are making a decision that in order to represent your constituents, you want to cross the floor – now, I think that this is again a very dangerous precedent. It's breaking the tradition of the Westminster parliamentary system on the mere whim of a government who just does not want to hear any other voice except their own. I think that that's a problem, and I think it's particularly hypocritical from a government that would not even exist had that rule been in place in the last Legislature. Every single member of the UCP in the last Legislature left their party, whether it be the Wildrose Party or the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta, and crossed the floor to join the UCP.

So what we have is not only a government that is trying to suppress our voice but is trying to actually take advantage of a rule, do it for themselves and then deny that possibility to anybody else. I think that's an incredibly dangerous road to run down, this idea that: we can do things, but as soon as we have taken advantage of them for our own purposes to unite this party so that we can win the next election, we're going to deny that possibility for any future

opposition to be able to do that. That concerns me deeply, that this is the tone that the government is taking, that they are somehow above the rules because now they can take the ladder which they climbed up and haul it up so that nobody else can climb up behind them. I think that's completely unacceptable.

I want to remind the Speaker that some of the most noble members of parliamentary democracy have crossed the floor. Winston Churchill is quite famous not only for crossing the floor once, at which he was called a rat, but for crossing the floor back again later on. He quite rightly said that it is one thing to be a rat but another thing again to re-rat. When I think about that, I think about this motion here in the House. I can see that there is indeed a rat in these motions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Well, I just hesitate to interrupt, if only briefly, as you have another five minutes and 45 seconds. While I appreciate your comments and encourage you to make them, I might just remind you that we are presently speaking to Government Motion 11, and I believe it's Government Motion 10 that is more specific to the particular debate that you are referring to with respect to caucus affiliation. Having said that, if you can tie the two together, I'm more than happy for you to make this relevant to Government Motion 11.

Mr. Feehan: I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that.

I'm merely trying to point out that there is an underlying theme to the changes that are being made in the House today. I think the underlying theme is one of suppression, is one of creating privilege and opportunity for the government and ensuring that the opposition does not share in any of those privileges and opportunities. I think, as someone who came into this House as a true believer in democracy, I am very concerned when I see democracy undermined and ridiculed by members of the opposition, as I see some of them doing across the floor right now.

I think I'll leave my comments on Motion 11 there at this point now, but I just wanted to make sure that *Hansard* recorded my concerns so that the people in my constituency know that I care about the democracy that brought me here and that I am prepared to stand and defend it.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I will take questions and comments under 29(2)(a) in just one brief moment.

I would just like to also confirm with the member that, you know, I encourage you to make comments, whichever comments you might like to make at another time as well on Motion 10 if that's what you choose to do. I wasn't interjecting to try to prevent any such comments, only interjecting to remind the member that we were in fact not on the motion that was dealing with that particular clause.

Having said that, questions and comments under 29(2)(a)? I see the Government House Leader is rising.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, you are correct. I look forward to providing some comments and context in reference to the comments provided by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford. I listened to his speech with great interest. I just want to acknowledge and address one comment in particular that the hon. member raised in regard to the 9 a.m. sitting concern. The fact is that the Opposition House Leader brought forward concerns to us when we asked about things that the opposition may want changed in standing orders as we proceed forward. This was one of the issues that was identified by the Opposition House

Leader. Now, what the Opposition House Leader wanted to have happen was that the 9 a.m. sittings be completely eliminated.

8:30

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do know that you had the privilege of being the Opposition House Leader, in fact, actually, when the 9 a.m. sittings were brought in. You and the then Government House Leader had some fireworks, and if I recall, it did not end that well for you. You may disagree. I don't know. But that's my remembering of that history. The reality is that Albertans did not like the idea of opposition MLAs attempting to fight not to go to work at 9 o'clock in the morning and then to keep this place not open and to be able to use all of the legislative time made sense, though. With that said, the Opposition House Leader made a passionate argument that there are certain times where it would make sense for the Assembly not to be called. It could be certain things that are happening within the province where we needed some flexibility for ceremonial purposes, something along those lines but also more commonly, Mr. Speaker, through you to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, for standing committees.

If we were dealing with certain things at certain times of the year where we wanted a standing committee to be able to meet, it would make sense for the Legislature not to be sitting at 9 o'clock in the morning because hon. members are working elsewhere. That's particularly important for an opposition not the size of this. This is a pretty big opposition for the Alberta Legislature, though significantly smaller than the last one that sat on that side of the House, that I had the privilege of leading for a while, as did you. But it is a fairly big opposition for this House. In the history of this province often the opposition is small. I know the hon. former Education minister will agree with that because he sat in some smaller caucuses. When the Government House Leader had standing committees happening simultaneously, that could put them at a significant disadvantage, so we added this into Government Motion 10 or 11, whichever one we're on at the moment, Mr. Speaker – Motion 11; thank you very much – you know, directly to try to work with the opposition.

So if hon. members have concerns with the 9 a.m. portion of this, I suggest they take it up with their Opposition House Leader. I know that they would have rather we went further and just eliminated it altogether, but I'm sure the Speaker, who was the former House leader at the time, will articulate to you, when he's not in the chair, why that is probably not a very good idea for Albertans.

While I look forward to discussing the floor-crossing motion, which the hon. member referred to – and I take your advice seriously, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that it's not part of the motion that's before the House right now, so I won't spend too much time on it, but the hon. member did bring it up. I look forward to debating vigorously with him the merits of that motion and why we have brought that forward in this House. That's a promise that was made to Albertans. But what I will tell him is that we should make clear because he's brought it up in *Hansard* today – our motion makes clear that an hon. member has a responsibility to their constituents, if they've lost confidence in their party, to sit as an independent. It has not been designed in any such way that would not allow them to do that work on behalf of their constituents.

The Speaker: The hon. member. If he wishes to comment, there's a minute remaining in his time.

Having said that, are there any other questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just going back to my comments earlier, this is again for Government Motion 11. I think that this is supposed to strengthen democracy somehow. You know, that's kind of sad, actually. It seems like somebody is wanting to turn this particular place into something they're more familiar with, maybe something in Ottawa, but okay. Let's just move on.

Let's talk about some of the issues – and I'm standing up to speak to this. I know that this has been debated thoroughly and people have spoken at length about all these things, but I have not, and I would like to be on the record to demonstrate to my constituents that I stood up and I spoke to these things because I don't agree with them, and I have some serious concerns.

You know, it's kind of funny that I'm talking about traditions of this place. There are traditions of this place that maybe I'm not as comfortable with or I maybe disagree with. I find it funny that we're sort of picking and choosing which traditions we like and we're okay with and which ones we don't, and I'm referring to desk thumping. Now, I'll be honest. Probably like a lot of the new members, when I first got here and I heard the thumping, it was a little bit shocking because it was loud, not something that I was used to. I'd maybe seen it on television but I'd not been in the room, and I wasn't used to it. But I got used to it when we started sitting here. I saw what it was used for. It was actually to support the person speaking or to show your approval for something. It actually sort of grew on me. I get that there are some people that choose not to thump. You can choose to thump or not thump – that's up to you – but I think to say that you must use this hand and this hand and make them meet and those are the only things that are acceptable in this place, Mr. Speaker, is weird.

You know, one of the things that happened a few years ago that was really fantastic in this place is that we got together to agree that women have babies, and they can sometimes have those babies in this Chamber, and there were times that some of our new moms had their little ones in this Chamber. I think there was even a time that somebody was breastfeeding in this Chamber, and it was a beautiful thing because this is the people's House, and the babies are people. I think, Mr. Speaker, it would have been kind of tough for that mom to clap versus thump with one hand, so is there a process for that? Do we send a note to the Speaker and say: "I'm sorry. I have a baby. Can I thump today, or must I clap?"

I'm being facetious with this in a way. Why is it that the government feels the need to tell us what we can do with our appendages? Seriously. If you don't like thumping, don't thump; clap. But why is it that you need to control what we do? Is that how you strengthen democracy? I don't know. I see you're – I don't know if you're hot or something. Just don't thump. What I'm saying is that I think it's really important to recognize that this is less about thump or clap. Whatever. It doesn't really matter to me. I don't mind that you clap and choose not to thump. I thump. I don't clap. You know, I think it's a House. We have individual choice and freedom. Why is it that you want to control people's bodies? This is our body. I'm going to put that on the record that I'm not okay with this. I'm sort of drawing a line to say that I'm never okay with people telling me what I can do with my body, whether it's my arms, my hands, or other parts.

Maybe let's just call it preserving an old tradition, sort of like doing a traditional prayer at the beginning of session. I might not express my faith in the same way that you do or the same way that our Speaker does, but I respect the fact that it's a tradition, and that's what we're choosing to do here, so why not respect individual choice here? Why is it that you feel the need to control this? I really don't get it. I want to be on the record as saying this. It might sound silly to you, but I think it's important.

Another thing that I wanted to highlight for you – and for those of you at the back, perhaps, I've been there. I know what it feels like. You often don't feel like you have a voice, but you do have a voice. You have the ability, Mr. Speaker. The members at the back have an ability to have a voice and to have an opinion, so once again I encourage them to have that opinion.

Just going back to desk thumping for a quick second, the other thing is that this particular Chamber and actually this building, maybe, given the age of it, is not very accessible. It's National AccessAbility Week, by the way. This Chamber is not very wheelchair accessible, and I think that – I'm not blaming anybody. It's an old building, and we have some work to do. For example, someone in a wheelchair can't come up the front steps. They have to go around the back. So, you know, hopefully, at some point maybe we can address that. I think there's a lot of goodwill in this place that we can do something about that.

I'm looking forward to the day that we have multiple people with disabilities in this Chamber. That would be fantastic. I'm talking about visible disabilities. Perhaps they are wheelchair users or perhaps they are amputees or perhaps they have cerebral palsy. I'm not sure whatever the disability will be. But one day it will happen, that inclusion will happen, and we will have representatives that have visible disabilities, and it'll be fantastic. And you know what? You can laugh all you like, but I don't think it's funny. There are some people that are physically not able to go like that whereas banging something or kicking something or even elbowing something might be the only thing that they do, but you are deciding the way that people can express their pleasure or displeasure, and that's not fair. This is a place that is supposed to be as fair as possible, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you would agree that you have the ability to represent your people. I happen to represent a lot of people with disabilities, probably because I seek them out, maybe. That's my background. That's what I do.

8:40

I'm belabouring this point, Mr. Speaker, because it's an important one. The rules that the government is trying to set don't fit for everybody. They just don't. At some point we will have somebody here that will be unable to clap, but they should be allowed to express their pleasure about something. The reason I'm saying this is that this is not fair. You deciding how we use our bodies, how we express ourselves, is not fair. This isn't about strengthening democracy. This is about doing what your boss told you. Clearly, I am not supporting this. I am not in support of this whatsoever.

There are a number of other things that I have serious concerns about, but I'm going to focus on one more, and it's for the members that maybe aren't sitting towards the front, don't have a portfolio, perhaps don't get as many opportunities to speak. One of the great things in this place as a private member is that we get put into a lottery. There are 64 of us, and so sometimes we get lucky and we get a high number so we get to have a private member's bill. It doesn't happen very often. Some people are lucky enough to pull really low numbers, and it's fantastic. They get to consult their communities, and they get to develop a bill. They get to use a Monday to talk about it, to do first reading, to do second reading, and we get to push it through.

There have been some amazing bills, actually – I can't remember the member. I think it was inspired by his daughter. He had a private member's bill. It was fantastic. It was something about bullying online or inappropriate photographs online. I wish I could remember the details, Mr. Speaker. I apologize. But it was an amazing story. He listened to his daughter, who had talked to her school friends, and this was a problem. He got a high number, he

brought the bill, and we got it done because we all agreed it was a fantastic idea. We did it. We did it right here. It didn't have to go to committee.

But this "strengthening democracy" is not strengthening democracy. It's slowing it down, and it's putting a thumb on it so that a committee can slow it down. We all know how committees work. They slow things down. There's a reason, Mr. Speaker, that the government is choosing not to send government bills to committee. They do not want it slowed down. But they're applying this rule to a private member's bill, and it rarely happens that you get a private member's bill. Rarely. Rarely. But they want to send it to committee. Ask yourselves why. Is this about strengthening democracy, or is this about silencing people? I'd say this isn't about strengthening democracy.

I am on the record. I'm thankful for that. I will share this with my constituents that expect me to stand up and represent them, and I am doing that, Mr. Speaker. I could go into some of the other strengthening democracy pieces, but I'm not going to. Those were the two that I wanted to focus on.

Clearly, I will not be supporting this. I'm hugely disappointed, and I would encourage the private members who also don't agree to do the same. Have the courage and do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate lost]

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to speak to Government Motion 11?

For a point of clarification, there's no 29(2)(a) as the motion was to adjourn debate. A debate, as we all know in the Assembly, cannot be adjourned on 29(2)(a), but because the hon. member moved to adjourn debate prior to concluding her remarks, there is no further opportunity for 29(2)(a).

Are there others wishing to speak to Government Motion 11? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore has risen.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to rise to contribute to the debate on Government Motion 11. Although I've had the opportunity now to rise a couple of times on some quick questions and a quick comment on the last amendment, this is the first time I do get to rise in this Chamber on behalf of the residents of Edmonton-Decore and bring their voices here through debate.

As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of concerns. I know it's surprising because I'm usually not an individual that gets concerned about things very often, but I have some here. As was probably mentioned a little bit earlier before, getting the chance to introduce people in this House is a very special moment. I won't belabour that, but I feel I should just add that quickly to my comments. Moving away from that, I think, will break a very long-standing tradition.

I think the Member for St. Albert was very clear on the desk thumping. I don't need to go any further into that.

One of the first things that concerns me about Motion 11 is the number of things that are contained within it all at once. I guess you could almost call it an omnibus motion. As one of the members who has served in the 29th Legislature – there are a few members here on the government side during that time. Maybe – I can't recall specifically – Mr. Speaker, you may have been one of those members at that time that were very, very concerned about the number of topics that showed up in a specific labour bill and wanted to split it up. It was interesting to watch that, yet here we are duplicating that. I've heard, of course, during the election and whatnot that a UCP government is going to do things differently.

But I hate to say it: with Government Motion 11 it seems a little bit like the second verse is the same as the first. I have a concern around that. I'm wondering: why that need to jumble all of this together?

I guess the second concern that I have is around the abstentions. Mr. Speaker, we are very clearly elected to this Chamber by our constituents to come here and do our job, and that job entails voting. I can remember a certain member that stayed in the House and very eloquently argued against a bill but also remained and voted, too, when, shall we say, some members decided to possibly conveniently take a bathroom break during that voting. Abstention, I believe, is an opportunity to do just that. It's just that now you've got somewhat a little bit of permission. Our constituents expect us to bring their views forward, and those views end up, at times, with a vote, either yes or no. We have to, to the best of our abilities, try to figure out if that is what we should be doing, voting yes or voting no. But simply to take our seat, cross our arms, and go, "Eh, I don't feel like getting up at this time and voting," I think, is unacceptable. We are here to do our jobs.

The other concern I have is around private members' bills automatically going to committee. I remember the Member for St. Albert drawing an example, and I would like to draw an example of a private member's bill. The Member for I believe it was Calgary-West in the 29th Legislature had a fantastic private member's bill around regulating pill presses. I even specifically remember personally reaching out to the member about some questions I had: could there be something different that we could do? I remember some of the government members from that time asking for permission to get through that private member's bill in one straight shot: first, second, committee, third, pass it. You know what, Mr. Speaker? It was important enough that we thought that we should do it. Had we had those rules in the last Legislature, that member's bill would have gone to committee, and we would not have gotten that important piece of legislation passed in a very timely manner.

8:50

It worries me that there could be private members, be it on the opposition side or, for sure, on the government side, that may have private members' business that we can all get behind – there is an urgent need to get it done – yet it is going to get kicked to committee and potentially slow that ability down, and we just don't know when that might happen. I mean, can you imagine the last few days where a private member's bill comes up and automatically goes to committee, and it's such a great bill, but maybe an election gets called, and we lose that private member's bill? I know the Government House Leader finds that very, very funny, but if you won't look out for your private members, then I will.

Mr. Speaker, I find myself unable to support Motion 11 based on these concerns. I would very highly recommend that the private members of the government side take this information and give it very serious consideration, especially around their ability to bring private members' motions forward, their ability to introduce their guests when they can make it. We can get all into the whole us versus them, but if they have a guest in this House and they introduce them, I will give them the traditional welcome that they so rightfully deserve.

With that, I will take my seat. I am sure there are probably some that are just itching to get up on 29(2)(a) and ask all kinds of questions, and I will allow them to fill their boots.

The Speaker: Questions and comments under 29(2)(a)? I see the Government House Leader is on his feet.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the hon. Member for

Edmonton-Decore. I enjoyed listening to his comments. I don't agree with him, but I enjoyed it. I appreciate him taking the time to debate on this important motion that's before the House today. He brought forward a couple of things, though, I think, that are worth clarifying for *Hansard*.

The first is the comments in regard to a private member's bill going off to committee to somehow magically just die, the way that he described it. I know that the hon. member was part of a government just a few short weeks ago that used to do that. But for the benefit, again, of my little brother from Calgary-Klein and all the other new members that are in the Assembly, I will tell you how it used to work, and I'll then tell you how it will work after these standing orders, hopefully, pass in this Assembly.

What used to happen underneath the NDP government is that when they found a bill that they couldn't politically defeat inside this place, because there'd be some media trouble or some trouble with their base, but they didn't want to pass it, what they would do is that the Government House Leader would get up and send it off to the standing committee, which you guys now have the privilege of being members of. It would go off to that standing committee. They would say: ah, it went off to committee. Then – you know what would happen? – it would never come back, and what that meant was that the bill basically died. It would never get to the agenda in those standing committees, and then what would happen is that we would prorogue for a throne speech or something along those lines, and the bill would die on the Order Paper and never come back to this Assembly.

Now, what we have proposed and the hon. member doesn't want to talk about is that the rule would be that it goes, yes, automatically on first reading of a private member's bill, but it has to return to this place within eight sitting days, which is basically two weeks. It has to come back. That allows the good of committee to happen, which is a committee able to have a conversation to be able to deal with issues to actually be able to get legislation passed.

The hon. member talked about the hon. Member for Calgary-West's bill on pill presses, which happily got passed in this place, but I see he did not bother to talk about the hon. member's bill on Serenity, which was defeated inside this place and would never have been defeated if it was able to go to the private members' committee to overcome some of the obstacles that were facing that piece of legislation. It would come back to this Chamber within eight days, significantly different than the undemocratic practices that all those members across from me right now, through you, Mr. Speaker, to them, used to do just a few short weeks ago when they were in government. Instead, we made a promise, we spoke about it many times in this House, and we're going to make sure that private members get to be able to work hard on their legislation.

The only other thing I wanted to talk about while I was up here, Mr. Speaker – and I would appreciate some comments from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore – is his passionate fight to be able to keep desk thumping, which I find just outrageous, that he is spending so much time on that.

I'd like to go to a constituent of mine by the name of Cathy, who posted this on my Facebook when we announced these standing orders. She said:

I stopped planning my class legislature trip during session because of how immature the [NDP] MLAs acted. My students missed everything being talked about on the floor because of the immaturity of the [so-called] adults. They were appalled by the behaviour. I applaud the UCPs for this move.

I will go to another teacher, Jody Blackmore:

This is an issue that definitely needs to be dealt with. Our grade 6 students were able to observe about 30 minutes of Question Period yesterday and were shocked at how rude the NDP MLAs

were. They have learned that it is completely impolite and disrespectful to talk while others are speaking. They noticed and later asked why the NDP were banging on their desks and constantly [talking] while others were speaking but the UCP didn't do any of that. It'll be nice to bring classes in the future and have them see a good example of how to behave in public rather than the extreme example of terrible behaviour [by the NDP].

Mr. Speaker, we have promised to bring decorum back to this House. I'm proud of our Premier, who has led the way, pioneered it inside this Legislature, which these members across from me seem to be appalled by. But I'm proud of him. He brought it to this Chamber. This Chamber has calmed down. It's been focused on the business of Albertans rather than calling names and fighting to bang on your desks. These members in the opposition have it wrong. They're wrong on this. This side of the House is going to stand up for teachers like Jody and Cathy and stand up for their students and make sure that they can come to the people's House and watch appropriate behaviour by adults, not whatever you guys are doing.

The Speaker: There are questions and comments available under 29(2)(a). Any others?

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Calgary-Acadia and Minister of Health is rising on debate.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise because I was alarmed by the comments of the Member for St. Albert, and I wanted . . . [A cellphone rang] The floor could almost dance to that.

Speaker's Ruling Use of Electronic Devices in the Chamber

The Speaker: I just would remind all members that it is appropriate to either turn your phone's ringer off or not bring them to the Chamber. I would just like to thank the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford because I've been hoping for this opportunity. I know we had this opportunity in the very early days of the legislative session, but I might just suggest that the next time inside the Chamber that this happens, there will be a Speaker's fine, you might say, a \$50 donation to a charity of your choice. Any additional offences, I think, will be a \$100 fine to a charity of the Speaker's choice. So let this be a fair warning: any additional offences, the fines will be appropriately distributed.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Acadia has the floor.

Debate Continued

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, I wanted to rise because of the alarming comments that were mentioned by the Member for St. Albert, that alarmed me, that I wanted to make sure that my colleagues were aware of. She said that this motion is going to regulate what we do with our bodies, what she's going to be able to do with her body.

Then I cracked open the Standing Orders, and I learned that there's a prohibition on the hon. Member for St. Albert being able right now to just walk between us as I'm recognized by you. There's a prohibition on any of us in this room being able to walk, after we've adjourned, before you've left the Chamber. There's a prohibition on – well, actually, we're all bound to attend the service of the Assembly. There's a forcing of the hon. member to stand when the Speaker and the Mace enter. I'm just shocked. There are a number of portions of the standing orders which tell us what to do with our bodies on quite – well, I suppose I can't say that.

9:00

Anyways, Mr. Speaker, not quite sure where the hon. member was going with what we can do with our bodies and why the motion can't – all right. I'm going to stop right there, Mr. House Leader, and now I'm supposed to . . .

Mr. Jason Nixon: Adjourn debate.

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate. Do I move to adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Yeah, you've done it.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 3

Job Creation Tax Cut (Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment) Act

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

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise tonight to move second reading of Bill 3, Job Creation Tax Cut (Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment) Act.

Alberta's economic outlook has deteriorated, and this bill is a central part of our plan to get Alberta working again. Our government committed to reducing the tax burden on job creators, and these amendments will start that process.

This bill proposes three general sets of amendments: a cut to the corporate tax rate, consequential amendments to the small-business tax rate, and other technical amendments. First, the corporate tax rate. If passed, the first set of amendments to the Alberta Corporate Tax Act will reduce the corporate tax rate from 12 to 8 per cent over the next four years. We're proposing that the corporate tax rate be reduced as follows: on July 1, 2019, it would be reduced from its current rate of 12 per cent to 11 per cent; on January 1, 2020, the rate would decrease to 10 per cent; on January 1, 2021, the rate would be reduced to 9 per cent; finally, on January 1, 2022, Alberta's corporate income tax rate would decrease to 8 per cent.

We know that business decisions are not made spur of the moment, so to help encourage timely investment decisions, we're implementing the first two cuts within the next seven months. By reducing the corporate tax rate quickly, Alberta will become a more attractive place to do business. This will provide incentive to make new investments in Alberta. Our proposed amendments also include the final two rate reductions on January 1, 2021 and 2022, ensuring that the corporate tax rate is reduced to 8 per cent within four years. Legislating these rate changes in advance will allow businesses to make future investment decisions with confidence.

If passed, these amendments will make Alberta a much more attractive place to do business. In fact, after the first proposed decrease in July our province will again have the lowest corporate tax rate in Canada, and by 2022 Alberta will be one of the most tax competitive business jurisdictions in North America. The job creation tax cut will help reverse the flow of investment to once again see investment flow from south of the border back to Alberta. Mr. Speaker, we must take bold action to help support our job creators, and these amendments will go a long way in that regard.

The next set of amendments proposed in this bill concern the small-business tax rate. If passed, this bill will maintain the 2 per cent tax rate for small businesses. The calculation of this rate in the

act relies on the general corporate tax rate, where a deduction from the corporate rate determines the small-business rate. Currently a deduction of 10 per cent is used to reduce the current 12 per cent corporate tax rate to a 2 per cent small-business tax. We're proposing consequential amendments that will maintain the small-business rate at 2 per cent.

As the corporate rate is reduced, these consequential amendments will ensure that the deduction used in the calculation of the small-business rate gradually falls from 10 to 6 per cent, in sync with corporate tax rate reductions. These adjustments will also occur on July 1, 2019; January 1, 2020; January 1, 2021; and finally, on January 1, 2022, in tandem with the corporate tax rate reductions. Small businesses are extremely valuable job creators in our province, and maintaining the competitive 2 per cent rate is important to our government.

The final set of amendments we are proposing consist of technical changes to the act to ensure the new small-business deduction sections are properly referenced in the act. All of the proposed changes will ensure that the tax rate reductions are implemented properly.

Mr. Speaker, to recap, this bill will reduce the corporate tax burden on many Alberta businesses, and it will maintain Alberta's small-business tax rate at 2 per cent. It will also make technical changes that provide more clarity and ensure that all adjustments within the bill are implemented properly.

I'm pleased with the changes we've brought forward with the job creation tax cut, and we look forward to watching Alberta's economy bounce back as a result of this and other government initiatives. If passed, these amendments will make a meaningful difference for Alberta by getting our economy rolling again and fostering job creation.

I look forward to debate on this bill and call on all members of this House to support these amendments.

I now move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 2

An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business

[Debate adjourned May 29]

The Speaker: Are there any hon. members wishing to rise and speak to Bill 2? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West is rising.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great honour to speak on Bill 2, An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business. As the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods has very astutely outlined, there are a number of serious issues around this bill that I think we all as members of this House should consider and consider the consequences over time. I can say on a personal level that the restructuring on overtime pay perhaps was one of the ones that jumped out, both at me and my constituents as well.

Of course, here in the province lots of people are accumulating overtime, and the idea is that there's an agreement that you are being paid appropriately for that deferred overtime. To make changes as are being proposed here in Bill 2 around that particular element of a worker's agreement really leaves a lot of people shortchanged. I know that we made some calculations and others have made calculations around overtime banked hours being paid out, and we see a differential. For example, an oil and gas worker earning \$43 an hour working 10 hours of overtime every week on a 12-week project would bank about 100 to 120 hours of overtime. With the changes in Bill 2 around banked overtime, the difference

in pay in that scenario – it's just one anecdotal scenario, but you could create any number of those – is \$2,600.

When you start to make those sorts of changes arbitrarily – I know that the hon. minister was saying that this is an agreement that could be worked through, but when you change the balance of fairness on an agreement to the discretion of the employer, then you see that workers are often left short and out in the cold. I think that it won't take long for us to see a correlation with the minimum wage changes that are being proposed concurrently with youth workers – right? – a change of 15 per cent reduction in pay. I mean, some employers will make choices to the benevolence and the benefit of their employees, but many won't. You know, when you create a law, you create a standard, and when you create a standard, it should be reflective of a sense of fairness, justice, equality, and continuity.

By changing banked overtime payout and moving the balance of power and discretion of that to the employer, you put the workers and the vast majority of Albertans that are in that position at a disadvantage. You know, that's one of the elements of this bill that definitely jumped out at me.

9:10

Another element that I found was around the Employment Standards Code – right? – you know, around leave: compassionate care leave, job protection extended to 27 weeks from eight to better align with federal government employment insurance benefits, long-term illness and injury leave, personal family and responsibility leave. All of these are basic things that people look to as an element of trust in their job when an employee is in one of those situations – right? – someone being ill in their family, long-term illness, injury, compassionate care, and so forth. By changing those expectations, you make it difficult for people to have peace of mind and to have the financial security and certainty that would allow them to move ahead.

I just found the breadth of this bill in looking for ways by which to repeal labour reform – you know, a lot of these reforms simply were to put Alberta in line with the rest of the country. It's not like we were bringing out the lead and blazing new territory. You know, we're the eighth or the 10th province to finally have some of these reforms put into place. You know, it's not radical. It's not out of keeping with the rest of the country or even international standards; it just brings Alberta up to a standard of expectation of normalcy and responsibility.

To repeal so many of these things – you know, this whole idea of starting a new government with the general feeling of pulling back or somehow moving backwards as an opening theme for a government to start their new term: I find that a very curious way to choose to characterize your own new government, and lots of people suffer as a result, right? The people that were looking for reasonable labour reform were enjoying the expectation of, you know, proper maternity leave law, of bereavement and personal loss law, of overtime banked hours expectations, and suddenly all that gets lost in the tide of the summer of repeal, as it's characterized here with the new government. I find that categorically troubling and then specifically with some of these elements with Bill 2 that I just put forward.

You know, certainly, we will work with this new government to try to help them with this problem that they've created for themselves in regard to Bill 2. I know that we have some reasoned amendments that we can use to perhaps clarify the importance of protection of banked overtime, of leave protection, and so forth, and we're happy to do so. You know, you don't try to set a theme of the government at the peril and at the compromise of fairness of compensation, fairness for safety, and employment standards that

Albertans expect and employment standards that are in keeping with the rest of Canada.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to more debate, and I look forward to working with the government to perhaps improve this bill.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for questions and comments.

Member Irwin: Yeah. I'll just go on that one for a minute. I just wanted to thank the . . .

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

Member Irwin: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your patience. I'm new. How long can I say that for?

The Speaker: It's over now.

Member Irwin: I want to thank the member for his comments, in particular, just the comments around OT, overtime pay. You know, particularly, we've heard from a lot of folks working in oil and gas that that's going to hit them hard. My own father worked in oil and gas for nearly 40 years in northern Alberta, Swan Hills. He worked a lot of overtime, and he sacrificed a whole heck of a lot. I know a lot of other folks did the same. A lot of people that I worked with out in rural Alberta were dependent on that overtime. I know a fellow I dated, back when I was dating fellows, worked at the power plant out in Forestburg, and he put in a lot of overtime as well. Again, I hardly got to see him. But it was a sacrifice that he needed to make to start to make some investments in his future.

I just wanted to ask the Member for Edmonton-North West to just elaborate a little bit more on that because I know you've heard from some of your constituents as well about the impacts of the decrease to overtime pay.

The Speaker: The whip for the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you. I appreciate that. You know, what I saw and what I know from friends and family that work on project-based oil and gas is that you have a period of intensity where you're working on, let's say, a shutdown of a plant or building a project. It's project-based work. You have an intense period of earning lots of time and potentially the money that you will then defer over to the rest of the year when you don't have a job. That banked overtime is an essential part of the calculation for the basic budgeting for a family, right? It's not like you've just got great piles of money, and you get another pile. It's where you're working intensely and hard, often in remote locations, and then carefully building a budget around the hours that you worked but the banked overtime that you worked, too, to make sure you can make it through the rest of the year, when you don't necessarily have work, right? So to change that and to change that balance of decision-making to the employers I think is dangerous. We always have expectations for the best of intentions from human beings, but we always need to make regulation and backstop for when the best of intentions don't come forward.

Again, this is a direct correlation to the red tape reduction bill that I saw, that's coming forward here now, where you create this idea that regulation is bad. But, I mean, regulation protects people, too. You know, when you have a regulation that – so you're paying someone who's 17 and a half 15 per cent less than the person who's suddenly 18, right? Then you have to put in all these checks and balances to see if they're going to school or not or what their actual

age is or if they're raising – I mean, that sounds like a whole lot of red tape to me. You have to create a whole new department to check and see, you know, carding people in restaurants to see if they're actually working so many hours. If that red tape reduction department wants somewhere to start, they'll probably have to start with this minimum wage thing because they're creating this Byzantine sort of set of rules and regulations and different prices and payments.

I heard people talking about a liquor server differential as well. You know, that doesn't sound like reducing red tape. It sounds like a whole lot more of the very same thing.

I mean, when you're talking about labour and employment standards, you want to keep it fair, you want to keep it equal, and you want to keep it sustainable, right? Any deviation from those simple principles creates red tape, creates unfairness, inequality, and it makes it harder for families to make ends meet. I think that's one of the expectations we have as MLAs, to fight against those things. So I think we need to make a couple of changes to Bill 2 to make it meet those standards.

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to speak to 29(2)(a)?

I see no one.

On the bill, then. Any wishing to speak to the bill? I see the Member for St. Albert rising.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand up and speak to Bill 2, An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business. I'm not going to comment on the title. I guess I'm going to focus on a couple of areas, one of which is actually the minimum wage and reducing the minimum wage for young people.

9:20

I guess when I first heard this, I mean, I wasn't hugely surprised, but I asked myself: why? Really, why would you do this? Then I thought back to: who are the people that have been lobbying for this? It's pretty clear. I think the Premier actually had a meeting or – I don't know – a rally of some kind before the election, if I'm not mistaken, with Restaurants Canada, and I'm pretty sure that this is something they were pushing for. But, you know, I'm sure all of the donation things will be sorted out in due course, and then we'll find out sort of how this came about, I suppose. I find it sort of interesting that the members opposite are telling us that this is about creating more jobs when there isn't a whole lot of proof to say that reducing young peoples' wages creates more work. It certainly creates more friends in certain industries, but I don't think it creates more work.

I was somewhat worried that other people with modest levels of human capital would get the axe or get a reduction. I'm hugely grateful that that is not the case. I know that when we were on that side, one of the things that we did was get rid of a regulation that had been put in place by the previous Conservative government, and that was to allow employers to apply for a minimum wage exemption for people with disabilities. That had been in place for quite some time, and that was possible for people to do.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

Sadly, I do think that there were some companies or organizations that had somewhat taken advantage of that, where you would hear stories about people doing really rote, menial jobs, whether it was sort of assembly line things or, you know, getting donations and sorting them, and being paid, really, a pittance, like, just cents per hour to do the work. That was allowed because somewhere down the road somebody had viewed these folks as

having moderate levels of human capital, I suppose, and it was okay to pay them less.

But I am very sad to see that young people in our province will now be paid less for doing the same job. Actually, I'm sure somebody else has already touched on this, but our pages, who work so hard, who work really long hours here in this Chamber, the ones that are under 18 years of age will now lose \$2 an hour, and they'll likely work alongside people that are maybe a little bit older than them who will make more money simply because of their birthdate. I don't know. That doesn't seem fair to me.

I know that maybe some of you were in the same boat. I didn't come from a wealthy family at all. Actually, quite the opposite. One of the things that we had to do as kids, when we were, you know, young teenagers, is that we had to find jobs and we had to help. I'm not saying that we paid rent to our parents, but what we did do is we covered our own expenses. You know what that's like when you're a young person, whether that's paying for a field trip or buying clothes or a backpack or school supplies or just, you know, things that young people need.

As I got older as a teenager, one of the things that I started to do was to save for my education because I knew that my parents didn't have the ability. Well, they were struggling just to pay rent, you know, to make sure that we had food and all of the things that we needed to survive. But it was up to us if we wanted to go a little further. On a side note, my grandmother said that I could do anything, told me that I could be a bank teller one day. Anyway, a little story about that.

But we were told that that was what we had to do. So we worked. Every summer we worked, whether it was – you know, one year I remember going out and picking tomatoes while they were there, and then we got taken to a field to clear fields. I worked in an ice cream parlour. I worked at McDonald's. I worked in fast food. I've done all of those things that young people do to save money, and I worked just as hard as the person beside me who was older than me. I worked really hard all summer, and I saved that money so that I could afford the things that I needed, just like our young people now.

Yet you're saying that you're hanging up an open-for-business sign on the backs of young people by reducing their wage by \$2 per hour. This isn't about job creation; this is about profit for companies. This isn't about our young people; this is about profit for companies. This is about: who were the companies that got the ear of the people making the decisions, and what were those deals, what were the agreements that were made? I'm left questioning: how is it that we got to this place where it's okay to reduce the wages of young people? I don't think it's acceptable to say that you are creating jobs on the backs of young people. It's pretty sad, actually.

Those same young people that are going to work so hard in the summer, work hard during the year to save for their education, now they're either going to have to work harder, whether that's during the year, work more hours, or they're going to have to take out bigger student loans. At the end of the day, who is benefiting? Is it the lending institutions? Is it these large organizations that are going to hire younger people so they can pay them less? Really, who is winning here? It's not our youth. Our youth are the future. This is our most valued, treasured – this is everything that we stand for. Our youth are the future, and for us to set them up with this kind of start is just really sad to me.

Another thing I wanted to touch on quickly was about things like holiday pay. If I understand this correctly, if let's say Christmas falls on a day that you normally don't work, you don't qualify for that. Let me just paint a little picture for you in one particular sector. People that support folks with disabilities tend to work really odd hours.

They don't typically do, like, a 9 to 5, Monday to Friday. They will often do shift work. Often they will do 24-hour shifts. They'll do multiple days for a lot of different reasons. It provides continuity and support to people that need it most. It allows for a routine. It allows for people to feel safe. These are very skilled workers, by the way, and these are not people that are paid a lot of money, but they give a lot. They're away from their families for hours on end. Some people do sleep shifts, so they might be there all day and then spend the night and be there the next day. These are long shifts, they're away from their families, they sacrifice a lot, and suddenly we're introducing these rules that are going to take little perks and little benefits like, say, Christmas away from these workers.

I'm asking through you to the other members: are these things that you talked about? Have you had these discussions? Have you considered what the impact is on real people in this province that are not wealthy people and that work really hard? These little things like Christmas, a holiday maybe that wasn't really your normal workday anyway but you happened to get it off: it is a benefit, but it's a benefit for people that need it. My question really is: have you given this thought? Is this what you want to lay your hat on? To say that this is how we're open for business, this is how we're going to promote more jobs, by cutting the wages of youth and taking away these small benefits: who is this benefiting? Who's profiting from this? Who is making money from this? Really, who is profiting? It's not our young people.

Ask yourself: is this who you want to be? Is this the government that you want to be? Is this what you want to be known for, to reduce the wages of young people so that you can say – what, exactly, I'm not sure – that you supported large business so they could make more profit? It's not enough to give them a massive corporate tax break; now we're going to reduce wages of young people.

Again, I'm sure you've heard this all. It's difficult sometimes to sit there and listen to this stuff again and again and again, but it's important for me and for the people that I represent, the young people and their families and the workers who don't make a lot of money, people with modest levels of human capital, like they're defined by the Premier, I guess.

9:30

I want to be on the record to say that I'm opposed to this, absolutely, one hundred per cent. I would not support this. I do not support this. I firmly believe that our young people who work as hard as people who might be a month older than them based on their birthday are worth as much as the people that are older than them, and they should be paid equally for their work. People who do equal work deserve to be paid equally. It's actually fairly simple. It shouldn't be about profit; it should be about individual people.

With that being said, given the hour I am going to move that we adjourn debate. Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Acting Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak?

Mr. Jason Nixon: A point of clarification, Mr. Speaker. What's going on? We adjourned debate, correct?

The Acting Speaker: Debate is adjourned, yes.

Mr. Jason Nixon: I know it's new.

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: I would like to call the committee to order. Ladies and gentlemen, please take into consideration the fact that this is my first time in the chair, so I am as much excited to learn about this process as, I'm sure, you all are who are new members.

Bill 1

An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

The Deputy Chair: Are there any comments or questions to be offered with respect to amendment A1? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Excuse me. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You look great in there. If you could just say that one more time. You said that we have an amendment under consideration now?

The Deputy Chair: We are currently on amendment A1. It's an amendment from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Eggen: Okay. Good. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this amendment in Committee of the Whole. Just to remind everybody what the amendment is:

- (1) On the coming into force of section 1, the Minister of Environment and Parks [will consult] with the public, industry and academic and scientific experts regarding the development of a comprehensive action plan . . . to address climate change.
- (2) Consultations under subsection (1) must be completed within 9 months . . .
- (3) The Minister [must] make public a report summarizing [these] consultations . . . within 120 days.

Certainly, I am in complete agreement with this amendment. Certainly, when you repeal something – you know, nature does not love a vacuum. By repealing the carbon levy and the climate action plan or parts of it, you need to make sure that you build something to give people the assurance that we are indeed moving forward in a positive way to address carbon emissions and to address all of the innovation and business opportunities that have already been created by the climate action plan that has been here in place for a number of years in Alberta.

During that time, Mr. Chair, we've created something of an industry phenomenon – right? – in terms of renewable energy. People are moving here from other jurisdictions because of the opportunities around wind and solar and geothermal energy, around creating energy efficiencies for existing structures, both public and private, and so forth. With just simply this act to repeal the carbon tax, you know, the job isn't done. You are making one action which, I would suggest, is not in the best interests of good governance, but you need to at least make sure you're compensating by having a plan and reassuring the public – industry and academic and scientific and the general public – that we're still moving ahead in a positive way, in keeping with the rest of the world, to reduce carbon emissions, to help to diversify the economy, and to help ensure that Alberta remains an energy leader throughout these times, because we are. We have technology, we have innovation, we have expertise, we have companies that are willing to make those innovations and to be nimble, and we need to provide reassurance from the very highest level, from this Chamber, that we are going to carry on and support those people every step of the way.

This amendment is reasonable, and I encourage all members to support it.

The Deputy Chair: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

9:40

Member Irwin: Thank you. Again, I'll speak a little bit more to this amendment as well. Thank you to the Member for Edmonton-North West for setting the tone there. The part that I want to touch on here is just the piece around consultation, particularly with the public and industry and academic and scientific experts. We know that there is a huge scientific and academic community here in Alberta that are certainly concerned about the repealing of the carbon tax, and we know the importance of consultation. I mean, our government took that very seriously. I think this is an important step to ensure that, you know, in the absence of evidence-based decision-making, we are able to at least try to move forward in a somewhat science-based approach.

I know that one of the conversations earlier today was just around the loss of solar jobs. I talked a fair bit on the record yesterday about solar energy and my own interest in renewables, and I think consulting with industry on this piece will be critical, because they are asking. They're starting to ask questions already. What's going to happen to all of our solar projects? Whether it be the solar projects in Maskwacis – I talked about how almost every building in the Louis Bull Tribe is being retrofitted with solar panels. We're talking not only about jobs. We're also talking about community development and bringing communities together.

I think I want to just really urge the members opposite to consider this amendment so that, again, we can move forward by saying that we're grounded in science and in evidence.

The Deputy Chair: Are there any other members who wish to speak?

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Deputy Chair: Are there any other members who would like to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate the opportunity to continue to speak and look for constructive criticism of Bill 1 and to help make it better for Albertans. In that spirit, I do have an amendment that I would like to bring forward that I would ask if each of you would consider.

The Deputy Chair: We are going to take a quick pause while the amendment is being distributed.

Hon. members, this amendment will be referred to as amendment A2.

I invite the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West to speak if he has any comments.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. This amendment is fairly straightforward, as you can see. It talks about section 2(5)(b), and then it strikes out "does not apply" and substitutes "applies." This is in reference to the revenues that have been collected with the carbon levy in various forms. The original plan for the act, Bill 1, was to take outstanding revenues and put them back into general revenues. What this amendment does is that it compels the funds that were collected with the intention of applying them to, you know, climate leadership projects and to make sure that it stays that way.

I've heard the government talking about keeping Energy Efficiency Alberta at least in some form going, for example. But it won't go at all, Mr. Chair, if it doesn't have any oxygen – right? – if it is devoid of funds. Then again, same with a lot of these solar projects and so forth and energy efficiency projects that are happening with public buildings, schools and so forth. I think it's reasonable and logical and ethical to take the monies that were

collected, the remnants of the last bit of money that was collected through climate leadership and the carbon levy, and make sure that it's applied to these projects so that you have some symmetry from what the money was collected for and understanding and to make sure we are meeting the responsibilities that are outstanding around, let's say, Energy Efficiency Alberta or, you know, doing upgrades to make buildings more energy efficient and so forth.

Again, not to belabour this point, but I remember hearing unfair criticism of the carbon levy as somehow, you know, redirecting money inappropriately, right? But here we are looking at a government that's reducing taxes for the very wealthiest brackets of our society, reducing corporate taxes for even companies that are quite profitable – right? – which is a questionable economic choice. I've heard from so many quarters that by doing so you are making a distortion in the economy, and it has more negative effects than positive. Anyway, you are reducing those taxes on profitable corporations and high brackets of personal income tax, and at least some of that money – because money isn't money in the general revenues – would be coming from the carbon levy and the climate leadership program.

You know, one of the, I think, most compelling and fair parts of the climate leadership plan is the rebates that low-income people would receive from the carbon levy. So if they are paying in, they would be getting a cheque on the other side coming out. Well, again, that disappears through the exhaustion of funds, but you're taking the money that was intended for that and instead putting it in general revenues, and part of that money will go to pay for those tax cuts for the highest brackets of our society, right? I don't think that that is logical, I don't think it's fair, and it sort of smacks of a degree of hypocrisy as well.

I managed to fix it with this amendment, and, you know, everybody is going to like it. [interjection] Hopefully, I explained it in the clearest way possible, that the monies that were collected for the carbon levy – and I know that the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods got it a hundred per cent – will be taken to put back and to spend on the initiatives for which it was intended.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate that. I'm really pleased to be able to rise to speak to the amendment that my colleague the Member for Edmonton-North West has brought forward to Bill 1. In fact, this is my first opportunity to speak to Bill 1 in this Chamber. So I'm really pleased to be able to speak up and share some of my thoughts about this particular piece of legislation because this piece of legislation is really important: important for this Chamber, important for our province, important for my constituents in Mill Woods.

9:50

Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, is something that is very worthy of a lot of discussion and debate, and this amendment that my hon. colleague has brought forward I think does something really important because – and many times in my time in this Chamber I have heard the members opposite, when they were in opposition, refer to the money raised through the climate leadership plan, through the carbon tax as being a slush fund, as being a tax grab purely for government gain, over and over, in fact. Right now what we are seeing through this amendment is a rectifying of something that I think is really important, because without this amendment the money raised by the carbon tax would become a slush fund and would actually go into general revenue rather than being able to use it for important programs and services that helped reduce carbon emissions in our province.

Now, one of the things that I found very interesting is that during this transition in the lead-up to Bill 1 there hasn't been a lot of clarity for consumers. I think in part that's understandable because of the transition – new government, new priorities, Bill 1 is being introduced – but it's left a lot of Albertans in the lurch. I know I saw one particular story of a family who had been told that their application for solar panels was in the queue to be processed. They heard from their contractor, the solar panel installers that they had worked with, that they've been through this many, many times and they were good to go. They did the installation, and now that approval has never come. That family is waiting at about the six-week mark because they submitted for approval before the election, but the timing – Energy Efficiency Alberta chose to and has not approved that family's rebate, essentially.

By not moving these monies into general revenue, perhaps we can make sure that Alberta families are not out of pocket for thousands of dollars for doing things like installing solar panels on their roofs to make a real change in the amount of energy generated through the solar panels for their own home, because these are, of course, investments, investments in our province, because of all the jobs that were created. Today in question period we heard the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar asking about all of the solar installation jobs, the new companies, the businesses that have started here in the province – we know there are a huge number of them – and there's a lot of uncertainty now because they're not sure what is going to happen, never mind in the long-term future but even just for work that's already been done.

This amendment gives us the opportunity of making sure that the monies collected under that carbon tax are used for the purposes that they were designed for, to continue to reduce emissions, because we were 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. That's like eliminating the emissions of Metro Vancouver three times over.

We know that the jobs like those solar installers had are part of more than 7,300 jobs that were created in just the first two years. Making sure that we consider all the implications of Bill 1, as is appropriate in this place, is really important because climate change is an urgent issue for our society and our economy, and we know that Albertans want a very real plan to address it. Even with the change in government and changing priorities, being able to have a solution, being able to have a plan going forward is incredibly important.

I do think it's important to note that the implementation of a carbon tax was fundamentally a Conservative idea. Preston Manning has advocated for carbon taxes. It's widely known as the most efficient, most transparent, and most effective way to address changing climate. This was a market solution to a conquerable problem of climate change. Now we're just kicking that can down the road, without another solution ready to go. Once the impacts get stronger, it will require more government spending and intervention to be able to solve, so we're really stealing from our future at this point.

But I have spoken to the reasons why I think this amendment is important, making sure that the funds do not become a slush fund, which is what the members opposite spoke strongly against in the 29th Legislature, and that is why it has my support. I hope all members will support this amendment.

The Deputy Chair: Any other members wishing to speak on amendment A2? I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs is going to speak.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to the notice of amendment brought forward by the

Member for Edmonton-North West, to talk about what the revenue would be supporting. I'd just like to talk a little bit about some of the things that we had set up to support out of the carbon levy.

Transit. In Edmonton-Castle Downs constituents have a difficult time accessing public transit, so what we did is we invested \$3 billion over 10 years for light rail transit in both Calgary and Edmonton from the CLP, including \$1.53 billion for Calgary's green line and \$1.47 billion to support Edmonton Transit, including the west valley line. This budget also included \$967 million over GreenTRIP and other community transit investments.

We talked about the rebates: \$700 million rebated to a majority – that's two-thirds – of Albertans to make their lives more affordable and to offset the carbon levy costs. That would be gone.

We looked at upgrading things such as schools, universities, hospitals, and colleges, all very important. Forty million dollars has been invested in schools, universities, colleges, and hospitals for projects that cut emissions and save operating costs such as the University of Alberta district heating project, which allows the university to own and operate its own thermal energy, cutting 60,000 tonnes of emissions.

10:00

We talked about Energy Efficiency Alberta. Programs launched since 2017 have yielded \$510 million in energy savings, \$710 million in economic growth, 4.2 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions reductions – that's the same as taking about 722,000 vehicles off the road for a year – \$13.5 million in energy efficiency products installed, and 12 million cubic metres of water savings. For every dollar invested into the EEA programs, \$3.30 was returned to Albertans' pockets. That's a big deal, Mr. Chair.

I would ask that all members in this House support this amendment, and at this time I would like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Chair, I will move that we rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[The Speaker in the chair]

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

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the 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 Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. That is carried and so ordered.

I see the hon. Government House Leader is rising.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members for their hard work this evening. Good ground has been made. As such, I will move that we adjourn the House until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:04 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Statement by the Speaker	
Table Officer Janet Schwegel	225
Government Motions	
Amendments to Standing Orders	225
Division	228
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 3 Job Creation Tax Cut (Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment) Act	236
Bill 2 An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business	236
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 1 An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax.....	239

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