



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, June 10, 2019

Day 10

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

First Session

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Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UCP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Milliken, Nicholas, Calgary-Currie (UCP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UCP)  
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)  
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,  
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UCP)  
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)  
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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)  
Dreeschen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)  
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP),  
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),  
Government Whip  
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Fir, Hon. Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UCP)  
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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  
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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)  
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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),  
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Deputy Government Whip  
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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  
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Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)  
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)  
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)  
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)  
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)  
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)  
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)  
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

### Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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

Philip Massolin, Manager of Research and  
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Nancy Robert, Research Officer  
Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of  
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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 and Private Members' Public Bills**

Chair: Mr. Ellis  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

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

### **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

1:30 p.m.

Monday, June 10, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, the prayer. Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interests and prejudice, keep in mind the responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by R.J. Chambers. I invite you to participate in the language of your choice.

### Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!  
True patriot love in all of us command.  
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,  
Il sait porter la croix!  
Ton histoire est une épopée  
Des plus brillants exploits.  
God keep our land glorious and free!  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

Hon. members, I might just congratulate you on the stirring rendition of *O Canada*. I'm not sure if it was for the Canadian women's soccer game versus Cameroon, started just half an hour ago, or perhaps game 5 of the Raptors' series tonight. Either way, I'm sure all of the teams would have been impressed with your singing efforts.

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** In the Speaker's gallery this afternoon I'm very pleased to welcome a familiar face back to the Legislative Assembly, the former MLA for Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley and former Minister of Energy Ms Marg McCuaig-Boyd. I'd invite you to rise. [some applause]

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I ask that you keep your applause till the end. Visiting us today all the way from the constituency of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain, please join me in welcoming a School at the Legislature group, Stony Plain Central school.

Also joining us are Taleesha Thorogood – I'm not sure if these guests have made it yet or not – and Andrew House.

Also in the galleries this afternoon as guests of the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul: Brenda Rosychuk, Jennifer Muirhead, Johanna Green, and Julie Kelndorfer.

Thank you very much for joining us.

### Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley.

## National Public Service Week

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In 1992 National Public Service Week was created following the passage of the serving Canadians better act. Its objective was to recognize the value of the services performed by public service employees and to recognize their contribution. Today marks the start of National Public Service Week, an opportunity to recognize all public servants across Canada for their contributions to the well-being of all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to have a high-quality public service that is professional, nonpartisan, and trustworthy. Every day our public servants take great pride in delivering a variety of services that support the work of our government and meet the needs of Albertans in their day-to-day lives. Their objective is to do this efficiently and effectively while committing to core public service of Canada values, which are integrity, dedication, and excellence.

Here in Alberta the public service is committed to continuous improvement to better serve our province and fellow citizens. They make a difference in the lives of Albertans every day. From keeping us safe to improving health care and inventing new life-changing products and technologies, our public servants truly serve the public.

National Public Service Week was designed to promote pride in and recognition of the public service of Canada by providing internal recognition and by raising Canadians' awareness of the excellence of the public service. Our new government shares their commitment and their passion for helping the people of this province, for doing everything we can to provide Albertans with optimal economic opportunities and public services.

In 2019 National Public Service Week will take place from June 9 to 15. During this time I encourage all Albertans to join me in extending our appreciation and thanks to all public servants for their important contributions to our country. I look forward to what we will accomplish as we work together to get Alberta back to work, to stand up for our province's right to control our economic destiny, and to make life better for all Albertans.

Thank you.

## Legislative and Social Change

**Mr. Dang:** Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Infrastructure said that P3 projects had been adopted all over the world before I was even born. Not only was this deeply offensive to me, but this was deeply offensive to young Albertans across this province.

But let's talk about things that happened before I was born, on April 7, 1995. Mr. Speaker, before I was born, people with disabilities weren't even allowed to vote. Before I was even born, women weren't allowed to vote. Before I was even born, there was no free trade deal between Canada and the United States. Before I was even born, Alberta used to sterilize people the government deemed disabled. Before I was even born, gays weren't allowed to marry in Canada. Before I was even born, Chinese people wishing to immigrate to Canada had to pay a head tax. Before I was even born, owning another person as property was legal in British North America. Before I was even born, it was normal to round up First Nations people and place them in residential schools. Before I was even born, teachers had to quit their jobs if they got pregnant.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, a lot has changed since I was born. A lot has changed for the better because of dedicated people in buildings like this fighting to make their communities better. The minister should be ashamed of what he said in this House last week. Young people like myself will continue to fight for a better future for ourselves. A lot has changed since I was born; a lot has changed for

the better. While the government chooses to sling insults and throw mud, our NDP opposition will continue to stand up for all Albertans. I will always fight against this government turning back the clock on progress.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Hanson:** I'll try my best to follow that one, Mr. Speaker.

### MS Society Lakeland Regional Office

**Mr. Hanson:** Canada has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis in the world. Here in Alberta we have among the highest rates in the country. On average, 11 Canadians are diagnosed with MS every day. MS is a chronic disease of the central nervous system affecting vision, memory, balance, and mobility, and women are three times more likely to be diagnosed than men. Sixty per cent of adults diagnosed are between the ages of 20 and 49 years.

Alberta is recognized as an international leader in MS research. Since 1948 the MS Society has funded over \$175 million in MS research as they work toward new treatments, a better quality of life, and, ultimately, a cure. The MS Society offers programs and services for affected people and their families and advocates to improve life for Albertans affected.

1:40

I'd like to highlight the work of the society's Lakeland regional office. Based out of St. Paul, supported by their local staffperson Brenda Rosychuk and committed volunteers and led by the council chair, Jennifer Muirhead, both of whom are here today in the gallery, they support a vast area comprised of 65 towns and promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle and help to connect people to community wellness programs.

The St. Paul MS Walk, the community's signature event, began in 2008 with under 300 participants; 10 years later it had nearly 600. Since 2008 the event has raised over \$1.75 million, with a significant portion coming from a team out of Bonnyville called MS Ain't Purdy. Originally captained by James Purdy, a young man with MS, the torch has since been taken up by his young son Griffin and daughter Stella. In four years as captain 11-year-old Griffin raised over \$60,000, adding to their total of half a million dollars. MS Ain't Purdy was the number one MS Walk team in Canada in 2014. The sheer magnitude of the St. Paul walk is incredible. On a per capita basis the St. Paul event far exceeds its much larger urban counterparts.

The MS Society's Lakeland regional office has been exemplary, and it's my honour and pleasure to salute their efforts today.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

### Pride Month

**Mr. Turton:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This month we acknowledge those brave Albertans who fought hard for their LGBTQ2S-plus rights. All Albertans deserve the freedom to be true to themselves regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation. While we have so much to celebrate, we also have a great distance to go before everyone in this country is treated equally.

Pride month is an opportunity to celebrate our shared belief in unity and diversity. It's also a good occasion to show gratitude for the many successes and contributions of Albertans who identify from our LGBTQ2S-plus community. All human beings are equal

in value and dignity and deserve respect. Individuals of different perspectives must respect each other and value one another as fellow human beings. No one should deny the dignity or freedom of those Canadians that seek to make our country a better place to live.

I personally look forward to attending both the crosswalk painting planned for June 22 in Stony Plain and the Pride at the Centre celebration, to be held in the Multicultural Heritage Centre on June 15. Both of these events are opportunities for the communities of both Spruce Grove and Stony Plain to celebrate our diversity and rally together as a community.

With kindness and understanding, I wish all people in this province a pride month full of support, love, and respect.

Thank you.

### Mobile-home Owner Consumer Protection

**Mr. Carson:** Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis threatening the over 30,000 Albertans who live in mobile-home communities across our province. For years homeowners have come to me with stories of sky-high lot rents and unaccountable management bodies. People are being priced out of their own homes because they can't afford to pay lot fees, which climb to upwards of \$1,000 a month. In many cases these lot rents have become higher than the mortgage payments for the homes themselves.

With rising fees, homeowners are looking to hold management companies accountable to manage the basic infrastructure of their community, which is only fair. Unfortunately, this is not happening. I've heard from seniors trapped in their homes because snow and ice aren't being cleared, and those who try to make that trip: many of them are injured from falls. Simply put, mobile-home owners are looking for the same protections that are provided to others under the Residential Tenancies Act, and they want this government to take action.

Unfortunately, for years the needs of mobile-home owners have been ignored, and for decades Conservatives have let everyday people fall behind while big corporations and the wealthy got ahead at their expense. Now they want to double down on that legacy, with big cuts to the services we depend on. Albertans deserve better from their government.

Our caucus will continue to push for changes to the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act that would provide additional powers to residents and new remedial measures for tenants. We call on this government to do the right thing and take action for the many people who are falling through the cracks in these communities.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

### Pride Shabbat Dinner in Edmonton

**Ms Goodridge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to share with the members of this Assembly an event that I and a few of my colleagues attended on Friday, the annual Edmonton Pride Shabbat. This special event, hosted by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, and the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, served as a kickoff to pride month and provided an opportunity to come together with both the Jewish and LGBTQ2S-plus communities. Pride Shabbat lets us celebrate both our diversity and our individuality. The organizers of this event believe it is important to demonstrate respect and inclusion for members of the LGBTQ2S-plus community, and I am proud to stand with them. I would also

mention that this was my first Shabbat dinner, and it did not disappoint.

I believe that everyone in this Assembly will agree that discrimination is wrong in whatever form it may take. Previous members of this Assembly believed that as well and passed the Alberta Human Rights Act as a way to combat discrimination. We as legislators need to build on that legacy and ensure that we make Alberta a more fair and inclusive province. Discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, race, marital status, gender identity or expression, creed, age, colour, disability, political or religious beliefs is never acceptable. Unfortunately, there are still far too many situations where these human rights are being infringed upon. Our province and our society are still hurt by instances of anti-Semitism, homophobia, and transphobia. We must do better.

Events like the Edmonton Pride Shabbat that I attended offer an opportunity to celebrate the progress that's been made and demonstrate our commitment to the work that's needed to eliminate discrimination. Our United Conservative government stands together condemning discrimination. We welcome all Albertans regardless of whom they love or how they pray. It was an honour to be invited to attend this Shabbat dinner, and I encourage all members to join me in attending pride events throughout the month of June.

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has a tabling.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of the expenditures and tax multipliers from Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2009 budget. The formal analysis presented by the economist and former Prime Minister clearly demonstrates that corporate income tax cuts are the least effective means to drive economic growth.

I also have a tabling, with the requisite number of copies, of Public Health and Public Order Outcomes Associated with Supervised Drug Consumption [Sites]: A Systematic Review.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Albert is rising to table a document.

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've the requisite number of copies of an article by St. Albert Today, powered by the *St. Albert Gazette*: Minimum Wage Rollback Worries Youth Committee.

Thank you.

### Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of the hon. Mr. Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, pursuant to the Insurance Act the Automobile Insurance Rate Board 2018 annual report; pursuant to the Alberta Capital Finance Authority Act the Alberta Capital Finance Authority annual report 2018.

### Oral Question Period

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

### Education Funding

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 1,800 additional students, 220 fewer teachers: that's the math confronting the Calgary board

of education because this government won't fund classrooms properly. I met with the head of the ATA local 38 this weekend, and he warned that class sizes will increase and that students will certainly suffer. To the Minister of Education: is it that you're ineffective at your job, or is it that you just don't care?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance is rising to answer.

**Mr. Toews:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government's commitment to education funding has been clear, and I'm pleased to confirm today that proposed enrolment growth will be fully funded for this upcoming year. Alberta's families and students depend on this government to ensure that a high quality of education is delivered, and that's what we're going to do.

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

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the first answer to the question that I've asked about 10 times. It's nice to hear that the growth for the more than 1,800 new students for the Calgary board of education will actually be funded. I think I heard that for the first time in this House. Thank you very much to the government for actually saying that for the first time.

What about feeding the hungry kids, what about the classroom improvement fund – will CIF and will the school nutrition program be funded, or are kids going to go to school hungry? – and will classrooms continue to be overcrowded, Mr. Speaker?

1:50

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, again, our government is fully committed and will ensure that students' needs are taken care of. We're committed to a high quality of education in this province. We have committed to maintain school funding and, in fact, to fully fund increased enrolment. We will ensure that Alberta students have a world-class education.

**Ms Hoffman:** Fully funding increased enrolment: kudos for saying that for the first time. We asked that over and over and over again in the election; there was silence. We asked it at least 10 times in the House; there was silence. We are glad to see that you've listened to us and to the advocacy that parents and teachers have been doing over the last several months. Kudos on that.

What about the hungry kids that are showing up to school, Mr. Speaker? The I think it was over 4,400 kids that are being fed a nutritious school lunch because this government, the NDP government, invested in them: is the government opposite going to let kids go to school hungry, or will you continue with that program and grow it so that hungry kids across our province have the opportunity to be nourished and focused on their educational needs, or will that be cut?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, again, we are fully committed to ensuring that this government delivers a world-class education system to Albertan families and to Albertan students. We're committed to ensuring that Alberta students' needs are met.

I just want to point out that we're, maybe more importantly, implementing economic policies in this province that will ensure that we have a sustainable education system in the future, something that the members opposite could not and did not do during their term in office.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood is rising with a question.

### LGBTQ2S-plus Rights

**Member Irwin:** Yesterday students in Calgary organized a rally to protest this government's plans to take away LGBTQ rights. Last week people gathered in Edmonton to protest this government's unwillingness to take the harmful practice of conversion therapy seriously. Protesters even attended the government's raising of the pride flag on Friday. For the record, simply raising a flag does not make you an ally. To the Premier: can you explain why you or any of your ministers are claiming to be allies when we know the changes that you are bringing in will traumatize the LGBTQ2S-plus population?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, many of our members attended the raising of the pride flag here on our Legislature Grounds. It was an honour for them to do that. One of our particular ministers talked about his daughter and her wife and talked about their child and how important it is for us here in Alberta to make sure that we have an inclusive Alberta here for all Albertans. I personally am looking forward to going to pride events across Alberta, like I have historically.

**Member Irwin:** Protesters at the flag raising Friday carried signs that said: LGBTQ rights are human rights, and you cannot attack our rights and raise a flag. The culture minister told media that the flag represents a commitment from government to support all Albertans. She added: love is love. I agree. I'm going to give any minister here today a chance to break ranks with this Premier, who is rapidly rolling back the rights of youth to establish gay-straight alliances. To those ministers: will you stand in support of keeping the current GSA laws in place?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to making sure that Alberta has the strongest gay-straight alliance provisions in all of Canada. We've been clear on that from day one. We've been clear on that in the campaign. We're not here to divide Albertans; we're here to make sure that all Albertans are free to live their lives as they choose. That is a commitment from us, to make sure that all Albertans can live with freedom.

**Member Irwin:** Then why change the legislation? Two months ago on the campaign trail the Premier told reporters, quote: we just don't get distracted by issues that voters aren't talking about. He said this when asked specifically about gay-straight alliances. Yet now, in its first legislative session, this government has introduced a bill, Bill 8, that does nothing to modernize schools but does everything to destroy gay-straight alliances. To the Premier: if you don't get distracted by GSAs, then why is it such a high priority for you to destroy them?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, as I already noted, we support making sure that we have the strongest protections for gay-straight alliances in all of Canada. All of Canada. We should be celebrating the fact that both parties represented in this Chamber support the fact that we should have the strongest protections for gay-straight alliances in all of Canada. It's a day to be celebrated, not dividing Albertans.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

### Budget 2019 Revenue Forecasts

**Ms Phillips:** Last week the Premier attempted to sell his favourite stenographer at the *Calgary Sun* a tall tale about the budget. Now, I'm not surprised that there's a hole in the budget. The Premier

himself put it there. A tax giveaway to his wealthy friends? That'll cost us \$4.5 billion. Cancelling oil-by-rail contracts? Kiss another \$2 billion in revenue goodbye. To the Premier: won't you admit that instead of a path to balance, you're on a path to baloney?

**The Speaker:** I'm not entirely sure about the use of the word "baloney," but perhaps I'll get back to the member and determine whether that was parliamentary or not.

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, it's been clear as we have looked into the province's books and as we're starting to move forward with our budget plan, that we'll be introducing this fall, that in fact we are inheriting a fiscal mess from the members opposite when they were in government. In fact, the revenues that were overstated during their time have meant that we're having to grapple with increased challenges here in this province. One thing I will say is that we are absolutely committed to delivering high-quality . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

**Ms Phillips:** Provincial budgets are audited, and they're developed by public service officials based on private-sector revenue forecasts. When the Premier peddles poppycock to his favourite propagandists, he insults the officials who work tirelessly on the budget, yet he continues to keep those officials among his key advisers. Ray Gilmour, the Premier's Deputy Minister of Executive Council, would have had a hand in the budget, for example. Is this government accusing Mr. Gilmour and hundreds of other Treasury and Finance officials of not telling the truth? Sure sounds like it.

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, the senior staff in our departments are of the highest quality and highest calibre. I will remind the members opposite again that we have inherited a fiscal mess brought on by irresponsible decisions by the previous government. We're committed to deliver high-quality services to Albertans and to be fiscally responsible, which is what Albertans expect from this government. They expect that we won't spend their children's inheritance.

**Ms Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, this is a cynical ploy to buy cover to stop feeding kids and bring in credit card medicine. Six and a half billion dollars and counting cut from the revenues: no wonder the forecasts don't add up. And who pays the price? Kids, the elderly, the sick, and even the truth. To the Premier: will you admit that while we aren't cooking any meals for low-income children, you sure are cooking the books?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, when they were in government, had this province on a trajectory for a hundred billion dollars of accumulated debt. On that trajectory we could not provide a world-class education system or a world-class health care system. We are committed to creating a business environment that will attract investment, create jobs and opportunities, and sustain government revenue used for the people of this province. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** I might just hope that we could hear some answers. Whether or not you like the answer is neither here nor there, but I think it's reasonable that the Speaker should be able to hear it.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

### Job Creation

**Mr. Bilous:** Mr. Speaker, this UCP government ran on a promise to create jobs, but new figures released by StatsCan on Friday show that we lost more than 21,000 full-time jobs in May, the first month



of this government's mandate. Now we see the Premier attempting to misdirect Albertans about the provincial budget. He's looking for scapegoats because he hasn't done a thing to support job growth. To the Minister of Finance: when will we actually see jobs gained, or is your so-called spring of renewal actually a spring of rhetoric?

2:00

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, as all Albertans know, the election took place on April 16. Job numbers in May really, quite frankly, are an inheritance from the previous government's economic realities, the mess that they left us from their term in government. Again, we're committed to implementing policies that will attract investment, create opportunities for all Albertans, create great job opportunities for every Albertan.

**Mr. Bilous:** Blame us if they're bad; take credit yourself if they're good. I get it.

Not only is this government not creating jobs, but they're literally picking the pockets of workers. We know that their so-called open-for-business bill stands to take thousands out of people's pockets, and it will hit our oil and gas and construction sectors particularly hard. Those very same sectors were among the ones that saw job losses in May. Can the same minister explain to Albertans how either losing their jobs or taking a pay cut is part of their plan to open Alberta for business?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration is rising to answer.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Our focus, as mentioned by the Minister of Finance, is the creation of jobs. Bill 2 is actually to get Albertans back to work, and we have a series of measures to do that, including changes to banked overtime, general holidays, and youth minimum wage, to get Albertans back to work. That's what we were elected to do, and that's what we will do. You will see a change over time as our policies take effect.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Bilous:** Yes. You'll see less pay for the same work. Good strategy, minister.

This UCP government has put all of their support behind a risky corporate tax cut, that has literally bankrupted other jurisdictions. We know that corporate tax cuts won't generate a dime of economic activity for at least two years. That's not me talking, Mr. Speaker. That's, rather, the UCP's own election platform. To the minister: how many more jobs will we stand to lose while we wait years for your apparent plan to get in gear?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, we were very proud to implement the job creation corporate tax cut, which will bring our corporate tax rates from 12 to 8 per cent within three years. It will make Alberta one of the most competitive jurisdictions in North America and, by far, the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada. It will attract investment. In fact, senior economists, reputable economists have suggested that it will create over \$12 billion of economic activity and 55,000 additional jobs for Albertans.

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

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is for the hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration. Canada's Labour Force Survey of May 2019, released Friday, shows that the unemployment rate in Alberta remains stable at 6.7 per cent while the national rate has dropped to 5.4 per cent. This shows that while Alberta's economy has become stagnant, elsewhere in Canada the

economy is humming. It is evident to me that other jurisdictions in Canada have adapted their regulations more effectively than our former government was able to do. What does the minister plan to do to help Albertans get back into the workforce?

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

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Drumheller-Stettler for the question. The unemployment rate is far too high, and business investment continues to be down. We're working to change that by reducing red tape and tax burdens on job creators. We have introduced Bill 3, the job creation tax cut act, to reduce the corporate tax rate by a third over the next four years to attract investment and create thousands of new jobs. We've also introduced Bill 2, the open for business act, to reduce burdens on job creators by returning to the previous general holiday pay and banked overtime rules.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. minister. To the same minister. Given that Alberta has always been known as the land of opportunity, with the phrase "Alberta advantage" coming from a reputation of a strong industry which provided diverse career options with high-wage growth for all Albertans and attracted job seekers from across Canada, and given that job prospects have become significantly more scarce in recent years, what is the minister doing to ensure that Alberta remains the land of opportunity?

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

**Mr. Copping:** Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. We are introducing a host of acts. We talked about some of them, Bill 2 and Bill 3. In particular, we're also taking action to help youth get jobs here in Alberta. We're addressing the youth unemployment crisis with a new job-creation wage of \$13 an hour. The \$15 per hour minimum wage resulted in young Albertans not being able to find work. This \$15 minimum wage was introduced by the previous government. The new youth minimum wage will encourage job creators to hire Albertans and get them back to work.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Horner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. minister. Given that properly preparing our young people for the job market is a fundamental piece of a strong future economy and given that the youth unemployment rate is nearly twice that of the adult unemployment rate, leaving thousands of young people without essential, on-the-job training at the most important time for them to be shaping their careers, how does the minister plan to address this issue?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I've already spoken to, we are introducing a youth job creation wage. In addition to the open for business act and the youth minimum wage, our government has passed legislation that scrapped the carbon tax and introduced legislation that reduces corporate tax and red tape. These changes will restore investor confidence, encourage entrepreneurs, and bring back the Alberta advantage. We also plan to introduce legislation to ensure fair access to regulated professions and trades

for newcomers, and this legislation will ensure that registration certification processes are transparent, objective, and fair.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

### **Election Commissioner Investigation of UCP 2017 Financial Contributions**

**Ms Ganley:** Mr. Speaker, \$77,250: that's the total of the fines now levied in the United Conservative Party kamikaze scandal. The Election Commissioner has been hard at work investigating the irregular financial contributions that emerged from the kamikaze campaign orchestrated by the Premier's staff. To the government: can anyone stand up and tell me that the Election Commissioner can count on you to provide the necessary resources and support to his office to complete his investigation?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure that we reference in this House that I'd gladly talk about government business here. Time and time again we're getting politics brought into this Chamber, and to quote the second-tallest member of this Chamber, we get fear and smear brought into this Chamber all the time. There's a reason why they're on that side of the Chamber getting comfortable. We're going to be focusing on jobs, the economy, and pipelines.

**Ms Ganley:** Given, Mr. Speaker, that repeating someone's own words is not fear and smear and given that this UCP government has refused for over a month to appoint a special prosecutor and given that they have now admitted that a conflict of interest does in fact exist and a special prosecutor has been announced, can the Minister of Justice affirm to Albertans that no one in his government will interfere with the work of the Election Commissioner or change the election finance and contribution laws while he continues to investigate the kamikaze scandal?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the question. There is an independent process in Alberta for doing special prosecutors, an independent process with an independent RCMP investigation. We've been over this time and time again in this Chamber. We're going to be making sure on this side of the House that we're focused on jobs, the economy, and pipelines and on doing the job that 55 per cent of Albertans elected us to do.

Thank you.

**Ms Ganley:** Given, Mr. Speaker, that I think that the public expects us to be ethical, whether we're focused on jobs or not, and given that the Premier himself has tried to write off this scandal as idle Twitter gossip and given that for all we know, these fines are the tip of the iceberg, will the government commit to respecting the independence of the Election Commissioner and allowing him to do his work and to accepting the ruling of this independent office?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I take issue with the hon. member referencing ethics. I'm not sure if they're questioning my ethics. I wasn't sure that the frame of reference around that was appropriate.

We're going to make sure that we continue to focus on funding the priorities of Albertans. They want us focusing on getting Albertans back to work. They don't want us relitigating stuff from the past. We're going to be making sure that we focus on getting Albertans back to work. [interjections]

### **Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language**

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I think it would not be appropriate to imply or to say, as I may or may not have heard: that's because you don't have ethics. It would be wildly unparliamentary, so I can't imagine that it actually happened from that side of the House.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning is rising with a question.

### **2:10 Supervised Drug Consumption Sites**

**Ms Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, last week I was joined by families and survivors of addiction at the constituency office of the Minister of Health. These brave individuals went public with their concerns about this UCP government's plan to freeze funding for new supervised consumption sites. These sites have saved at least 2,400 lives. Kym Porter, a Medicine Hat mother who lost her son to an overdose in 2016, said that this Premier's decision is, and I will quote, akin to wilful murder. Can this government explain why you're refusing to listen to Kym and countless other survivors?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, as promised in our election platform, we'll be reviewing the proposals for any new sites before funding them. We also have made a commitment to spending a hundred million dollars for mental health and addictions here in the province of Alberta. We recognize that this should be something that should be dealt with by Health. It's a serious issue. We're going to make sure that we deal with it in a thoughtful way.

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

**Ms Sweet:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this Premier is for 2.0 and the sites have been cancelled in Ontario, we would like to see our government put more funding into ensuring the safety of people living in Alberta and around these supervised consumption sites, and given that the Minister of Health agreed to meet with some of these survivors that protested at his office on Friday but given that even after that meeting the survivors felt no more optimism and a family physician, Bonnie Larson, said the minister needs to get out of the way, to the Minister of Health: can you explain to Bonnie why you're still standing in her way?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise here today on behalf of the Minister of Health to speak to this matter. As that minister has mentioned many times, his door is always open. He's always open to listening to the concerns of Albertans and making sure that they bring it forward in a thoughtful manner. We're here, again, making sure that we deal with the root cause. We want to deal with addictions in a compassionate and thoughtful way. We've maintained our commitment to making sure that there's adequate funding and looking at the future potential sites in a way that we can look at it holistically.

Thank you.

**Ms Sweet:** Well, Mr. Speaker, given that part of the spectrum of addictions is actually safe consumption sites and we know that they save lives and given that the review was launched by the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions with no details and given that we have no idea who's going to be involved in the review and what the scope is and how long it will take and given that all this makes these survivors wonder if this is purely a partisan smokescreen to again justify shutting down these supervised consumption sites, like in Ontario, to the minister: can you tell this House exactly who is conducting the review, and will you commit,

again, that both Kym Porter and Bonnie Larson will be allowed on this panel?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, I can speak from my own personal experience in this. I was on the board of the Calgary Drug Treatment Court for over five years dealing with addictions, making sure that we provided services in a way that deals with it head-on. I would invite the minister – I'm not allowed to comment, apparently, about who is or is not in this Chamber, and I respect the practices of this House – and if there's a thoughtful way to deal with this, I know that he'd welcome that meeting.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore is rising with a question.

### Energy Company Municipal Tax Payment

**Ms Issik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to the downturn in the energy sector and a series of NDP policies that piled onto Alberta's oil and gas industry, municipalities are finding it increasingly difficult to collect taxes from oil and gas properties in rural Alberta. After four years of NDP government many of these companies are in difficult financial situations and just aren't able to pay what they owe. To the Municipal Affairs minister: what is your advice to the rural municipalities who are needing to collect these taxes?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Government understands that this is a pressing issue for our rural municipalities and our oil and gas companies. Upon taking office, I immediately prioritized getting all of the stakeholders to the table, including the Rural Municipalities of Alberta and representatives from all oil and gas industries. Right now we are working on finding solutions that strike the right balance between the financial needs of our municipalities and the viability of the oil and gas sector.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

**Ms Issik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that rural municipalities are counting on these taxes to support their local budgets and given that I've heard from some of my hon. colleagues that many municipalities are asking residential taxpayers to cover the shortfall and given that many municipal leaders are wondering how this situation got to where it is, can the minister illuminate on why some oil and gas companies who operate in rural Alberta are finding it difficult to meet their tax obligations?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member again for the question. It is no secret that many of these companies are facing insolvency or receivership. If these companies go under like Trident Exploration did, municipalities would get no taxes, landowners would get no lease payments, and the orphan well fund would be that much more strained. We aren't going to let that happen, which is why we have made this issue a priority and have committed to finding balanced solutions that benefit all parties involved.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Calgary-Glenmore has her last question.

**Ms Issik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs for the answers. Given that municipalities provide vital services to Albertans like street

cleaning, snow removal, and waste-water and waste management and given the urgency and severity of the situation, what steps is the government taking to ease the short-term burden on affected municipalities while they wait for the long-term solutions to materialize?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We understand the urgency of this issue, which is why we immediately made it a priority. We are working with groups like the Rural Municipalities of Alberta and the Urban Municipalities Association to find the right solutions for all the parties involved. We are making life better for the energy industry and for the municipalities by eliminating red tape, cutting taxes, and creating jobs in every community, all things that the NDP failed to do in the last four years. We want to see our oil and gas sector succeed, and we want to see our rural municipalities succeed as well.

### Oil Sands Emissions Provincial Control of Natural Resources

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we managed to convince the government to fund for enrolment; hopefully, we can get some action on climate change, too. Our government's climate change plan legislated a 100-megatonne cap on oil sands emissions, but now the Premier and party officials aren't sending clear signals about whether or not that emissions cap will remain in place. Can anyone on the front bench tell us whether or not they intend to keep the emissions cap in place?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance is rising.

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, thank you, through you, to the member opposite for that question. We're committed to ensure that this government takes concrete steps to reduce carbon emissions in this province. We do have and we will be implementing a program that will target our heavy emitters, basically targeting 60 per cent of the emissions in this province. We're working at rolling that plan out, and we're confident that Albertans will support it.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like uncertainty is still the watchword when it comes to the 100-megatonne cap on emissions.

Given that our government consulted extensively with industry, can anybody on the front bench tell us whether or not they're going to consult with industry about the existence of this emissions cap, and if so, who will they be consulting with?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, we don't need a lecture from this NDP opposition on consultation. In the last election campaign, back in 2015, the carbon tax was not in their platform, yet they brought in the largest tax in Alberta history. I'm proud to know that Bill 1 has received royal assent and that gas prices at pumps across Alberta have dropped. We're receiving resounding feedback on our plan here. We're going to be focusing on jobs. We have a really credible environmental plan, as the Minister of Finance mentioned. We're going to keep working hard on Alberta's priorities.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to give the member a lecture on climate change being real, human caused, and needing urgent action any time he likes.

Given that the oil and gas industry is mostly in situ and given that if Alberta removes the 100-megatonne cap on our oil sands industry, the federal government through Bill C-69 will then take

control of our natural resources, can anybody on the front bench tell us how they intend to protect the constitutional right for Alberta to govern its own natural resources?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, we have been clear that if Bill C-48 and Bill C-69 go forward in their current form, we will be launching constitutional challenges to defend this province. We're going to defend Alberta. We're going to defend our constitutional rights to develop our natural resources. That's one of the reasons why Albertans elected us with 55 per cent of the vote, over a million votes. This is a historic mandate that we have, the most detailed platform in Alberta history. That's what we were elected on. That's what we're going to keep our focus on.

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

2:20

### Minimum Wage for Youth

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Unfair: that's how many young workers are describing this Premier's plan to gut their wages. But if this government won't listen to them, perhaps it will take some advice from the late Premier Ralph Klein. In 1998 Klein's government eliminated the student youth wage because it was unfair to young people and, quote: a fair day's work deserves a fair day's wage. To the minister: can you tell us which Premier was right? Yours or Ralph Klein?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration is rising to answer.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The student job-creation wage is just that; it's about creating jobs for Alberta's youth. When other provinces have abolished or decreased the differential of their youth minimum wages, it has been shown that this may have lowered employment rates 5 to 10 per cent for 15- to 16-year-olds. The previous government created a crisis, a youth job crisis, and our youth minimum wage is focused on fixing that. It is fair to get Alberta's youth back to work.

**Ms Gray:** Given that this Premier campaigned frequently alongside well-funded lobbyists and given that it was Restaurants Canada Vice-president Mark von Schellwitz himself that argued in 1998 to Klein that the youth student wage should be even lower than it was at the time – credit to Premier Klein, who ignored those calls and actually increased wages for youth – again to the minister: will you wisely ignore the lobbyists, like the late Premier Klein did, and reverse your plan to gut wages for youth?

**Mr. Copping:** Mr. Speaker, again, this plan and Bill 2 are about getting all Albertans, including our youth, back to work. When the previous government increased the minimum wage and made changes to the general holidays, they significantly impacted job opportunities in a number of industries, including the restaurant industry. I heard from restaurateurs, even as early as today, who indicated that with the changes that are coming, not only will it reduce their costs, but they will be able to hire more youth.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods on her second supplemental.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the dire predictions made by Restaurants Canada VP Mark von Schellwitz in 1998 proved to be incorrect and given that we've already seen this government move against workers to appease restaurant lobbyists,

to the minister: why won't you show the same leadership Premier Klein showed instead of bowing to your lobbyist friends?

**The Speaker:** The minister of labour.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we have discussed in this House over the last week, the increase in the minimum wage actually drove thousands of Albertan youth out of the job market. This was not only demonstrated in theory but actually in practice. When businesses in Alberta were surveyed, they indicated they actually laid off youth, they actually laid off workers, and they reduced job opportunities. We are focused, through Bill 2 and the youth minimum wage, to create jobs for Albertans and get our youth back working.

Thank you.

### Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation

**Mr. Rowswell:** Mr. Speaker, in 2015 the previous government passed Bill 6. This poorly crafted piece of legislation has forced farmers into a Workers' Compensation Board regime and a series of workplace safety rules that do little to protect farm workers and add pointless red tape that further complicates an already difficult job. In our election platform our government swore to launch consultations with farmers and ranchers to replace Bill 6 with better legislation. Can the minister of labour tell us if he has started these consultations?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Labour and Immigration is rising.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright for the question. As indicated, we made a commitment in our platform that we would replace Bill 6 with the farm freedom and safety act. In our platform we also promised to consult with farmers and ranchers before we did that. Their input will help us develop new rules that work for farms and ranches alike. The new laws will balance the unique needs of farmers and ranchers with the need for a common-sense, flexible farm regime. We will commence that this summer.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

**Mr. Rowswell:** Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the Minister of Labour and Immigration. Given that under the current law farmers are forced to pay for Workers' Compensation Board coverage even if they already provided private insurance that offered better coverage and given that this is one of the largest complaints that I've heard about Bill 6, can the minister confirm or deny if our replacement to Bill 6 will allow farmers to choose to provide private insurance instead of that forced upon them by the previous government?

**The Speaker:** The Minister for Labour and Immigration.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WCB coverage is only mandatory on farms and ranches that have waged, nonfamily workers. Family members are exempt. A producer may voluntarily have WCB coverage for family members, but it's not mandatory. As we promised in our platform, we will replace Bill 6 with the farm freedom and safety act. One part of that is giving farmers the choice of WCB insurance or getting workplace insurance from the private sector. I can tell the hon. member that my ministry is in discussion with both the WCB and private insurance companies about options for farmers and ranchers.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

**Mr. Rowsell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the minister of labour. Given that in 2015 the previous government did not consult with farmers before tabling Bill 6 and only began consultations after objections from both Albertans and the previous opposition and given that the secondary phase of Bill 6 did undergo consultations with Albertans before it was enacted, can the minister tell the House whether the government will hold new consultations for sections of the bill that the previous government actually held the necessary consultations with Albertans over?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As previously indicated, in our platform we made a commitment that we would actually undertake consultation. We are undertaking that consultation this summer, and our expectation is that we will be in a position this fall to introduce the farm freedom and safety act.

Thank you very much.

#### Automobile Insurance Rates

**Mr. Carson:** Mr. Speaker, our NDP government took action to protect Albertans from car insurance rate increases of 10, 15 per cent, or even more. We put a 5 per cent cap in place in late 2017, and then extended it until this August. Any increase beyond 5 per cent would be devastating to Albertans who rely on their vehicles to go to work or pick up their kids. To the Minister of Finance: will you commit today to continuing to protect Albertans by leaving the 5 per cent cap in place?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, we are aware and have heard concerns about the cost of insurance. We've certainly heard concerns about the sustainability of our auto insurance sector right now. Our department is looking into options going forward. But one thing we're committed to is ensuring that we have a sustainable automobile insurance system going forward to ensure that Albertans can find cost-effective insurance for their vehicles.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Insurance Bureau of Canada has said that it is, quote, "extremely well positioned with this new government," and given that the IBC has been calling for a lift on the cap, again, will this minister reject the calls of these companies, stand up for everyday Albertans, and maintain the 5 per cent cap?

**Mr. Toews:** Again, Mr. Speaker, this government is aware of the challenges facing the automobile insurance industry. We've been in discussion with officials. We are working with the industry on a claims-and-costs study to fully understand the issues at play and possible solutions going forward. We're listening to Albertans, and we're committed to finding the best solution going forward.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, in due course is just not good enough.

As I stated, the 5 per cent cap is due at the end of August and given that the Alberta economy is still recovering and many are still struggling to make ends meet, will the minister commit today to protect those Albertans and keep the 5 per cent cap in place?

**Mr. Toews:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the challenges in the automobile insurance sector, and no decisions have been made at this point in time. But one thing we will commit to is consulting with Albertans, unlike the members opposite when they rammed through a carbon tax that they never consulted on during the election campaign, unlike the members opposite who rammed through Bill 6 without consulting farmers and ranchers. We're committed to responsible decisions, decisions that are best for Albertans.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

#### 2:30 Public-private Partnerships and Seniors' Housing

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has promised that his government will aggressively pursue public-private partnerships, or P3s, for infrastructure projects, including seniors' homes and lodges. But the previous Conservative government's P3 model was considered a mess by an independent review because of cost overruns, lengthy delays, and insufficient oversight and project management. To the Minister of Infrastructure. Seniors in Alberta need reliable housing. Why are you planning to create another harmful mess for them?

**Mr. Panda:** Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for asking that question. There are always pros and cons of every policy, but in this case it shouldn't be any surprise because we campaigned on that platform. It's our campaign commitment that we will pursue these P3s, but Albertans need not worry about P3s because we are going to review each project and whether that model suits that project or not and then make those decisions.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, certainly there are more cons, Mr. Speaker.

Given that in that same independent report companies said that the increasingly price competitive nature of the P3 model has resulted in diminishing returns that simply do not provide enough incentives for proponents to bid and given that those companies said that there would be more interest if the province shelved the P3 model and switched back to the government's traditional model, which our NDP government did, again to the minister: can you explain how this government will ensure seniors have the affordable housing they need?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Infrastructure.

**Mr. Panda:** Thanks again, Mr. Speaker and to the member for that question. What the NDP government did is not a benchmark for me. Having said that . . .

**Ms Philips:** Is building housing for seniors? Building schools?

**Mr. Panda:** Absolutely. Building schools, building seniors' care facilities are a priority for this government.

We actually said that we will honour the capital project list, the list they proposed for the next four years. We said that we'll support those projects which are sustainable, which are going to get Albertans back to work, and we're going to honour that. That's what we'll do.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that P3s often result in higher than expected costs and given that companies often look to user fees to recover those costs and given that seniors often live on modest, fixed incomes, to the Minister of Seniors and

Housing: will you commit to not increasing fees for seniors regarding the cost overruns, and if not, why not?

**Mr. Glubish:** Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, we take this matter very seriously. We understand that the affordability of housing is critical and is an issue for many Albertans. We thank the member opposite for the opportunity to talk about some of our platform commitments that we made during the campaign to ensure that there's access to affordable housing. One of the reasons why affordable housing is an issue is because there have been increasing cost burdens on home builders due to unnecessary red tape, and that is why our red tape reduction strategy is so critical and will help us to deliver . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

#### **Minimum Wage for Youth** (continued)

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week this government passed a bill which effectively reduced minimum wage for students between the ages of 13 to 17 from a previous \$15 to \$13 per hour. Many students in this province have entered into contractual agreements with employers for which they expect to be paid \$15 an hour, but now students will earn significantly less. This is an issue for students in my constituency and, undoubtedly, everywhere else in the province, where these students work very hard to save money for school and put food on their tables. To the Minister of Labour and Immigration: what do you say to these young Albertans? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** You are an excitable group.

The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Calgary-Cross for the question. If employees have existing contracts or are part of a union's collective agreement, those wage rates are fixed and the youth job-creation wage would not have any impact in those cases. But I want to reinforce that the youth job-creation wage is a minimum. It's a minimum wage, and some employers may choose to pay more than that. What the youth job creation does is give employers more of an incentive to hire more youth so we can get our youth back to work.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for that thorough response. Given that these new policy changes will now take effect and given that this was previously brought up in Chamber by other members on both sides of this House, to the same minister: what will you say to the 500 youth workers who have entered into contracts with the Calgary Stampede, who are budgeting for the upcoming year on a \$15 minimum wage, and now are at risk of earning less than anticipated?

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

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you to the hon. member for the question. We actually had a chance to talk to Warren Connell of the Calgary Stampede about this, and this actually proves the point. He confirmed that any contracts entered into at \$15 an hour were being maintained at that rate, and many employers are stating that they will continue to pay their youth \$15 an hour. [interjections] As I mentioned previously, this is a minimum wage, and employers can choose to pay their employees

more. What this is about is creating opportunities for thousands of youth who have no opportunities and cannot earn anything.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** You would think the opposition, being so excited to hear the question, would also be excited to hear the answer.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Given that these policies will now reduce the minimum wage for students and given that this impact will be felt by students throughout this province and especially in lower income areas where students rely on these jobs to pay their bills, to the same minister: how can you say that the youth job-creation wage will help if youth are now going to earn much less than before and struggle to cover their basic necessities? How can they be expected to live on \$13 an hour, sir?

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

**Mr. Copping:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to Statistics Canada the majority of youth are working part-time and attending school. If the youth are not in school and working full-time, they will receive the general minimum wage. We are committed to get Albertans of all ages back to work. The youth job-creation wage will encourage job creators to hire students for their first job and give youth the opportunity to gain experience and skills, get their foot in the door, and start working up the job ladder. Again, this is about creating opportunities for youth.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

#### **Northern Alberta Wildfire Evacuations**

**Mr. Rehn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As you know, there are many people out of their homes throughout my riding and northern Alberta. While many wildfire evacuees have returned home, many others remain under mandatory evacuation order and continue to face challenges brought on from being evacuated from their homes and communities. These unlucky Albertans continue to be plagued by fear and uncertainty as wildfires continue to pose a threat to their communities. Can the minister update the House as to the status of the evacuations?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Lesser Slave Lake. Our government is working hard to ensure that every Albertan under mandatory evacuation order is taken care of. We are happy to know that more than 6,000 residents evacuated during the wildfire have returned home. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the first responders and emergency management staff who have protected human life throughout this ordeal. Wet, cooler weather has created favourable conditions for firefighters, and we are hopeful that more evacuees will begin to return home soon.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

**Mr. Rehn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the minister, thank you for that useful update. It's great news to know that more than 6,000 evacuees have returned home. Given that unfortunately there are still thousands of Albertans that remain away from their communities and livelihoods due to these evacuations and given that the number one question I hear from constituents is "When can I go home?," to the minister: can you please provide us with an update as to when these Albertans, like

those from Wabasca and Bigstone Cree Nation, in my riding can expect to return home?

2:40

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to do our part in Slave Lake to make this situation right for the evacuees, but given the hardship these mandatory evacuations can cause an individual and family – the wildfire situation in this province remains serious. Those under mandatory evacuation order must remain in safe conditions and in safe locations. We urge all Albertans to stay up to date on wildfire and emergency evacuation . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Rehn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, through you to the minister, thank you for that important update. I would like to take a quick moment to also thank all of the first responders and emergency management staff who have served to protect the lives and safety of my constituents.

Given that these evacuations are put in place to protect the safety of residents and given that being away from your home and livelihood can be a large burden both financially and on one's mental health, to the minister: what is the government doing to assist the wildfire evacuees through these difficult times?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The government understands the toll this has taken on the evacuees. We are doing everything in our power to make the situation much better. We are supporting evacuees who have met the right criteria with financial support, which will assist them with their day-to-day needs until they can go home. We are also helping with temporary food and shelter. We said that we would be there to support the evacuees through this difficult time, and that's exactly what our government is going to do.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will move to Orders of the Day. I encourage members that have other commitments to exit the Chamber in an expeditious manner.

## Orders of the Day

### Motions Other than Government Motions

**The Speaker:** I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview is rising to move Motion 503 on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

### Crude-by-rail Contracts

503. Mr. Schmidt moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to honour the crude-by-rail contracts in order to move Alberta's oil to world markets, protect jobs, and support companies in the province's energy sector.

**Mr. Bilous:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and speak in favour of this motion. I rise to move Motion 503.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Now, if it so pleases the Speaker, I will continue in my debate on this motion and encourage members to not only support this motion but also to engage in a dialogue. Madam Speaker, the reason that the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is proposing this, quite

frankly, is that we know that the Premier and Executive Council have had time to look at the numbers. In fact, earlier today my colleague referenced Ray Gilmour, the new deputy minister of Executive Council, who was a senior official under our government and very familiar with the contract. In fact, he had a hand in it.

Really, this contract does a couple of different things. We know that it's been very frustrating with the delays to the Trans Mountain pipeline. We know that we continue to experience other delays. In fact, line 3 was on track. I think it was a couple of weeks ago that we learned that that project going through the state of Minnesota is now delayed. These projects are absolutely critical to Alberta getting a fair price for our oil, Madam Speaker. When I say "Alberta," it's really Canada because Alberta is Canada's economic engine, and when we get such a discount for having a lack of market access, it hurts all Canadians, quite frankly. That's why we're proposing this motion.

The crude-by-rail contracts: I appreciate the fact that the members opposite during the election had said, "This sounds like a bad deal. We don't think we should continue on it," but now that Executive Council has had a chance to look at the details of the contracts, I hope that they see a couple of different things. One, what this does is that it's a release valve that will come into play very quickly here. I mean, back then it was a medium-term solution. Now it's an immediate-term solution, Madam Speaker, because the railcars would be coming onboard in July. We're talking about moving up to 130,000 barrels per day. That will reduce the differential, which will therefore help every energy producer in Alberta, in fact in western Canada, get a better price per barrel.

Is that the long-term solution? No, Madam Speaker. We said that from the get go. The long-term solution is pipelines. Pipelines are the safest mode of transport hands down, but what this government is doing and what this Premier is doing is telling the world that they will do nothing until a pipeline is built. Even if the federal government tomorrow came forward and said, "We approve the Trans Mountain pipeline," would oil flow tomorrow or the day after? No. It'll be years, so this was a solution that would ensure that our producers get a better price.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, the line of reasoning that the Premier uses, that this would happen on its own: well, the Premier is being a little naive, or he's not being forthright. If it would have already happened, then it would have happened a year ago, six months ago, two years ago. The fact of the matter is that there is capacity, and I know this because I was one of the people that sat down with the rail companies. There is capacity to put on more crude by rail, but they did not want to pay for it. They didn't want to take on the burden. For the government to take on these railcars – we did the numbers – actually, it would mean an increase to general revenue by \$2.2 billion. I mean, I'm sure the opposite side would love to construe this as, "Of course, this is the NDP government being socialist," which is far from the truth. What this is ensuring that our producers get a fair price immediately. It reduces the differential. It moves up to 120,000 barrels per day, but it also means an increase in revenue. This is a profit-generating tool.

My frustration and the reason why I support this motion from the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is that here is a solution that is under the nose of the current government. They just need to honour these contracts. It is not going to be a loss for the government or the people of Alberta; it's actually going to be a revenue generator. More importantly, it gets our product to market now. It doesn't mean waiting for the TMX to get built. As we've seen, there are always delays and unforeseen delays. Again, look at line 3 going through Minnesota.

This was a mid-term solution that this government has available at its disposal. I think it's a shame if they cancel these contracts.

Again, you know, saying that the private sector should just do it on their own: well, they're not. It's the same argument that is flawed as far as the programs to upgrade and refine more of our petrochemicals here in Alberta.

My question to the government is: if a flat tax is all that it took, then why are we building the first-ever propane-to-polypropylene facility in Canada? It doesn't exist. Nowhere do we upgrade propane. Why? That's a great question, Madam Speaker. The companies had said to us: you need to level the playing field, and investment will come to Alberta. There is a role for government. This is something that I can't seem to get through to the members on the opposite side.

In this case, those future royalty credits meant over \$9 billion of investment today, thousands of jobs for men and women today. The crude by rail will mean jobs for Albertans today. It means a better price for our producers. We're standing up for the energy sector. We're standing with Albertan and Canadian energy companies, and I urge the members opposite to do the same.

2:50

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other members wishing to speak to the motion? The hon. Member for Highwood.

**Mr. Sigurdson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on behalf of this government to speak against this motion. I've been a business owner for about 12 years, and you're going to have to, you know, bear with me a bit. There are a lot of reasons I'm speaking out against this motion. There are a lot of red flags. Just bear with me.

Number one, being a business owner for so long, I think it's important to be clear that our government, pretty much any government, should never be in the business of competing with our private sector. This government through the election, you know, even previous to the election, and postelection has been very clear that we are not going to continue with this crude-by-rail contract, and there are several reasons why.

You know, over the past 12 years I personally have negotiated millions of dollars in private contracts, and when I look at this contract specifically, \$3.7 billion, this was a contract that was negotiated very hastily just over a couple of months. I think it was negotiated because there was so much inaction that hadn't been done for four years. They left it to the very end. This is a contract that when it's compressed that short, I think it put them in a position where they're overpaying for these railcars, and it just doesn't seem like a very good deal for the Alberta taxpayers.

I mean, we heard from the Member for Lethbridge-West. She stated that this is roughly \$2 billion in revenue for the province of Alberta. Even if we consider that it is \$2 billion worth of revenue, I'm looking at a signed contract for \$3.7 billion, the largest expenditure in Alberta history, and I'm still looking at it. You know, the business sense in me goes: that's still a \$1.5 billion or more loss. That's just based on the estimates that we have right now, which leads me to the other part of myself in the business of risk.

Being in business – you know, the reason government shouldn't be in business is that the private sector really has the ability to adjust and deal with market values a lot quicker, faster. This is why government shouldn't be in that business. We can't react that well. There are a lot of highs and lows. We know that in the oil sector. This is a historical fact. We've gone through it many times in Alberta. The private sector is almost specifically structured to be able to take these risks, manage them better than government, and mitigate any losses that may come from that. Like I said, we're accountable to the taxpayers as government. That's our primary business, being accountable to every taxpayer that lives here. If

we're looking at \$2 billion in revenue and \$3.7 billion in costs, to me that's just a net loss. It doesn't make sense.

You know, when we're talking about the fact that the private sector isn't capable of taking care of this, I don't believe that either. I mean, that would be under the assumption that the private sector is at a hundred per cent capacity, that they have no ability to go beyond what they're shipping right now, but looking at a National Energy Board report – we're looking at 2018 numbers – they were going from around 145,000 barrels per day in January, and then they fluctuated. They increased to 330,000 barrels per day in October. This leads me to believe that the private sector can increase. If the market is there, this shows that the private sector is more than happy to increase and continue to increase crude by rail.

Now, I think those things are very important to bring up. These are, you know, really the main reasons that we shouldn't be getting into messing with the private sector. We're looking at risk. We're looking at risk. We're look at, as a government, increasing our risk. We're looking at getting involved in the private sector. I just think both of these are going to have a negative effect, and it's not going to benefit the taxpayers in the manner that the opposition is saying that it's going to.

You know, they're saying right now this year alone – we're seeing industry experts at Genscape right now estimating that we could go anywhere from 300,000 barrels per day this summer up to 400,000 and 500,000 by the end of the year, this all done by the private sector. So a \$3.7 billion contract, which is being proposed as being the complete answer to fixing our differential in our price, the export for Alberta: to me, every part of the business sense in me tells me that it's not. This is \$3.7 billion of taxpayers' money being spent. When they've even stated, like I said, by the Member for Lethbridge-West, \$2 billion in revenue – I don't know – to me this doesn't make sense.

We have numbers here that prove that the private sector has the ability to do this, and we're looking at a contract that was negotiated in the late parts of their four-year term. Inaction. They had inaction. They had no action, no credible action, for four years, forcing them into this terrible contract and even having to negotiate this contract in a very short period of time. This government was quite clear February 1 that we were not going to honour sweetheart deals or bailout deals. To me this appeared to be just their way of trying to convince the voters in this province leading up to the election that they had the answer for the oil problems. In reality they just hadn't done anything for four years. This was just a grasp at trying to bail themselves out after not getting anything in measurable effect for the oil and gas sector in four years, and the fact being that in the short period of time they negotiated this, I don't know how they could've negotiated a strong deal for this province or the taxpayers here.

I know that personally in business when I was negotiating contracts, if I was in a position where I had to do something, the only thing that I had on my side was time. If I had time to be able to negotiate, I still had something to work with. Now, you take time away, like was taken away from the opposition leading into the election – everybody knew they were forced. They had to have this done in a certain period of time. Everything here shows they're overpaying for these railcars, for the contracts related to it, and I just don't feel that in any way I can support this.

It seems like we can negotiate with the private sector. We can talk to them about, you know, what's going to work best to be able to continue to export our oil by rail, crude by rail as we work through dealing with the differential pricing.



3:00

We're moving into a time right now where it seems like the differential on the market looks good for them to be able to increase crude by rail. It makes more sense for them to be doing crude by rail. We have a market assessment here that says that due to where it's at right now, we're going to see that moving through this year. So I just don't see . . .

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

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to address the House on this particular subject and, of course, point out the error in the ways of thinking across the floor that we just heard and overall in terms of this bill. As I mentioned before, sometimes the chaotic thinking on the Conservative side of the floor is something that I'd find amusing if it weren't so dangerous to the population of the province of Alberta.

I just want to spend a few moments talking about some of the things we were just hearing from the member opposite about this bill just to demonstrate that the arguments that they're making, in fact, are often about things that were never said or are not properly descriptive of what has happened in the past and therefore – I mean, internally it must seem like the arguments make sense, but because they're not based on reality in the first place, they don't hold much water. I think it's interesting that the previous speech started with a comment that somehow the fact that this contract for oil by rail was done in the latter part of the term of our four-year government was in and of itself problematic. There are a couple of points I want to make on that.

One is that I do realize that there is an expectation on the other side of the House that we should have in four years done more than previous Conservative governments did in 44 years. I agree with him that we are indeed 11 times better than them at things that we do, but we simply didn't have time to do everything at once. Of course, you can't put all of your activities in the first six months of your time in government. You keep working. You have a job. You do a piece of work and you bring up the next piece of work and the next piece of work, and we did that. We worked right until the very end of our term, and of course that means that something – something – that we were doing had to happen at the end. So it's a silly argument to say that doing it at the end was in and of itself problematic because of the timing.

The second thing that was said about that is that it was done too fast and therefore that was problematic. That was said about a minute and a half before the comment was made that things should be left to private industry because they're more flexible and more agile and government can't move quickly to do things. I just wanted to point out the fact that that there was probably less than three minutes of time between the complaint that we did things quickly and their belief that government can't do things quickly were said. Again, you know, confusion in the Conservative mind that I think we need to, you know, point out because the decision to eliminate the crude-by-rail contracts is another piece of confusion.

We know from the assessments being done by the good members of the public service in the government of Alberta that the investment being made in crude by rail will net an approximately \$2.2 billion profit for the province of Alberta. Now we have the Conservative Party telling us that they are against profit. I think that's, again, another example of the confusion that they have. They don't like it because they only want profits to accrue to a small, select group of individuals in society, people who are their friends and who will contribute to their coffers in the next election. When those profits instead are accrued and then shared by all people in

society so that services can be created such as health care and education and the public services that we provide here in this province, they suddenly don't like profits.

Again, you know, the arguments they're making are at best confusing and at worst a little bit nasty toward the people of the province of Alberta who would be benefiting from this extra \$2.2 billion. We know, of course, that the CEOs of the rail companies have indicated that if these contracts are cancelled, there are going to be penalties to be paid. So not only is it a loss of \$2.2 billion in benefits to the people of the province of Alberta, but it's also going to be more than that when the penalties have to be paid out.

Let me just go on a little bit further and talk about some of the other faults in the previous statement that was just made, and that is concern that somehow this was supposed to be the solution, the only solution, and the complete response to the problems in the oil economy that the province of Alberta has been experiencing. Again, you set up a straw dog, you set it on fire, and then you pretend that somehow you have, you know, made a good point, but it's not true. If we just simply look at what the government of Alberta did under the NDP, we can see a very complex, sophisticated plan to deal with a problem that did not originate here in the province of Alberta but, actually, occurred across the board in oil economies in North America and, therefore, was largely out of our hands.

I just want to point out that the same kinds of problems that we've experienced here in the province of Alberta, such as the loss of jobs and so on, also occurred in Conservative Saskatchewan. It happened over there, too. They had the same kinds of issues in terms of loss of government revenue and loss of jobs as we did. They don't bother to point that out, though, because they like to pretend that because something happened while we were in government, therefore we are responsible for it happening. Again, as I've mentioned previously in this House, they really cannot understand the basic difference between correlation and causality – so everything that has a correlation that happens at the same time therefore must be causal and it must be because the government did it – when, in fact, we know that the evidence indicates that that's not true. It happened to the Conservative government in Saskatchewan as well as it happened to the NDP government in the province of Alberta.

I'd just like to remind the House a little bit about some of the complexity of the plan that we had put forward in terms of dealing with this issue, the fact that we did a number of things in order to ensure that over the long term we would have some benefits. In the short term, of course, we did put some reductions on the amount of production of crude so that the differential would be reduced, and indeed when we did that, the differential was reduced. At one point the differential was actually more than the actual profits from the barrel. By the time that we had implemented that phase of our plan, the differential was reduced to less than \$10 per barrel. In fact, it was a very effective immediate step, but we understood that that was not a long-term plan for this province, that we needed to do something different, but we were handling the crisis in the moment.

The medium term was crude by rail because if we sell our product, which apparently the Conservatives don't want to do – they don't want to sell our product – then we can take the benefits of that. We can provide services to the members of the province of Alberta, and we can make sure that the province is growing and the number of jobs is growing. So it's an interim step.

Now, we all know that shipping crude by rail is not the first and best thing to happen. We get that. Nobody chose it above all other alternatives. What we said was that given the reality, given what's actually happening out there, not the made-up, straw-dog falsities that are often, you know, argued about in this House on the other side, the reality is that we do not have an oil pipeline in this province

that can satisfactorily transport the crude oil that we would like to be able to transport in order to make the profits that we need to make as a province.

Now, that largely falls on the backs of the Harper Conservative government in Ottawa, of which the Premier was a senior cabinet minister, who failed to do anything to resolve this problem in over 10 years while they had a Conservative government in Alberta and a Conservative government in Ottawa. They failed. They failed continuously to address the problem and to deal with it.

**3:10**

As a result, when we got elected, we got stuck with a complete disaster that had been handed to us by a federal government that did nothing to resolve the problem in the first place and a provincial government who had saved no money, who had taken oil profits at a time when oil was at a hundred dollars a barrel or more and still had done nothing to resolve the problem at all. So we began the process of resolving the problem and pushing things forward. We know that ultimately we were moving toward a pipeline.

But it wasn't stopped by us. The pipeline wasn't stopped by the provincial government of Alberta. It wasn't stopped by the federal government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

**Mrs. Allard:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise this afternoon to speak against this motion. Let me be clear. This government is not in the business of competing with the private sector, and the government, in my opinion, should not be in the business of competing with the private sector. We have repeatedly stated before, during, and now since the election that we will not be continuing with a government-owned crude-by-rail program, and there are several reasons why.

First, shipping crude by rail is something that the private sector is fully capable of doing, and before the former government's program was announced, the private sector was fully prepared to do so. Let me share a few examples with the House. According to the National Energy Board, Canadian crude-by-rail volumes increased throughout 2018 from 145,000 barrels per day in January to over 330,000 barrels per day in October. Volumes peaked in December at over 350,000 barrels per day. With narrower differentials on the oil price between Alberta and U.S. markets in early 2019, the level dropped to around 130,000 barrels per day. However, as opportunities are developing from U.S. demand with wider than expected differentials, industry is stepping up again.

Madam Speaker, at the beginning of 2019 analysts at TPH Energy Research estimated that March volumes would be in the range of 160,000 to 175,000 barrels per day. Subsequent data released by the National Energy Board shows that they were right on the nose. Crude-by-rail exports rose 29 per cent, to about 168,000 barrels of oil per day, from February. This includes Imperial Oil shipping 15,000 barrels per day during that time, ending the month at around 28,000 barrels per day.

Looking ahead, Cenovus has talked about ramping up to 100,000 barrels per day or more by year's end. Both CN and CP expect to continue shipping more crude this year. Industry experts like Genscape are forecasting highs of 300,000 barrels per day this summer, while IHS Markit is going even higher when they estimate that railway movements will hit record highs of between 400,000 and 500,000 barrels per day by the end of this year or early next year.

Madam Speaker, all of this movement has been occurring before the NDP's irresponsible and ill-conceived crude-by-rail program even comes into effect. Speaking of irresponsible, let's talk about

the fact that this program was rushed. It was last minute, and it was concocted by a desperate government on the eve of an election that they knew they were about to lose. We are talking about one of the largest single expenditures in Alberta's history, a \$3.7 billion contract coming together in a matter of months, just months. It is challenging to try and do all of the appropriate due diligence and negotiate the best possible terms when you do not have time on your side. It's no wonder the former government pulled such a hasty deal together in such a short time frame and on the public stage, no less.

Madam Speaker, it was simply reckless of the previous government to borrow such an enormous sum of money to create crude-by-rail capacity without the proper oversight to go with it. These were contracts completed under less than ideal negotiating conditions in a clear attempt to secure an election. Again, the private sector was already expanding oil-by-rail capacity significantly over the course of 2018, without government intervention or its requirement. Curtailment was put in place and rail was expected to adapt as the differential started to bounce back, as it has been doing. The former government only had to step back and let the private market work itself out.

That brings me to my third reason. This deal is just too risky for a government to undertake. We all know what the oil industry is like. There are highs and lows, booms and busts. This is a historical fact. While these ebbs and flows are challenging for the private sector, it's something they are in a much better position to manage because they expect it. The private sector is specifically structured to be able to take risks, with investors who make the decisions to take higher risks for higher potential returns.

But as a government, Madam Speaker, we are accountable to the taxpayer. We are stewards of the province's energy resources, and we should not be taking unnecessary risk with the public's money or their economic future. The public needs certainty from their government, and they need us to be able to provide the public services they require to go about their daily lives. These contracts are not in the best interests of Albertans. Now, thanks to the members opposite, we are locked in, with few options to salvage the taxpayers' money.

Madam Speaker, we know the private sector will ship crude by rail if the economics are favourable. I'll say that again: if the economics are favourable. They can and they will take on all risks associated with this transaction. This, without question, should not fall on the province of Alberta, at least not on our watch.

Madam Speaker, before I conclude, I want to assure all hon. members that the crude-by-rail industry will continue, as it always has, to provide well-paying jobs to all Albertans even without a government-run crude-by-rail program. Based on industry forecasts, I predict it will be a very busy year for crude-by-rail activity, and we welcome that. Crude by rail is something that the private sector is in the best position to be running on its own.

This government will do what is best for Albertans, and we will do what's necessary to protect Alberta taxpayers. I will therefore not be supporting this motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Motion 503, brought forward by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. I'd first like to start by disputing a couple of the points that have been brought up by members opposite who have spoken already to this motion.

Firstly, the Member for Highwood spoke in this Chamber a few moments ago about his expertise in the business community and how he thought that negotiations that were done over a certain pace

of time were of less quality than negotiations that were done over a protracted time. I might remind that hon. member, notwithstanding his tremendous experience in negotiating contracts, that there are others in this Chamber who have also had a similar amount of experience.

I, for one, can say that I've been involved in over 800 contract negotiations in the real estate industry during my career, and believe me, Madam Speaker, the pace of those negotiations was different for each one of them. The circumstances of the clients involved, the nature of the transaction involved dictated the pace of that negotiation, and it didn't mean that the contract which resulted was any worse or better because of the pace at which that contract was negotiated.

The contract that results is what was negotiated within the framework of the needs of the time frame that was required. For example, in the negotiation that we undertook in the crude-by-rail investment project, that negotiation was certainly done in a period of crisis that necessitated quick action on the part of government to protect Alberta jobs, Alberta workers, and the bottom line for the government.

Now, the Highwood member suggested that in his calculations – and he mentioned that the cost of increasing rail capacity was about \$3.7 billion; that was in the government announcement of the day – there would be a \$2.2 billion profit that would be generated. Then he went on to say that in his calculation that would leave a \$1.5 billion shortfall. I'm not quite getting where that all adds up. He's forgotten about the fact that the province anticipated generating \$5.9 billion over the three-year period following that announcement in increased revenues and royalties. If you subtract the \$3.7 billion cost from that, that's where you are left with the \$2.2 billion profit that would emanate to the province. So there's a bit of faulty arithmetic going on there, and I would ask the Member for Highwood to correct that at his next opportunity.

3:20

So on a couple of fronts I do take exception to the Member for Highwood's characterization of the numbers as well as the type of condemnation he's made towards the province of Alberta's government negotiations during our NDP government's period, when he suggests that we were in a rushed, hurried negotiation that was flawed as a result of that. Nothing could be farther from the truth, Madam Speaker. The negotiation took place in a time frame which necessitated quick action, nimble action by a government which was able to respond in a way that ended up with a transaction that would result in a \$2.2 billion profit for the taxpayers, to be reinvested in services and in the very industry that this government today looks to harm by \$2.2 billion by eliminating the crude-by-rail contract. So I'm not quite understanding why some of the members opposite are opposed to the continuation of the crude-by-rail investments.

The fact is that over the course of the mandate of the previous government we suffered the fate of having to look at: why indeed are we in the place that we are in right now? In fact, if you actually look at the long-term situation, the crisis that we ended up in, the problem is that we don't have enough capacity to export our product to tidewater. That isn't something we created in the four-year term of our government, Madam Speaker. That's something that was a conscious decision made by the economic geniuses over on the other side over 44 years of Conservative government. They thought it wise and they accepted a policy world where we only had one pipeline to tidewater and did nothing to rectify that situation. Of course, it came to a head where we ended up with the situation where we couldn't get our product to tidewater.

We were producing a product that had no place to go, and as a result the price was dropping through the floor. We were practically giving away our resources. You're darn right that we negotiated an oil-by-rail contract to get some of that excess capacity out to the international markets and receive a reasonable price for it, the best we could possibly do under the circumstances, as an intermediate measure to keep the industry afloat, keep Albertans working, and keep the economic revenue flowing until such time that we can get an approval for a pipeline and get the pipeline capacity flowing to the coast, hopefully more than one coast, and continue on the road to developing our natural resources in a way that should have been done over the past 44 years by successive Conservative governments, who failed to increase our pipeline capacity and allow our products to get to world markets in a volume that would enable us to receive the proper return for our Alberta products.

Now, I know that the Member for Grande Prairie recently spoke to this Motion 503, and the quote that that member made is something I will deliciously remember for a long, long time, and I hope to hear it repeated many times over in this House. The solution that that member suggests that we should adopt is that we should simply "step back and let the . . . market work itself out." I think that's a pretty close quote. Well, in fact, that's what's been happening in this province for about 40 years of Conservative government, previous to our government, basically stepping back and letting the market work itself out. In the meantime they're letting Alberta workers and businesses become the collateral damage of 44 years of stepping back and letting the market work itself out.

I, for one, believe that there is a role for government to play when indeed faced with crises that are costing Albertans jobs and revenue and that need direct and immediate action. We took that action as a government, Madam Speaker, and we think that this current government should continue the oil-by-rail contracts because they were the right thing to do and they still are the right thing to do. They end up profiting this province to the tune of \$2.2 billion over the life of those contracts. The argument that the private sector certainly should have been left, that we should have stepped back and let the market work itself out: we didn't have that type of time. The marketplace wasn't stepping in. Typically they will step aside when they think their risk is too high, so governments have a role to play to soften that risk, indeed, when that faces them, and that's what we did as a government.

We got into this crude-by-rail contract, and it's a profitable contract that will end up doing what it set out to do, and that is to, in an intermediate way, get our product to tidewater at a world price – or it won't get it to tidewater necessarily but get it into the marketplace at a higher price in a way that will allow our production to be maintained while we, hopefully in the not-too-distant future, get approvals for pipelines to tidewater and get our product to global markets and at a world price.

You know, the whole idea behind the oil-by-rail contract was to secure market access for our resources, create good jobs, and continue to diversify Alberta's energy economy. We laid out short-term, medium-term, long-term plans to get top dollar for our resources. Ultimately, of course, as I mentioned before, the crude-by-rail investment was a medium-term solution which we put in place to tide us over while we fought to get more pipeline capacity in the long run. It was projected to be a win-win for the energy sector and taxpayers. We would have signed commitments with suppliers that would have seen an estimated 4,400 railcars move up to 120,000 barrels of oil per day. We'd purchase crude oil from producers, load it onto railcars at loading facilities across the province, and ship it to market. That was intended to help industry,

including smaller producers who may have not had the ability to take action on their own.

Albertans could have looked forward to seeing railcars roll as early as July of this year, and, Madam Speaker, they still could if this government saw fit to continue with the wisdom of the contract that was produced in a crisis period of time and also in a way that effectively . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

**Mr. Getson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, thanks for having the chance to talk to Motion 503 here. It's been interesting hearing some of the dialogue back and forth from the folks and different perspectives, and I'd like to offer mine, if I can, from a gentleman who worked in that industry, who was actually part of the rail group at Enbridge that built transshipment facilities and oil by rail, so understanding some of that as well as the models for pipelines, et cetera.

What I do find very interesting, in my recent position here as a politician, is hearing politicians that I only saw on television or in news ads that protested against line 3, against Gateway, against Energy East, against, let's say, Trans Mountain, and against Keystone XL. Such proponents now have become for pipeline capacity and understanding it. It seems that they don't understand that when we build upstream facilities, it's based on the auspices of having those pipelines in place and the approvals, which should almost be a slam dunk based on the fact that our industry is so well poised and positioned for it as well as that we're so cognizant of the environment protection, et cetera, et cetera, the great lengths that we go to. I'm very happy to understand now that they realize that that part of the industry is so vital and that we are key people within that industry.

Little words of wisdom here: putting on a Superman cape does not give you the ability to fly or have superpowers. Buying a bunch of train cars does not make you an oilman. That's something that folks have to understand as well as the way the industry works. When you purchase product at a given spot value, you then take care, custody, and control of that product at a given spot value. When you do not control where or when that shipment will reach the other end, you are speculating. They are speculating with taxpayers' dollars.

The folks that actually are the oilmen and -women that are in that industry understand and know that there are different commodity types, and those commodity types are traded in situ and in transit and while they're moving at a given timeline and sometimes will hit terminal tankage, those types of things. Paper trades are played, and that's a whole industry. I have not heard once of how the former government was going to become a trading stock exchange to manage the shortfalls in those industries. It's a little-known fact – or obviously they would know because they crunched the numbers, as they've said, Madam Speaker – that typically moving oil by rail is three times the cost of moving it by pipe.

I also find it very interesting, given that they're, you know, on the record against pipeline projects with their partners in Ottawa, that they were the ones that ran around and caused the delays and the protest and all the churn that took place in these projects. Ergo, they are the ones that ran out and cut us, being the Alberta people and the folks in that industry, and now they're running around selling the Band-Aids to us to fix the wound that they caused, to help stop the bleeding. That's what I do agree with them on: this is an interim measure.

They failed repeatedly on their budgets. They failed repeatedly on everything that they've touched, including this sector, and we're

supposed to now inherit the mess that they made. We campaigned on fixing the messes. We understand that this is more of a diverse issue. Industry are the ones that are able to take the risk.

3:30

Here's a little – I don't know – tidbit. When industry is worried about the risk, you might pay attention to it. The member over there had just mentioned that industry was too scared of the chance to take the risk in this, so we boldly jump in where, you know, angels fear to tread. Again, coming back to the Superman comment, Madam Speaker, putting on the little Superman suit does not give him superpowers, does not let him fly. Buying these train cars is not making them oilmen. I'm sorry. I get a little heated on this one. The boys out in the patch have heard me talk about this a number of times.

So they came in, with much of their power of having this industry that was hating the oil industry. They engaged in protest projects. They opposed and managed just about everything that we were dealing with on pipeline projects. Forming the government, they engaged in a royalty review that did nothing but scare away investors. They promptly rolled over on the Trudeau Liberals. It happened with the Northern Gateway project, and it happened with also the purchasing of that thing, that was supposed to buy us the Trans Mountain facility, all of this social licence. We're supposed to trust that this short-term, Band-Aid measure that they're suggesting is still salient and sound in the industry.

Colleagues have also mentioned about the market capacity and the fact that we can move this oil, that the industry is willing to take that risk. Again, understanding the industry that they are part of, they're the ones that play in that. For us to take the risk and pretend we're oilmen on the Alberta taxpayers' dollar: absolutely – absolutely – the wrong thing to do.

So I don't think it should come as any surprise to anyone at this point that I'm absolutely against this motion that the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has put forward.

Unlike the NDP, which has shown their underlying opposition to development of the incredible natural resources that we have, the Conservative government here, the United Conservative government, are going to stand up for those 151,000 energy workers. We've got a clear plan on getting our product to market. We've got a clear plan on standing up against the friends in Ottawa that – well, their friends; they weren't ours. We're hoping Andrew Scheer helps things along when we get in there. The NDP failed repeatedly and came up with this plan to buy railcars. We're not going to repeat these mistakes.

We got voted in on a different mandate, to do things responsibly, to take into consideration all those other items we mentioned, and, again, by having people from those industries, not the accidental tourists that are strapping on Superman capes.

I don't know where the shot clock is at, ma'am. I could go on for hours on this. It just irks me. Again, we had such a strong mandate that we ran on. The Alberta people have spoken. They want us to make the right decisions. This was a half-hatched, haphazard-type idea. If the member has understood, having the 800 or 900 or a billion contracts that he's had, given the timeline that they're all different and all changing in those negotiations taking place, the one that should have jumped out at him came out of his own mouth: nobody else wanted this; it was too risky, so we decided to jump in. Wow. I would love to sit across the negotiating table from that gentleman on any other contract. Again, if anyone can remember that show *Dallas*, J.R. didn't lose too often, and that's exactly who this gentleman was thinking that he was negotiating on behalf of, to put it in that type of colourful argument.

Here's the track record. We tied in with Trudeau. We gave in to Obama. We actually pulled our negotiators off the Keystone XL project, helped to scrap Northern Gateway. We walked away from that. We gave Quebec and New Brunswick a veto. These are the same folks now that are trying to sell the Alberta people that this is such a great thing and that they're really concerned about the industry and that they know it better than the folks that are in it and the folks that were elected.

That's about all I've got to say about that. I'm against it, and I strongly suggest that everyone else vote against it, too. We're meddling with things we shouldn't be involved in.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Member Ceci:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You know, I just want to try and focus on the issue of crude by rail as opposed to trying to belittle the previous government and the actions they took. The actions that were taken were because the differential was blowing out. With the differential blowing out, there were small and medium-sized businesses, workers across this province working for nonintegrated companies, meaning that they were producing but weren't able to refine because they didn't own refineries – the people who were making lots and lots of money with the blown-out differential were the integrated producers, those who had production facilities. They could transport it to the refineries. They were making money on every barrel.

And who was suffering, Madam Speaker? Well, the treasury was suffering, of course, because the WCS was so low or so small. The action was taken because at small and medium-sized producers, those companies in Alberta with their staff across this province, in rural areas and urban areas, all of those workers were at risk of being let go.

The other side talks about: well, the private market would sort this out. The private market would have sorted it out, Madam Speaker, with the failure of small and medium-sized companies and thousands and thousands of workers being put out of work across this province. Those were the boys, maybe, in the oil patch that this individual from Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland talks about. Those boys would have been out of work because if they worked for an unintegrated company, they would have gone under. They would have gone under because the WCS was so small and the differential was so large.

For months and months and months the previous government looked at, "Okay; what are the solutions?" and they were identified very well by my colleague in the back row over there. They were talked about very well. We looked at short-term solutions, we looked at medium-term solutions, and of course pipelines are the ultimate solution. We took that action. I think my friend in the back row, of course, Edmonton-McClung, was very correct when he said that the speaker from across the way – I think it was the Member for Highwood – was wrong when he was talking about what the government of Alberta would have realized as a result of that crude-by-rail solution that we had proposed, that we had worked on.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but under Standing Order 8(3), which provides up to five minutes for the mover of a motion other than a government motion to close debate, I'd like to invite the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar to close debate on Motion 503.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and close debate. It's been interesting to hear the comments that have been made by all of my colleagues, and I want to thank

all of my friends here in the NDP caucus for their thoughtful interventions.

It's certainly an interesting contrast with the points made by the Member for Highwood, who doesn't understand the difference between \$2 billion in revenue and \$2 billion in profit; the Member for Grande Prairie, who read notes that were clearly written by a staffer and that she'd seen for the first time entering this Chamber; and, of course, the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, who doesn't understand that we have the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission, that is the agent of the government, that buys and sells oil on behalf of the government of Alberta and has done so for 45 years and has done a reasonably good job. But, of course, Madam Speaker, I mean, we can't trust somebody who thinks that we've signed over immigration responsibility to the United Nations to bring anything resembling a fact to bear on debates here in this Chamber.

Madam Speaker, it's important to emphasize the need for moving this crude oil by rail because, as the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview noted in his opening comments, the uncertainty around the increases in pipeline takeaway capacity are greater now than ever before. Last week, just last Monday, the Minnesota Court of Appeals announced that they revoked the permit for Enbridge's line 3, so we don't know when Enbridge's line 3 will be constructed. Just the other day Keystone XL had a court injunction lifted, but of course as soon as that injunction was lifted, other organizations filed suit against the Keystone XL project, putting that project in further delays. And the Trans Mountain pipeline, of course, is now at risk. Our government worked hard to put in place a climate change action plan that managed to convince the federal government to grudgingly approve and purchase that pipeline, but now that the members opposite are intent on scrapping the climate change plan and won't even commit today to keeping the 100-megatonne emissions cap on our oil sands production, we are further away from getting the federal government to say yes to Trans Mountain than ever before.

3:40

All three of these major pipelines are what our oil sands producers are relying on to get our resources to market, and all three have a considerable amount of uncertainty. The earliest that any of those things would come online is three years from now. It's more critical now than ever to use oil sands by rail to get our oil to market.

The members opposite seem to think that the private sector was able to do this on its own. In fact, they pointed to the fact that oil sands by rail increased significantly throughout the year 2018. They neglected the fact that the differential dropped to significant lows, that we were practically giving our oil away. As the Member for Calgary-Buffalo noted, we had to enact a two-step plan to shore up the price of oil. The first was to curtail oil production by approximately 300,000 barrels a day. The second step of that plan, Madam Speaker, was to increase oil-by-rail capacity so that the oil curtailment limits didn't have to stay in place forever. We haven't heard the members opposite say what they plan to do with the oil curtailment limits. We know that the private sector can't move quickly enough to move all of this oil by rail. We need government intervention to do this.

You know, the Member for Grande Prairie pointed to companies like Imperial and Cenovus, who are moving their crude oil by rail, and that's true, Madam Speaker. Those companies have the negotiating capacity to deal with CN and CP, to negotiate contracts that make it affordable for them to move their product by rail, but the junior oil sands companies do not. What the members opposite neglect when they talk about the free market is that we don't have a free market when it comes to rail capacity. We have two

companies that we deal with, CN and CP, and they have a significant amount of market power. They won't deal with the junior oil sands companies on their own because they don't have the volume and they can't commit to a three-year contract, that CN and CP are looking for. In order to act in the best interests of the junior oil sands companies, our government took action and secured these oil-by-rail contracts to keep junior oil sands companies at work and keep those people employed.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 503 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:43 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Bilous	Feehan	Pancholi
Carson	Ganley	Sabir
Ceci	Goehring	Schmidt
Dach	Hoffman	Sigurdson, L.
Deol	Irwin	

Against the motion:

Allard	Jones	Rowswell
Amery	Loewen	Schow
Barnes	Lovely	Schweitzer
Ellis	Madu	Sigurdson, R.J.
Getson	Milliken	Singh
Glubish	Neudorf	Smith
Goodridge	Nixon, Jeremy	Stephan
Guthrie	Panda	Toews
Hanson	Rehn	Walker
Horner	Reid	Yao
Hunter	Rosin	Yaseen
Issik		

Totals:	For – 14	Against – 34
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[Motion Other than Government Motion 503 lost]

### Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

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

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

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

[Adjourned debate June 4: Mr. Glubish]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne and talk about my journey to this Legislature.

First, I'd like to thank the constituents of Central Peace-Notley who chose me to be their representative. I also want to thank the many volunteers who gave freely of their time, energy, and money to support me and the United Conservative Party. The support is

humbling, and I promise to represent them to the best of my abilities.

4:00

Also, I'd like to thank my parents. From their humble beginnings as homesteaders in the Valleyview area they taught their boys the value of hard work. Paul, my dad, worked hard as a heavy-duty mechanic with oil field contracting. I've seen him work 24 hours straight as a mechanic and then come home and put in a full day on the farm. My mom worked as a secretary for oil field companies and government, putting in a full day's work and then coming home to cook and help on the farm. Not only did they teach me by example how to work, but they also taught honesty and compassion when dealing with others.

They also taught their three boys to follow their dreams. My oldest brother, George, has made his living as a professional musician and music teacher, a very talented musician on many instruments. My next-oldest brother, Kelly, is an engineer in the racing industry. He's worked for over 30 years across North America in the racing industry as a mechanic, engineer, and team leader for the likes of Alex Tagliani and Kyle Busch and companies like Players and Toyota. I understand he's still winning with his new team right now. Myself, I've made my living most of my life as an outfitter in the tourism industry, guiding hunters from all over the world, and now, of course, being elected to this great Assembly for a second time to represent the good people in the Peace Country. I say this partly because I'm proud of my family but mostly to show the diversity of three brothers coming from the same humble household. Yes, you can follow your dreams.

My wife, Teena, and I grew up in the Valleyview area, and we couldn't think of a better place to raise our five children: Travis, Ty, Taylor, Tianna, and Tenea. Now, you might notice a tacky trend there. Also, our three grandsons – Silas, Ezra, and Leo – are all being raised there. We love the Peace Country and the life and opportunity it provides.

I was first elected in 2015 to the constituency of Grande Prairie-Smoky. That was the basic area that included Fox Creek, Valleyview, DeBolt, Bezanson, Teepee Creek, Sexsmith, and the north half of the city of Grande Prairie. In the most recent election, on April 16, 2019, I received the honour of being elected to the new constituency of Central Peace-Notley. Now, one of the most striking things about this constituency is its size, not just the amount of square miles but the number of communities and municipalities. Basically it includes the towns and areas around the towns of Fox Creek, Valleyview, DeBolt, McLennan, Falher, Spirit River to Bonanza, Berwyn to Fairview, and then west to Hines Creek, Worsley, Cleardale, and all the way to the B.C. border, where we find Cherry Point, Bay Tree, and the community of Gundy. Gundy can only be accessed by travelling 100 kilometres through another constituency or by going through British Columbia.

Here are some interesting numbers. The constituency of Central Peace-Notley contains eight MDs and counties, 11 towns and villages that have elected councils, 12 Hutterite colonies, and at least 80 other rural communities. It takes about five hours to drive between the communities of Fox Creek and Cherry Point. It also contains the Treaty 8 reserves of Sturgeon Lake Cree First Nation and Duncan's First Nation and lands of Horse Lake First Nation in the Clear Hills area. It also contains lands of Treaty 6 reserve of Alexander First Nation. I've had the opportunity to attend round dances and powwows at Sturgeon Lake Cree First Nation, and I've thoroughly enjoyed my time there.

I do want to give a bit of a rundown on a few of the communities. Though there's not enough time to cover all, here are a few. Fox Creek is known for oil and gas as it has access to both the Duvernay

and Montney formations. Valleyview is considered a portal to the Peace where highways 43 and 49 split; of course, highway 43 goes on to Grande Prairie and then on to mile zero of the Alaska highway and Dawson Creek. Highway 49 goes up to Peace River, and it's the main access to Mackenzie highway, that goes all the way to Yellowknife.

Falher is the honey capital of Canada. It's also known for its agriculture, beautiful, flat farmland there, and it's also a francophone community. When it comes to the francophone community, I have family there, and one of my favourite parts, enjoying the customs there, is to have a good feeding of tourtière. Tourtière is a meat pie, and I like to eat it the way my wife's pépère would eat it, and that's with maple syrup.

We go on to the community of Wanham. Now, Wanham this year is having it's 49th annual Plowing Match. I've had a chance to be there a couple of times for the plowing match, and they've got me on the walking plow. I have to say I think I got third prize once, maybe fourth prize another time though I'm not sure how many competitors there were in the beginner category. But I did enjoy walking behind a horse and operating the hand plow.

Spirit River: a trading post is how it originated. It has a history of ranching that goes back to the 1840s and a history in agriculture that goes back to the 1880s.

Now, Dunvegan is one of the most beautiful areas in Alberta. It's located on the Peace River, a beautiful valley there. It's very historic. It was started in, I think, 1821 with the Hudson's Bay Company, but actually, of course, the indigenous communities used that area for thousands of years, in particular the Beaver people.

Fairview is known for Fairview College, which is an extension of the Grande Prairie Regional College. They have a trades college there and train people from all over Canada. It's actually the only authorized training centre in Canada for Harley-Davidson, so anybody in Canada that wants to take on the Harley-Davidson training has to come to Fairview. Also, just a bit of a note here, they actually have competitions for motorcycle mechanics. A fellow by the name of Brett Hart, who studied at Fairview College – not the Bret Hart that you may be thinking of, the wrestler – actually won the world championship in Japan for motorcycle mechanics. He was a product of Fairview College.

I'd like to take some time to talk about all the communities in the constituency, but of course there's just not enough time to do that. What I do want to talk about is doughnuts. Now, in this huge constituency – it's hard to imagine – there's only one Tim Hortons, and that's in Valleyview. Of course, we all know about Tim Hortons doughnuts and Timbits. I guess I've got a bit of a sweet tooth. Maybe that's why I want to cover doughnuts.

Just about 60 kilometres west of Valleyview is Crooked Creek. Crooked Creek doughnuts I think are known probably Canada-wide and sometimes world-wide because they have such a great homemade doughnut there. I think the store sells, like, over a hundred dozen a day. This is a little store along the highway there. As I was representing this constituency and campaigning, I actually found out about the Bear Country Inn in Wanham, and they make homemade doughnuts there, too. We had an event in Eaglesham nearby, and we actually ordered 10 dozen of these doughnuts for that event. Of course, I had an opportunity to taste-test them also, and they are excellent, too. As far as doughnuts go, we can't forget about the Tractor Pit Convenience Store in Girouxville, who makes doughnuts, too. They are fantastic also. Of course, other doughnuts: we have Freson, IGAs, and Co-op stores, too, that sell doughnuts. I actually think I might have to have an event some time called doughnut wars, where we can blindfold taste-test doughnuts. I think that would be a great opportunity to really test these doughnuts out in my constituency.

Now, I do want to mention one other thing here about Crooked Creek. In Crooked Creek – we'll call it downtown Crooked Creek. Basically there's the Crooked Creek store, and then there's Scotty's Burger Shack. Now, Scotty and his wife, Robyn, have the Burger Shack, and \$1 from every burger that's sold goes to Ronald McDonald House and Kids with Cancer. Scotty started what they call a fight for hope. Scotty has raised – I don't even want to put a figure on it, but I know, like, with the fight for hope, one of the fights that he had was the biggest single fundraiser I think in Canada for the Ronald McDonald House. I know that he's got a little counter, and every time somebody buys a burger, it goes up a dollar. I know he's over \$30,000 on that counter. That's Scotty's Burger Shack in Crooked Creek. I know he just opened another little store in Shaw's Point Resort. That's just northeast of High Prairie. I just wanted to mention that. Scotty and Robyn: I don't want to tell their story here because I wouldn't do it justice, but they have a child that's been battling cancer, so that's their inspiration for doing this.

I do want to recognize some of the previous MLAs. One thing I found out in doing a little research – most of the MLAs I was going to cover were more recent MLAs, but I thought it was interesting that in 1905 James Cornwall was the one that was declared elected, you know, in the Peace River district. But the election results were actually overturned because there were some irregularities, so that left the seat vacant. They had another election on February 15, 1906, and at that time Thomas Brick decided he was going to run, too. Thomas Brick and James Cornwall were the only two people running in that election in 1906, and they actually ran for the same party. Of course, only one was declared a winner, so Thomas Brick became the elected MLA at that time.

#### 4:10

Now, maybe a little more recently, from 1971 through 1989 Marv Moore was the MLA. I guess I'll just back up for a second here. Because there are a couple of different constituencies involved here, I've got kind of two lists of MLAs. We'll start with Marv Moore, and this was the area that was considered Grande Prairie-Smoky. He was elected first in 1971 and represented the area till 1989. He was Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Transportation, and Minister of Health. I guess he's politically a bit of a legend in the area. He's been very helpful along the way and has given a lot of good advice. But maybe even more special than Marv is his wife, Fran. Now, Fran is a fantastic woman. She's a history buff. She volunteers extensively in the community, and she really does keep a lot of the history of that area, the DeBolt-Crooked Creek area. I do want to mention Fran and what a wonderful woman she is.

Next elected was Walter Paszkowski, 1989 to 2001. He was Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Transportation, Minister of Municipal Affairs. Following his term was Mel Knight, 2001 to 2012, who was the Energy minister. Then following him was Everett McDonald, 2012 to 2015, who was previously reeve for the county of Grande Prairie.

Now, at the other end of the constituency – like I said, these two have kind of joined a bit. From 1971 to 1984, the namesake of the constituency of Central Peace-Notley, Grant Notley, who to this day is still held in high regard in the area. As I was campaigning in the area, I often heard his name mentioned.

Following him was Jim Gurnett. Then following him: Glen Clegg from 1986 to 2001; Hector Goudreau from 2001 to 2015, Minister of Tourism; and then, of course, Marg McCuaig-Boyd, 2015 to 2019, Energy minister.

I want to get back to the Speech from the Throne. I know that when we ran the campaign in 2019, it was a pretty ambitious campaign platform, probably the most detailed campaign platform

ever in Alberta's history. One of the main things that we campaigned on was, of course, getting rid of the carbon tax. It was the number one issue at the door. We mentioned that in the Speech from the Throne. Number two was the open for business act to relieve the challenges that employers face when it comes to employing people and getting the job done. We talked a lot about the job creation tax cut, trying to get investment back into Alberta that we've lost over the last four years, and then the Red Tape Reduction Act. I think that everywhere we look in our world, we run into things that hinder our progress in trying to get things done.

Now, it seems that some people are maybe a little surprised that we're keeping our promises. It shouldn't be that way. I think that as politicians when we campaign on something, we should follow through on it, and we should be able to tell people what we're doing before we do it. There's kind of a theme that's been coming out, I think, since this last election as we've hit the Legislature and everything, and that theme is: promise made, promise kept.

Once more, I'd just like to thank the good people from Central Peace-Notley, and I commit to representing them to the best of my ability. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 29(2)(a) are there any comments or questions?

Seeing none, are there any more speakers? The hon. Member for Calgary-North.

**Mr. Yaseen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is an honour to be with you in the traditional territory of Treaty 6. I also acknowledge the Métis people, who share a deep and historic connection to these lands. I want to thank the constituents of Calgary-North and all the volunteers during the previous election for giving me the honour and privilege to be their MLA. I would also like to congratulate all my colleagues in this Legislature on their election results. No matter which side we're on in this Legislature, we can all agree that there are no bad seats here in this Chamber, although I must say, Madam Speaker, that your seat seems most comfortable. Again, congratulations on your election as Deputy Speaker of the House.

Madam Speaker, my family moved from a small farm town in Pakistan to Canada. Like many others, we moved in pursuit of better economic opportunities. I am the second-youngest amongst seven siblings. I was 17 when I came to Canada. As a newcomer to Canada I had to face many basic challenges such as cultural norms, social cues, and language.

[Mr. Hanson in the chair]

My first day in English class at Crescent Heights high school I was told to finish reading the Shakespearean play *Hamlet* so we could discuss it in the class on Monday next week. At this point I could barely understand Canadian English, let alone Shakespearean English. Let's just say that my Old English to Canadian English dictionary and my Canadian English to Urdu dictionary were working on overdrive that weekend. It wasn't until years later that I realized that no one really understood Shakespearean English anyways.

I graduated from grade 12 and received my diploma and later received my diploma in petroleum technology from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. Mr. Speaker, the year was 1979. Peter Lougheed was the Premier of Alberta then, a leader who fought a hard political fight for the people of this province.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

After graduating, I started my career as a field technologist at the Gilby field office near my favourite Alberta town, Rimbey. There I worked for two years, became familiar with the rich culture of rural

Alberta, developed life-long friendships, and also learned the game of curling. Being young and eager to try games that I had not seen before, I also tried cross-country skiing. As most of my time trying cross-country skiing was spent on my back, I decided that it was better for me to focus on my career.

Because of this, Madam Speaker, I was able to save money and put that together towards furthering my education. I was lucky to be granted an educational leave of absence by my employer. I joined the University of Wyoming and completed my bachelor of science degree in petroleum engineering in 1983. I then returned to work with the same employer. Those were the good times when Alberta used to have lots of economic opportunities not only for Albertans but for people across Canada. This phenomenon later became known as the Alberta advantage.

Now living in the city of Calgary, where I had earlier experienced social, language, and cultural issues as a newcomer, I decided to get involved in the community so I could help those facing the same challenges I did. This, Madam Speaker, became such a fulfilling and rewarding and enjoyable experience for me. This is when I realized the importance of giving back, the importance of helping others when they need it.

The 10th Premier of Alberta, the Hon. Peter Lougheed, is quoted as saying: I am a community person; I think in terms of community before individuals, and that is the essence of Albertans, and, to a large extent, that is the essence of Canadians as well. Unquote. This quote has inspired me to do as best as I could for the community around me in Calgary and now here at the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

I served as the president of the Pakistan Canada Association for many years while also volunteering intermittently with organizations such the United Way, Junior Achievement, the Canadian Red Cross, the Food Bank, Mosaic Volunteers, and others. During this time, while I was raising my two sons with my wife, Parveen, I began to take evening classes, completing my master of engineering and MBA.

4:20

Madam Speaker, I strongly feel that whatever I have been able to accomplish has been linked with my employment and, in particular, Alberta's oil and gas sectors. This is why it is so sad to see that the same oil and gas sector, which used to be an economic engine of Canada, is suffering from the adverse economic impacts over the last few years. This is the feeling that is shared with many of the constituents in the riding that I am honoured to represent, Calgary-North.

Madam Speaker, my riding is amazing. I have lived in this riding or in the northern part of Calgary for 35 years, and in this riding, specifically this riding, since 2003. I have made Panorama Hills my home for the past 16 years because I truly believe Alberta is the place to live, work, and raise a family. For that reason my family and I are eternally grateful for all that Alberta has given us. The riding is beautiful with its schools and small businesses, beautiful paths and walkways, parks, a golf course, and spectacular views of the city. There are a number of languages spoken in the riding, including English, Tagalog, Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin, German, Spanish, Urdu, and a few more. Forty-three per cent of the population in Calgary-North identify themselves as immigrants. I do plan to work closely with this population and other Albertans as applicable in my portfolio as parliamentary secretary of immigration.

This spring I met so many amazing constituents who gave freely of their time and effort as we worked together to bring back the Alberta advantage. The comments, discussions, and advice at the door have been of immeasurable value to myself and our



government. I want to thank everyone who gave me their trust to be their voice in the Alberta Legislature. I am so proud to serve the communities of Evanston, Creekside, Hidden Creek, Panorama Hills, and Carrington, with Panorama Hills being the largest community in Calgary, with a population of 26,000 people.

One doesn't have to go that far in these communities to find a network of extensive green spaces and parks, bike paths, and winding creeks for families to enjoy. Just outside my riding is a first-class recreational athletic centre called Vivo. Even though it is outside my riding, it is still vital to Calgary-North. This rec centre is widely used by residents of Calgary-North, including my own family. Vivo is committed to promoting a healthier lifestyle by offering several programs and services for all ages. This facility partners with academics to offer a living lab whose research is to explore how to live healthier. Since its inception the facility has been the recipient of provincial grants, allowing the centre to expand its facility and programs, particularly to the many students who live in the riding.

I think we can all agree that one of the most important investments we can make is educating our children. Alberta is committed to providing students with a safe learning environment. This is why our UCP government has pledged to maintain or increase educational funding. My constituency has four elementary and one junior high school. It is, however, in dire need of a public high school and a middle school. I pledge to be a strong advocate for the schooling needs in Calgary-North.

The most devastating thing I would hear at the door was that of layoffs and high unemployment rates in the province. Engineers, accountants, and IT professionals were a small example of professionals who were struggling. We need to get our resources to market. We need to get Alberta's oil to market. People are struggling. People are leaving our great province. Madam Speaker, time is of the essence. That's why I am so proud to be part of a team that is 110 per cent committed to supporting the economy. We will stand up for Alberta pipelines. We will stand up for Alberta oil. We will stand up for Alberta, period.

As promised during our election campaign, we will lower taxes so we can create more jobs. We will reduce regulatory burdens so we can create more jobs. We will foster a positive economic environment in the private sector so we can create more jobs. By creating more jobs, Madam Speaker, we will balance the budget so our children don't have to. I am, therefore, very pleased that this government is focused on getting Albertans back to work and restoring the Alberta advantage. The people of Calgary-North sent me here for a reason. We in this House have a special obligation not only to our own people in our own riding but to Albertans across Alberta. We are here to make a difference. Together we can and we will.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Are there any comments or questions? The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

**Ms Issik:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that he's the former president of the Pakistan Canada Association. He's been a treasured member of the cultural community from Pakistan in Calgary. Perhaps he can elaborate on the contributions of cultural communities in Calgary.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-North.

**Mr. Yaseen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member. Calgary is full of cultural associations and communities. They offer wonderful programs. They have cultural

facilities, and for that matter, the Alberta Pakistan Canada Association has its own cultural centre in the northeast, which I was very much involved in creating way back in the late '90s, early 2000s. I think it was officially inaugurated by the hon. Gene Zwozdesky, who was the Speaker later on but at that time was the minister of community and social development. He came to Calgary to inaugurate that centre. I think that was in October 2002.

The contribution of the cultural associations and programs that we have: they offer programs where the mainstream has an opportunity to come and see what's happening in various cultural associations, whether it's Polish or Pakistani or Indian or whatever. They have lots of opportunities to learn and share the values from different parts of the world.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any more comments or questions under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is the rare privilege of a lifetime to rise as the Member for Edmonton-South West and respond to the Lieutenant Governor's Speech from the Throne. I think that it is in order for me to offer my congratulations to you on your election as the Deputy Speaker of this House.

4:30

I want to start my maiden speech by extending my sincere congratulations to the esteemed members of the House on both sides of the aisle on their successful election campaigns. In the words of one of my heroes, John Paul II, "The future starts today, not tomorrow." Albertans sent us here for a reason. Now we must get to work to deliver the future they deserve. I want to thank all of my constituents who voted for me, and I want all of those who did not to know that I am here to represent them equally. I want to thank my fantastic volunteers, who gave me so much of their precious time and energy. Volunteers are the unsung heroes of our democratic process, and without them none of us would be here. I want to thank my family. I owe everything and more to my beautiful wife, Emem, and our three beloved children: Adanaya, 13 years old; Chisom, 11; and Ugonna, four. My family has sacrificed so much to support my political journey, and for this I am forever grateful.

Madam Speaker, my constituency is beautiful, and it is diverse. It is home to seniors, young families, new Canadians, public servants, professionals, business owners, and entrepreneurs. The new Edmonton-South West riding was first created in 2000 to accommodate the significant business and residential growth that occurred in southwest Edmonton. In my community you will find children playing outside and neighbours who feel a sense of community toward one another. We are home to some of Edmonton's most beautiful communities, including Wedgewood, Hodgson, Lessard, Jamieson Place, the Hamptons, Glastonbury, Grandview Heights, Edgemont, Woodbend Estates, Cameron Heights, Keswick, Glenriding, Ambleside, Windermere, Langdale, and more.

We were first represented in this Chamber by Matt Jeneroux, who is now serving successfully as the Member of Parliament for Edmonton Riverbend. Part of Edmonton-South West was once Edmonton-McClung. Another part was Edmonton-Whitemud, which has been represented by two former Premiers, the Hon. Don Getty and the hon. Dave Hancock. The people of my riding have high expectations for their leadership, and I look forward to serving them well.

Edmonton-South West is home to hundreds of acres of natural beauty along the North Saskatchewan River valley, which our

government has sworn to protect through the creation of the Big Island provincial park.

Over the past year I've had the privilege of speaking to tens of thousands of Edmonton-South West residents. I heard their greatest hopes and their dreams for the future. Where I met this relentless optimism, Madam Speaker, I also heard the very suffering of people who had fallen victim to the actions of the previous NDP government over the past four years. I heard from young professionals who hadn't worked in months and sometimes even years, I heard from small-business owners who had to forego salaries in order to make payroll, I heard from young families who were struggling with an ever-increasing tax burden, and I heard from parents who were worried that their children would not be afforded the same opportunities they had.

Madam Speaker, my constituents were extremely worried about the direction of the former government, and they voted in large numbers for change. They were worried about the ideological NDP carbon tax. They couldn't understand why they were being punished for heating their homes, buying nutritious groceries, taking their kids to hockey practice, and living their normal lives. They were worried about the skyrocketing debt. They knew the NDP had us on course for more than \$100 billion of debt and that their children and their children's children would be the ones left holding the bag. They were worried about the six credit downgrades that caused investment flight and shook investor confidence in our province, and they were worried about the NDP's habit of resorting to divisive identity politics whenever questions about their economic record came up.

The NDP's ideological policies weren't just fodder for debate in this Chamber; they had real consequences for real people's lives. Under their watch the unemployment rate skyrocketed, and nearly 200,000 of our fellow Albertans found themselves out of work. Others moved out of the province or quit looking altogether, having completely lost faith in our economy, and countless businesses shuttered their doors for good. The NDP presided over the decline of Canada's wealthiest and most prosperous province, the heartbeat of Canada's free-enterprise economy and the place that has created unprecedented opportunity and prosperity for people from all over the world.

Albertans don't want a handout; they want a hand up. Throughout our history, whenever we have been challenged, we have ever answered that call. Let's create the conditions Albertans need to succeed, and then get out of the way.

In the words of another of my heroes, President Ronald Reagan: "There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of human intelligence, imagination, and wonder." Albertans are down but not out. Along with my colleagues I vow to restore the Alberta advantage for my constituents and for all Albertans, but I will need the help of this Assembly to get that job done. We as legislators are embarking on one of the greatest projects in our province's history: fixing the economy of this province, an economy that once made dreams come true but an economy right now in crisis.

Madam Speaker, I myself have been blessed to have lived the Alberta dream, a dream I would not have thought possible at the beginning of my life. My journey to this historic building did not begin last month or even last year but many years ago on a remote family farm in southeast Nigeria, called the Igbo of Nigeria. I was born just a few years after the devastating Nigerian civil war, otherwise known as the Biafran War. More than 2 million people died in that war, most of them were Igbos, and the precursor to this war was the persecution and slaughter of countless Igbo people. The Igbos are known across Africa as the wandering Jews of the continent due to the remarkable similarities in culture, early religion, enterprise, and world view. The oral history that has been

passed down for thousands of years traces the origin of the Igbos to modern day Israel.

While I was born into this rich history, I was also born into extreme poverty. Madam Speaker, I cannot overemphasize that phrase "extreme poverty." I am the seventh of 11 children. Two of my siblings, Thaddeus and Chinedu, have passed away. May their souls continue to rest in perfect peace. Growing up, my brothers and sisters and I lacked access to proper nutrition, medicine, and education. The life expectancy in Nigeria at that time was around 40 years, the lowest of all West African countries.

My parents were rural farmers. It was not mechanized farming, Madam Speaker, so my brothers and sisters and I worked the farm with mostly our bare hands. We grew yams, cassava, palm oil, maize, plantain, and groundnuts, among others. We cultivated, planted, weeded, and harvested the fields with less than ideal equipment such as hoes, knives, and shovels. Our farm saw our blood, sweat, and tears, but despite our hard work, we could not afford two square meals a day. For most of my teenage years my mother wore the same wrapper day after day, week after week.

Neither my mother nor my father had ever been to school, but they knew education was the key to unlocking a better future for their children. They worked so hard to ensure we attended primary and secondary school even though they knew this would likely take us away from the farm. While in primary school I made myself a promise based on a conversation I had with my dad's oldest sister when I was nine years old. My aunt told me that she had seen that I was going to become a lawyer in our native Igbo language. I had no idea what that meant at the time, but she described it to me, Madam Speaker. That conversation stuck with me.

After secondary school poverty threatened my dream of going to the university. I decided to take a risk and moved to Lagos. It was in Lagos where I started what I call petty trading, buying clothes and shoes and selling them to white-collar workers on the commercial streets in Lagos. I used the money I earned from this to become the first in my family to attend the university in Nigeria, the University of Lagos. I continued petty trading throughout university and law school, using the money to pay for my education and eventually that of my younger siblings.

Madam Speaker, it was on the first day of university that I met the love of my life, Emem. Little did I know then that this chance encounter, given to me by the grace of God, would change the trajectory of the rest of my life. Emem and I came from two separate backgrounds, however. Emem's parents were very educated, unlike mine. Her dad was an engineer and her mom was a lawyer in the registrar at a different university. Despite our differences, Emem saw in me someone I had yet to see in myself. She believed God had great things planned for me and for us. Despite my poor beginnings she drove me to never rest on my laurels but to continue dreaming bigger.

4:40

After practising law for a couple of years in Nigeria and after just a week-old marriage, Emem travelled to Canada to pursue her master's degree in law at the University of Alberta. I soon joined Emem in Edmonton. Prior to Emem's admission we had decided we wanted to live, work, and raise our family in the best place on Earth, a place we heard was teeming with hope and opportunity. I took a position with the patient food services at the University of Alberta hospital, making meals and washing dishes for our most vulnerable citizens. This work forever changed my life, awakening in me a desire to help others. While many looked at this as a step backward, I was very grateful for this opportunity as it allowed me to support my young family while my wife furthered her studies.

Following this I went on to work for Legal Aid Alberta and the public service. After writing my exams for my Canadian law degree equivalency, I was called to the bar, becoming a lawyer in Canada. I continued to give back in any way I could, volunteering for the Edmonton Community Legal Centre, the lawyer referral service, my local church, and community organizations.

As the MLA for Edmonton-South West I now find myself in the best position to help others that I have ever been in, and that's exactly what I intend to do. The next four years, Madam Speaker, will not be about settling scores or imposing any sort of political ideology. The next four years will be about bringing investment back to Alberta, growing the economy, implementing common-sense policies, and getting Albertans back to work.

In Nigeria there's a proverb that says that a single tree cannot make a forest. I always remind myself of this proverb because it reminds me that no matter what I accomplish in life, I accomplish it with the help of others. Standing before you, Madam Speaker, I think about this proverb and everything everybody did for me: my parents; my brothers and sisters; my teachers; my wife; my three amazing children; my MLA colleagues; my friends and volunteers, who worked tirelessly for me during the election; and, of course, the residents of Edmonton-South West. I am here not for myself but for them, and for them I will work tirelessly to create the future Alberta deserves. This is what the Alberta dream is all about, using one's success to facilitate the success of others and always conducting oneself with a sense of kindness, passion, and community. These are lessons I am now trying to teach my three children. While they may be growing up in a different world than I did, these ideas are universal for the prescription of a good life.

I am so thankful I followed my parents' wisdom all those years ago, and I thank God every day that they are still alive to see what their wisdom has become and how it is still helping others. I believe that public service is an honourable calling, and I'm eager to get to work alongside my new colleagues and our new Premier, who is one of the greatest leaders our country has ever known. In just a few weeks he has shown Albertans how committed he is to improving their lives. As soon as he was sworn in as the Premier, he travelled to Ottawa to fight against Justin Trudeau's Bill C-48, the west coast tanker ban, and Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines bill. Under the Premier's leadership we have already tabled several pieces of flagship legislation, including the carbon tax repeal act, which is now law; the Job Creation Tax Cut (Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment) Act; the open for business act; and the Municipal Government (Property Tax Incentives) Amendment Act, 2019.

I fully endorse our government's Alberta advantage immigration strategy, geared towards attracting new entrepreneurs to our province. Our Premier is truly one of the hardest working people I have ever known, and I look forward to working with him as well as my other talented government colleagues to pass these bills and get Albertans working again.

I want to end on a quote from another one of my heroes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

**Ms Goodridge:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, I thoroughly enjoyed listening to your maiden speech, and I was just wondering if you could perhaps give us your favourite quote. I'd really appreciate hearing that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wanted to end this speech with one of my other heroes, Abraham Lincoln. "We can

succeed only by concert. It is not 'can any of us imagine better?' but 'can we all do better?'"

This is reflective of how I view the world, and I look forward, you know, to reaching across the aisle and finding common ground, where possible, with the opposition. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General and keeper of the great seal.

**Mr. Schweitzer:** It is an honour to rise, Madam Speaker, to speak in response to the Speech from the Throne and provide my maiden speech. I also want to thank my constituents of Calgary-Elbow and the team of people that helped, you know, get me here. So many times over the last year – this campaign that we launched was over a year ago – we were out door-knocking in minus 30-degree temperatures with large teams of people, and every time our team wondered whether or not our volunteers would continue to come out, people kept coming because this campaign that we ran mattered to them and it mattered to the people of our community.

It is absolutely humbling to be the representative for Calgary-Elbow. I'll get into it and tell you a little bit of detail about my constituency here, but it truly is a unique constituency in the city of Calgary. It's known by the name Elbow. People sometimes think of it just as one part of the constituency, but it truly is a diverse, inner-city constituency in Calgary. We have some of the highest density areas for rental properties. We also have Mount Royal University. We have Chinook mall. We have areas as well that were impacted by flooding in 2013. So it's a very diverse constituency with lots of different needs and also, you know, requests of their elected officials. It's a true honour to represent the community and be here to be able to give this speech today.

The constituency also has a deep and storied history of elected representatives. Some of them are very colourful. One of them is the former Premier Ralph Klein, known by many affectionately as King Ralph. When you door-knock and talk to constituents that remember King Ralph, they remind you on a regular basis that he held up a sign saying Paid in Full. It is often a reminder of how important this job is and how important it is to get Albertans back to work.

Also, not a day went by in that campaign where we didn't talk to somebody that was struggling, somebody that was wondering whether or not they were going to be able to make their mortgage payment or whether or not their kids were going to have a future in this province. So for them: I've received your messages loud and clear. I will hopefully represent you throughout this term with dignity and respect and make sure that I continue to listen to you.

I look forward as well to getting back to the doors here in the fall. Our team: I know that we're probably up there for some of the most door-knocking in Alberta, but we made it through our entire constituency five times – and that truly was a grounding experience as well – to make sure that we heard people, that we understood what their concerns were. Again, a huge thank you to my team and everybody there on the ground.

Also, it's an honour to serve as the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, also, as you mentioned, keeper of the great seal, which is one of my favourite titles. It's just such a foundation of our democracy, to preserve our justice and make sure that Albertans know that they can live in a strong and free society. I don't take that lightly.

I also want to thank my family. I'll get into some remarks about my beautiful wife, Jen, but I also want to say just a few things to my two amazing daughters, Heidi and Stella. The one thing that

really got them excited over the last year was when I got the call to be asked to be in cabinet. Their response was: yes, waterslides. To them, the West Edmonton Mall water park was the highlight of dad's political career. It puts things in context sometimes as to what it was. I must say that I was disappointed that the loop-the-loop waterslide, kind of that pinky-purple one, was not in operation that day, so my children are determined to take dad back to the West Edmonton Mall waterslide so we can take on that challenge as well.

Also, my parents, Ed and Karen, had the opportunity to come and see me be sworn in as an MLA. My mom was a schoolteacher. My dad was an entrepreneur. My dad was also an Edmonton police officer. When he was a young boy, at that point in time there was no high school in his community here in Alberta, and he actually came to Edmonton to go to Concordia. He went to Concordia, and after that he went on, in his late teens, to the Edmonton police force, where he served for a number of years. His claim to fame, he told me, was that one time when he was in a high-pursuit chase, he rolled his police car and got himself onto the front page of the *Edmonton Journal*. Luckily, it was not his photo but that of his car upside down. That was his claim to fame here in Edmonton when he was a young man.

4:50

Also, I just want to talk a little bit about my family history as well in this province. My grandparents on my dad's side experienced a war-torn Europe in World War I. My grandma remembers what it was like having Russian troops live in their home. They didn't know each other yet, but as young teenagers they both set out for a country of hope, where they knew that they could have prosperity and the ability to farm and, hopefully, live in peace. Both of them chose to come here to Alberta and set up near Goodfare, which is in the Peace Country, close to Grande Prairie. They raised eight children; my dad was one of them. I'm just immensely proud to see how many of my family members have gone on to stay here in this province and make this home.

On my mom's side of the family as well there is a long history in Alberta. My great-grandfather Richard Longhurst was a member of the 89th Battalion, which was recruited across Alberta and mobilized in Calgary. He went on and was wounded at Vimy Ridge. When he came home, he never actually spoke about the war or his experiences that he had when he was there, but one of the things that I've seen and my mom preserves is the notes that he actually would send back to my grandfather Master Eric. He would actually send them. Also, the photo that he had with the Winnie the Pooh – the Winnie the Pooh – is one of the most precious items that he sent to my grandfather. My grandfather also went on to serve in World War II, where he served and volunteered. He actually wasn't there for the birth of my mother. He didn't get to see her until she was about a year old, I believe, when she was a young girl.

I just want to say that it's humbling just to kind of see the history of your own family. I'm actually very, very moved by my colleague Minister Madu and his story about his family and how far his own life story has come. We all stand on our families' histories, and for me it's just grounding. I'm thankful for everything that everyone has ever done to get me to this point in my life, and it's just with deep honour that I say thank you to them and everyone in my family at this point.

I want to turn now to why I decided to get into politics. As many people in this room know, I'm a restructuring lawyer by trade. Many people don't know what a restructuring lawyer is, but we help companies and people in financial difficulty. Over the last number of years here in the province of Alberta too many Albertans have been facing financial challenges that other jurisdictions facing similar issues policywise were not facing. Time after time I would

meet people. I'd meet a husband and wife who had built a small business here in this province, and they were having a tough time. They couldn't make payroll. There were, you know, economic challenges. They could accept that there were economic challenges, but they couldn't accept the policy framework here in Alberta that they felt was working against them.

Time after time we'd go out to the market. We'd try and see if we could come up with a solution so they could keep their employees, so they could keep the people that they cared about working here in this great province of Alberta, and time and time again we simply could not find them the resources that they needed to keep the lights on, to keep it going. Too many times I'd see these people go away, tears in their eyes, knowing that they'd actually have to go to their employees and face them, people that are family to them, and tell them that they'd have to turn the lights out. All the equipment would go to the auction yard. Ritchie Bros. auction yard was full here at unprecedented levels, Madam Speaker. It's unacceptable that Albertans have had to live through that in a way for the last four years. Seeing so many people go through this, I felt compelled to get up and run.

It hits me at a personal level because my own family in the early 1980s went through a very similar circumstance. My mother had taken time away from being a teacher to raise us as kids, and my parents had started a small business. At that point in the early 1980s we faced national energy programs, we had 20 per cent interest rates, and we had failed policies that economically devastated the west. My parents had their small business. They lost their small business. We lost our home. I remember an extended period of time in my youth with a great uncertainty as to what the future would hold. I remember what it was like to have an empty fridge. I remember overhearing my parents talking about whether or not they're going to be able to pay their rent. I do remember the great charity of our church and community, time and time again people in our community stepping up to help our family go through some great difficulties.

My parents are my ultimate heroes in life. I was asked one time in the media: who do you truly respect? It's my parents. The reason why I respect my parents so, so much is that they never quit. They never gave up. They always wanted to be an example for me and my siblings. So to them I say thank you for everything that they did for us to get us to where we are. My parents did recover, but it took them an immense amount of time. We really didn't have stability financially in our lives until I was about 11 or 12 years old as a kid. My siblings were older than me. I was the youngest one. They remember it more vividly than I do. But my parents did recover. They're now comfortably retired. My dad decided to retire at the age of 82. He kept working throughout his life, had that work ethic. My brother went on to become an accountant. My sister went on to become a well-published professor at York University.

I decided to pursue the really, you know, conservative profession, when I was younger – or at least I tried to make it a profession – of becoming a baseball player. I decided that I wanted to pursue that, so I had the great fortune of going on and playing college athletics in the United States. The one thing about being a pitcher, though – and I got opportunity after opportunity because in baseball I was strong. I could throw hard. I could stand at home plate and throw a ball out of the baseball stadium, but for some reason when you're a pitcher, to be able to take that to that next level, you have to be able to throw strikes, and that was one thing that was lost on me. I would walk a guy, hit a guy, strike a guy out, and after years of catchers groaning about having to catch for me, I decided that maybe some other path was in the future for me.

I came back to Canada at that point in time, looked at my somewhat jumbled transcript, I would have to say, after attending

many different undergraduate institutions pursuing my dream of baseball, and realized that it would take me just as long to finish my undergrad as it would for me to go to law school and just finish that, so I decided at that point in time to write the LSAT. It didn't occur to me at that point in time in my life that people actually prepared for the LSAT.

Again, I decided to write the LSAT. It wasn't available where I was, so I drove up to Kamloops at that point in time, wrote the LSAT that morning. One of the things that I learned from writing that LSAT exam, as I compared that to my law school exam experience, was that I needed to wake up a little bit earlier than just showing up at the exam right when the bell went off, but I did well enough to get into the University of Manitoba. I had never been to Winnipeg before, but I heard it was a nice city, and I decided to go to law school at the University of Manitoba.

I am very fortunate that that happened in my life because that's where I met my wife, Jen. My wife, Jen, was a first-year law student like myself. She met me and quickly turned around and decided to run away. She thought I was an American because I still had a little bit of an American accent, apparently, at that time in my life. But luckily her last name and mine were both towards the end of the alphabet, so we were in many classes together, and shortly around Christmastime of that year we started dating, and by the time we graduated, we decided to get married.

Now, my wife is one of the most determined, smart, savvy individuals that I've ever met in my life, and she is truly the greatest partner. For me, personally, she saw definitely – I don't even think I was a diamond in the rough. I was probably a lump of coal at that time in my life from a refinement standpoint, and she stood with me throughout that. To speak to her patience: when we were set to graduate law school, I was involved in a few different things at that point in time, and her patience is to the point where we graduated law school on a Friday – I was involved in a political campaign; it might shock people to hear that I was involved in a political campaign – I won a leadership campaign on the Saturday, and then we got married on Monday. So in one weekend, we graduated, I won a campaign, and we got married. I helped with the flowers a little bit on the Monday, but other than that – Madam Speaker, my wife is truly an amazing woman.

I also want to turn to the first year of our marriage, getting back again to the patience of my wife. She got an articling job right away. She got an articling job in Manitoba. She was born and raised a Manitoba girl. She got a job in Manitoba, her dream job, doing criminal defence work. She got a job there. I, on the other hand, did not get a job in Manitoba. I went through the interview process, and they looked at me and said: "I don't know how exactly you're going to build a business here in Manitoba. You're not from here." And they took a pass at that point in time in my illustrious law student days. But at that point in time I had a chat with my then fiancée and said: "Okay. Well, what are we going to do? Obviously, I need to work. Let's take a look at: where in Canada do I want to be? Where in Canada do we want to be going forward?"

5:00

So we took a look at an amazing city called Calgary. I remember to this day the difference in experience that it was like actually going to that interview. At that point in time I was interviewing with a law firm called Bennett Jones. The experience that I had with those folks: they told me literally in the meeting: "We don't care who your parents are. We don't care where you come from. We want to know you have a good head on your shoulders because here in Alberta you can make it."

I was sold at that point in time. I told my wife: "This is where we need to be. This is what the future holds for us and our family.

We've got to make this work." We spent the first year of our marriage apart in different cities, and now we're here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments or questions under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? The hon. government whip.

**Mr. Ellis:** Yeah. Thank you very much. You know, having known this member for quite some time, I'm sure I'd like to hear a little bit more as to what he had to say and to probably finish the remaining part of his speech.

Thank you.

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Building on that, Alberta was where we wanted to be. We had to be here. Just seeing how confident this city that we were in, Calgary, and the rest of the province was, it was setting the national agenda at that point in time. It was the magnet for talent, the magnet for young, talented people to come to to build their lives. For me, when I saw that, that's where I needed to be, and I want my daughters and I want all Albertans to experience that once again.

One of the most painful things that I experienced in the last few years in politics and campaigning was having young university students come up to me and say, "Your generation had it easier than mine." I'm 40 years old. They said: "Your generation had it easier than mine. We want the same opportunities. We're tired of our friends having to leave this province to go find opportunities. This is our home. We want to be here. We want a government that's going to reflect that and fight for jobs and our future here in this province."

For me, Madam Speaker, I was driven to run to do that. I'm actually amazed at the professionalism, the collegiality of the government members, and as I've gotten to know so many of you over the last few weeks and months here, I'm looking forward to working on our agenda here, focused on jobs, the economy, and pipelines. I'm looking forward as well to working with members of the opposition, where it sees fit. My door is open. If there are areas that they have issues with, we're here to work with everyone, to be here for all Albertans.

With that, I say thank you. I look forward to working with everyone here, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. government whip.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you. I believe I have spoken to this.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to adjourn debate. Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

### Bill 7

### Municipal Government (Property Tax Incentives) Amendment Act, 2019

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill 7, Municipal Government (Property Tax Incentives) Amendment Act, 2019.

This legislation would empower municipalities to attract investment, create jobs, and realize their full economic potential. Municipalities desire the freedom and opportunity to make choices that fit them best. As it stands, municipalities have the ability to

cancel, defer, or refund property taxes for a specific year. That helps provide relief to property owners in times of hardship, but it does little to support economic investment since businesses are looking for longer term certainty.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

The legislation that we are proposing is concise. We are proposing to expand the powers of municipal councils to create property tax incentive programs. Municipalities know what is best for their residents. We are simply getting out of their way and letting them do it. If passed, Bill 7 would allow municipalities to provide property tax incentives for up to 15 years, down from the year-to-year incentive program that we allowed previously. This would give Alberta a competitive advantage over jurisdictions across Canada and the United States. Other jurisdictions have programs like this in place: Saskatchewan, British Columbia as well as Texas and Louisiana. If passed, we will be helping municipalities provide one of the longest tax incentive timelines in North America.

Another proposed amendment would require any tax incentives a municipality chooses to put in place to be included on the municipality's tax assessment and tax roll. This would allow public access to information about the properties that have received tax incentives. This transparency is already in place for other types of property tax exemptions. Our proposed legislation would mirror this requirement.

Another proposed change to the act would require that decisions come in written form. This explanation would outline the extent of any property tax incentives a municipality would put in place. This would ensure continued transparency for any business that applied for property tax relief. Our proposed legislation would allow an appeal process for any decisions that are made on the property tax incentives. This proposed legislation would allow municipalities the choice to permit municipal staff to make decisions on incentive applications. It would also allow these decisions to be appealed to municipal council. These decisions can be reviewed by the courts, who have taken the steps in this proposed legislation to reduce the review time to 60 days, down from the default timeline of six months. This would allow swift resolution of any dispute that may come up.

If passed, this legislation would allow the incentives to continue even when part of one municipality is annexed by another. This would allow more certainty for businesses, all guaranteeing the property tax incentives for the duration of their term as long as they continue to meet the conditions set by the specific municipality. In fact, this proposed amendment would give municipalities the ability to include conditions or criteria in their incentive programs, giving them the tools to hold businesses accountable and, in the worst-case scenario, cancel the incentive if the business does not live up to its commitment.

Some individuals and groups may disagree with the proposed legislation, thinking that it may lead to increased competition between municipalities. Increased competition is exactly what we are looking for. We want to help grow our economy, not just manage it. If passed, I believe that this legislation will bolster investment and economic development across our great province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister. Just to confirm, as I was switching over into the chair, this was moving second reading of Bill 7?

**Mr. Madu:** Yes. That was exactly what I said, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Are there any other members wishing to speak at second reading? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo standing.

**Member Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the hon. member for bringing this forward and for saying some of the things he said about municipalities, especially things like: they know what's best. They do know what's best, and that's why the lack of consultation with municipalities around this legislation is astounding. It's stunning why this minister didn't reach out and talk to mayors and reeves around this province, talk to the organizations that they all belong to, with regard to: "Do you need this? Would this help you? Would this attract more business and development and investment and create jobs?"

I think, Mr. Speaker, that had the hon. minister done that research, he would have found out that, you know, this is not the top – this is not the top – of the list for municipalities of things they want to see. In fact, what they want to see is that they want this province, they want this government to get back to the table, sooner than later, with regard to a funding framework, a fiscal framework for municipalities that they need to have in place by 2021, when the MSI agreement runs out.

It's stunning that the government would bring this forward and say that this will fix things for municipalities. What this will actually do is potentially create some disagreements between municipalities. A cynical person could say that much will go on between municipalities but not in a positive way as a result of the bill, the legislation, brought forward here today.

**5:10**

Some problems that I have with this bill I can tell you are what was mentioned by the hon. minister just a second ago. He said that if a decision gets put in place by one municipality with regard to tax exemptions for a business potentially up to 15 years and then potentially to get renewed after that and if it's adjacent to another municipality, a municipality that wants to look at annexing in a planned way so that urban services can go out in a planned way, if there are all of these tax-exempt companies and properties on their border, then that municipality that wants to annex in a planned way will be stymied because they won't get any of those property taxes from those nonresidential or businesses far into the future, Mr. Speaker. They have to assume the exemptions or the deferrals that were given to that company by another municipality, and that's not a good thing.

You know, this is not an improvement on what we have. We already, in the MGA under specific sections, have the ability to, as the minister says, grant deferrals or exemptions to property, and many, many municipalities have done that for their businesses in their areas over time. In fact, when we were government, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the city of Lethbridge approached the government of Alberta around one of the biggest private investments they wanted to land in that city, Cavendish Farms. Cavendish Farms approached Lethbridge, approached the province of Alberta, and got their support that they needed to make that final investment decision with regard to the location of their plant in Lethbridge, and all of that took place under the existing legislation.

Numerous media reports have been in the paper, with different people speaking out positively and negatively about this, Mr. Speaker. Some of the positives that we can see are that some mayors talk about the increased flexibility they will have to use this tool, but I would contend that there are already tools in place that they can use and have used successfully to attract investment and jobs and businesses.

Some of the negative things they've said, Mr. Speaker, are far more numerous than the positives. They have talked about the

potential of this being a race to the bottom or a competition. As the hon. minister says, we want there to be competition amongst municipalities for the betterment, I guess, of all of Alberta, but I can tell you that many are concerned that the competition will lead to a race to the bottom amongst municipalities, and therefore they will not have the ability to collect proper taxes that are needed to support operational budgets and maintain programs and services and things like roads and sewers and all those other things. So the race to the bottom, the competition, will actually be a bad thing for municipalities.

The Edmonton metro board talks about a number of municipalities in and around the city of Edmonton that like to work together, Mr. Speaker, that believe that if they work together, they can go much farther as a group than they would as any individual municipality. They talked about that as hunting like a pack. They believe that they sell the best of their region to those who want to invest. What this might do, this very legislation brought up by this hon. minister, is that this might strain and crack the ability of the Edmonton metro board to hunt like a pack. I hope it doesn't happen, but it could happen where one municipality breaks away from the rest and figures that they've got more to achieve on their own than their pack would have as a group. That's not a really great thing either.

They've tried to put together reasonable intermunicipal co-operation agreements with each other, and frankly, Mr. Speaker, isn't that what we want municipalities to do, to co-operate together so that they can build a stronger, more united region or Alberta together? That's, I think, what's missed by this legislation. What this minister likes to tout as, you know, a new advantage, where there will be competition amongst municipalities, could potentially lead to those same municipalities eating each other's lunch and having more conflict arise.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that's missing, notably, from this legislation is no hint at all of the province of Alberta participating in this scheme besides putting the legislation together. If they're so confident, if the government is so confident that this will work for municipalities, why is no government money on the table; namely, the education portion of the nonresidential property tax? That's not mentioned at all here in my read of this legislation, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the hon. minister can confirm or deny that the government of Alberta will still be collecting its educational property tax if a municipality decides that they want to not collect or defer the municipal portion of that property tax. The government of Alberta will still be able to collect theirs because there's no mention that that would not come to the province of Alberta, as it does now. The government's confidence in this seems to be lacking because they're not putting any money at all behind this initiative.

Municipal leaders have been popping up around the province saying: you know, this legislation popped up on our radar; we didn't know about it. I'm sure the hon. minister and his colleagues in this debate will say: well, you need to look at our policy platform for the election because it was in there. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in the 101 pages of policy platform in the municipal governance section this was one line – one line – in 101 pages. It's been brought forward in terms of legislation here today.

You know, it's talked about as being what municipalities need. What they really need is certainty of income. They need businesses to locate, and they need the ability to plan for their futures. I think this is going to strain all of that. It's going to put a lot of tension intermunicipally, in between municipalities, and it's going to be a problem. The issue, in addition to some of those that have been talked about by myself, is that we don't know how one municipality will use this as a tool and other municipalities may not use it as a

tool. Really, will those other municipalities be left behind? Probably, Mr. Speaker.

Will this attract any more business to this province, or will it cause municipality A to race to the bottom to try and get under municipality B? The argument that it's going to attract business from other places, nationally and internationally, I don't think really holds water. What we'll see is that business will go shopping amongst municipalities and have those quiet conversations with mayors. They'll say: "Mr. Mayor, I was just down the road at this municipality, and they've said that they'll do this for five years. What are you willing to do, Mr. Mayor? Will you kind of undercut them and go for seven or go for 15 years?" You know, I just don't think that's the kind of conversation we need to be having at the municipal level and that mayors need to be having at the municipal level, because, Mr. Speaker, it's a race to the bottom. It's not intermunicipally building relationships; it's more a dog-eat-dog kind of approach.

I'm really disappointed that the government would bring this forward, it being only one line in their platform and not a line that, you know, municipal mayors and Reeves and councillors believed was first on the agenda. First on their agenda is always, always, always: do we have a long-term funding arrangement with the province, and what is that arrangement like? Now, we did that. We put that in place for Edmonton and Calgary, and we were working with the other two associations to put the same thing in place with them. Mr. Speaker, had we been sitting on that side right now, we'd be working on that and making that happen instead of further delaying them, as has been the case with this current government.

5:20

Mr. Speaker, I'm of the view that the kinds of things that are in this legislation are just going to lead to challenges amongst all of the municipalities and that we have current rules in place in the MGA where these same sorts of things can take place and have taken place across Alberta and, no doubt, will continue to take place across Alberta.

What we, of course, I think, need is that we need this government to step back, actually go and talk to the local partners, whom they value so highly but didn't talk to in advance of bringing this forward, and talk to them about the different provisions in here. I think one of the things they'll hear is: "If you believe so strongly in this, why isn't there any provincial money on the table? Like, you're expecting us to give deferrals and exemptions. Why isn't there any provincial money on the table?" If the minister can answer that question, that would be really helpful for me to understand. The minister could also maybe take an opportunity to answer the question: why this? Was it being clamoured for by municipalities across the province? I certainly wasn't aware of any large, significant clamour by individuals saying that they needed to exempt more property from nonresidential property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, it used to be good enough that we had an excellent education system in this province, one that was talked about by the government side just a little while ago. We have excellent services and programs, rule of law, safety in our communities, like I said, an excellent workforce, a young workforce. Those were seen as attractors to Alberta, and from all my time in city council, 15 years, I can tell you that those are significant benefits to any corporation that wants to locate in Alberta.

Now, those are the kinds of things that I can remember mayors of the day that I served with would say when they would go down to Montreal and, say, meet with CP Rail. CP Rail, as you remember, in the mid-90s moved to Calgary and created a head office in Calgary after having one in Montreal for 100 years or so. It wasn't because they were being offered a deferral of taxes. It was because

of those other five things that I talked about: a good workforce, a good culture, excellent academics in our province, postsecondary education, great health care. All those things were the attractor, not the fact that they wouldn't have to pay property tax for a period of years. They came because of those other things.

I submit that, you know, if we really want to help municipalities out, we would start working on long-term funding agreements with those municipalities, not give them more opportunities to not collect nonresidential property tax and not put any provincial money up at the same time. Mr. Speaker, these are tweaks we don't need. It's not at the top of the municipal agenda, and we should just go back to talking to them before we bring anything forward. If I were that minister, I would take the opportunity to step back, talk to municipalities – “Let's do this together” – as opposed to springing something in this Legislature that they haven't asked for nor need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

As the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo was the second speaker on this, there is no 29(2)(a) available.

However, is there another member who would like to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

**Ms Ganley:** Calgary-Mountain View.

**The Acting Speaker:** Calgary-Mountain View. Yes, of course.

**An Hon. Member:** Close.

**Ms Ganley:** Close-ish. Fair enough.

Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Interestingly, I think that with respect to this bill I probably have more questions than comments. As many members of this House will be aware, in the last four years we underwent a significant rewrite of the Municipal Government Act. This is something with which I am intimately familiar. I'm sure many members of the government bench are aware of the Legislative Review Committee and the joy that it can be to chair that committee. I personally actually really, really liked it although as it turns out, many of my colleagues were not as enthused as I was.

Of course, that committee had to review extensive changes to the Municipal Government Act, which is why I remember doing extensive changes to the Municipal Government Act. Those were quite extensively consulted on. They came in in a series of different phases, which is an interesting logic conundrum, I guess, when you're dealing with amending portions of an amending act which itself isn't yet proclaimed. Those changes tended to be brought in, and then they would be consulted on in between legislative sessions and then passed in future legislative sessions.

After we went through the process with the legislation, the next process was with respect to the regulations. There are sort of special provisions under the Municipal Government Act with respect to those regulations that require them to be posted for 60 days so that municipal politicians and the public generally have the opportunity to see them and to form opinions on them or consider them and then to get back to government before those regulations are actually brought in by order in council. In that rather extensive process I don't actually recall anyone saying that the powers that they have currently with respect to this issue were inadequate.

For the sake of the record I will read in that section 347(1) of the Municipal Government Act presently states:

If a council considers it equitable to do so, it may, generally or with respect to a particular taxable property or business or a class

of taxable property or business, do one or more of the following [things], with or without conditions:

- (a) cancel or reduce tax arrears;
- (b) cancel or refund all or part of a tax;
- (c) defer the collection of [taxes].

- (2) A council may phase in a tax increase or decrease resulting from the preparation of any new assessment.

To me, in substance, that appears to do already what it is that we're attempting to amend the act to do.

I'm, I guess, a little confused, in a rather packed legislative session that is already scheduled to run into the summer, why it is that this was such an urgent priority. It wasn't featured prominently in the election. It wasn't featured prominently in the platform. I don't recall, again, in the rather extensive consultation done on previous amendments to this same act, anyone cropping up and asking for this, and it appears that it doesn't do anything that the act didn't already permit or enable. So, yes, I guess I'm curious as to why it is that we're here having this conversation.

In fact, municipalities have created tax incentive programs under the current provisions. Lethbridge, for instance, has done some. In 2015 they established a targeted redevelopment incentive policy to promote new construction and major renovations. Chestermere also created a policy in 2019 to enable tax cancellation for nonresidential commercial developments, industrial developments, seniors' housing, multifamily housing in the form of three- or four-storey apartment buildings. In May 2019 Calgary council provided a one-time cancellation of \$94,000 in property taxes for the Royal Canadian Legion in Kensington. Those are a couple of the places that it appears already to have been used.

I'd be interested to see the reasons for this. I wouldn't necessarily state that I'm against it. I'm just sort of concerned as to what the reason for this is. It seems to be less an issue of needing power and less an issue of needing legislation and more an issue of needing talking points. We all know, certainly, in Calgary that businesses are having a real struggle. It's because of a series of circumstances that I'm sure most members of this House are familiar with and that I don't need to go into in extensive detail. There's less tax base to draw from in the core, and that's potentially pushing costs out onto other businesses in Calgary. It's become rather a hot issue in recent days. It is a concern. I think it has been a concern in the past. I'm a little concerned that this is less granting municipalities more power – I think that they already have those powers – and more the government being able to say: well, municipalities, we did for you, and if you didn't cut taxes and cut your budget and do all sorts of things, then that's on you.

5:30

I'm a little concerned it's going to turn into this rhetoric, this rhetoric that we hear all the time that I think is destructive to the importance of our public services, about how everything is a waste and everyone who works for government is a bureaucrat and they deserve to have their salaries cut and their jobs cut and various other things. I don't believe that most of that is true in many cases.

Certainly, as additional technologies come on stream, as new ways of doing things exist, it's totally possible to find efficiencies. We found a huge number of efficiencies in court systems over the last four years. There were a number of different policies and processes that were changed because of the addition of technology, because of sort of new systems that came online. There's a lot of that that, admittedly, can be found. One of my favourites is still the bill that makes it the case that if you don't pay your C-Train ticket, a warrant is no longer issued for your arrest. I think that that was a huge efficiency in terms of typing those warrants and checking



those warrants and having to enter them in the police system and the court system and everything else.

I'm not saying that efficiencies don't exist; I'm just a little concerned that this bill is an exercise in communications to try to sort of point the finger at municipalities and say, "Well, we gave you all the tools you need; if you can't find the money, then too bad, so sad," but really they haven't given them any additional tools. So the problem that existed continues to exist, and it continues to exist in pretty much exactly the same form that it existed previously. Yeah. I think that's a concern to me.

Now, perhaps I'm incorrect. I obviously don't have the benefit of the in-depth briefing that members across the way have with respect to this, but I would be interested to hear what ways this creates additional or new or different powers and who it was that was asking for those additional new or different powers because, yeah, I mean, it seems to do something that could already be done.

With that, I will close my comments. Thank you for much.

**The Acting Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anyone have any questions or comments.

Seeing none, are there any members looking to speak to the matter? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall standing.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to the bill, the Municipal Government (Property Tax Incentives) Amendment Act, 2019, which, on the face of it, creates incentives and programs that somehow will – again, the same talking points for every bill – attract investment, create jobs in Calgary. I think this election and this party's platform was about jobs, the economy, the pipeline, and that's exactly what Albertans needed. They needed more jobs, and they wanted to see their economy improved, but so far what we have seen from this government is – the way, I guess, they were describing it is that hope is on the horizon and all those things. So far in whatever they have put forward, I think, we didn't see that hope. I guess, today there were new numbers for job numbers. Alberta lost 21,000 full-time jobs just in May. So there is still something missing that businesses failed to see. Albertans failed to see that hope. That is one, that kind of bill, which doesn't give any hope, doesn't attract any investment, doesn't create any jobs. It can be a good political stunt, but insofar as jobs, economy, pipelines, all those things are concerned, that doesn't do anything. That doesn't create those jobs, doesn't give a boost to the economy.

In an effort to support and attract businesses, small businesses, for instance, when we were in government, we worked with businesses, and we were able to offer incentives such as that we were able to cut taxes by one-third. That was something businesses were looking for. We were able to work with ATB, who were able to work with Business Development Bank of Canada, and come up with almost \$2.5 billion to increase the borrowing limit, to make it easier for businesses to access loans and expand their businesses and create jobs. We were able to create tax incentives that were providing the funds to hundreds of small businesses, new businesses, and attracted investment in green technology. Similarly, we worked with Alberta Innovates and came up with programs where businesses were provided supports to help them market their products and increase their investment, create more opportunities. Similarly, small-business incubators were added so that businesses can grow faster. We created a partnership with Business Link here to provide resources and support to the newcomers to Canada to get ahead and get into businesses.

All those things were practical steps that were adding opportunities for new businesses, were attracting investments in new areas, diversifying the economy, and creating jobs. But this piece of legislation, as my colleague from Calgary-Mountain View

just mentioned, is expanding on something or clarifying something that already exists in our existing Municipal Government Act, section 347, that gives powers to municipalities to do the kinds of things that they are clarifying in this legislation. In fact, there is a huge concern in Calgary, because Calgary was really hit hard during the downturn, at how nonresidential businesses are burdened by the business taxes. There was a protest this morning at 7:30 at city hall. After that, during the council meeting they approved a bailout package where they will provide almost \$130 million to reduce the burden from nonresidential property tax by 10 per cent. This was happening as this bill is before this Legislature, and they were able to do that to provide relief to the businesses. That happened this morning.

One other thing. When we were working on the Municipal Government Act – there are 300-plus municipalities around the province – our minister then travelled all across Alberta to gather input. Here we are with this bill. If I just quote a couple of municipalities, just Calgary and Edmonton, the Calgary mayor, I think, said that it's great to have flexibility but clearly warned about unintended consequences. If there was some fulsome discussion, some fulsome consultation with Calgary, for instance, they wouldn't be saying those things. Similarly, the mayor in Edmonton also raised concerns about those unintended consequences and even elaborated on that, how it may create issues like equity issues, that if it's just a race to the bottom, surrounding municipalities may offer all kinds of incentives. It will pit municipalities against each other.

**5:40**

If they were consulted, I think those concerns could have been addressed, or they wouldn't have raised these concerns. I think government needs to get to the table, needs to talk to municipalities, who they claim this bill is about. They're not sure what it's about, and that's what their comments clearly reflect. They need to talk to them about what they really need in terms of attracting investment, in terms of creating jobs. As was mentioned by the MLA for Calgary-*Buffalo*, what we have been hearing for a while and even during the election campaign was that they were concerned about what will happen when MSI comes to an end in 2021.

What they would want to hear would be some predictability of whether they will be getting funds and what formula will be used, how much funds they will be getting so they can factor that into their long-term planning. But so far I think they have never heard anything about that. I think that's coming in due course like every other investment, like education funding, health care funding, and all those things.

Those are the things that municipalities are looking for, and I think this bill, when looked at in conjunction with other bills, for instance – there is another bill before the House that will give \$4.5 billion to businesses. They are worried about how they will sustain their finances. For instance, the carbon levy will be repealed. If we talk about Calgary, there was a lot of investment that was going to the Calgary green line, many other projects across Alberta and in business communities. The province and municipalities, local leadership are worried about the impact of those bills. Now, I think, here is another bill that doesn't give anything concrete to municipalities about how they can continue attracting investment or creating jobs, not hearing what they actually need to hear; that is, about their MSI funding and those things.

With respect to section 347 of the Municipal Government Act, I think Calgary was facing that issue, and this morning there's the evidence that there is that flexibility. There is that power built into that act that they can offer those incentives. They can offer those breaks. They can reduce tax barriers. They can cancel them. They can refund it. Those things are already there. But if there is anything

else, since municipalities were not consulted, if there is some other consultation going on with some business group who wanted to see these changes, I think, again, it would be nice if the minister would share those details. If there is somebody other than municipalities, if some businesses are looking for these clarifications, we would, I guess, love to hear those details as well if there were any consultations.

These powers, these kinds of programs, have existed under the Municipal Government Act and been used in Calgary. They were being used in Lethbridge. They were used in Chestermere, and the program that was used in Chestermere was to create a policy where a municipality could cancel the nonresidential commercial development, could put a brake on those kinds of developments. That program is still in place, and it will expire at the end of 2020, meaning that even right now, as it stands now, municipalities can come up with multiyear plans as well. It's not that that flexibility is not there. That flexibility is still there for municipalities to come up with plans that are longer than one year. It's not just that one-time kind of thing that they want to resolve. I think municipalities have the ability to come up with those kinds of incentives that are longer than one-year terms.

Again, these new clarifications, these new powers: we cannot see how they are helping municipalities to attract investment. Certainly, one thing that was indicated that maybe was an unintended consequence was that it may start a competition between municipalities on how they can offer more incentives and try to attract the same businesses, try to move the same businesses out of a municipality's boundaries with more incentives and all those kinds of things. It's not the kind of competition that will help us create jobs, except in moving those businesses. That will not help us attract any kind of investment.

As I said with respect to consultation, there has been literally no evidence of consultation, that this government went out and consulted with all the municipalities. It's the kind of change that is affecting municipalities across the board. What we heard from Calgary and Edmonton clearly shows that they were taken by surprise to see this. Sure, they welcomed the flexibility, but both the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary have clearly warned about the unintended consequences. They are still trying to figure out how it can be used.

In the meantime, I think, as I said, it's good that we had that section in the Municipal Government Act that Calgary council was able to use this morning and provide relief to businesses in Calgary. I would say that if we see that bill, in the grand scheme of things it's not what this government promised to Albertans, to create jobs, to create opportunities for investment. So far, the total legislative package that's before the House, I think, is not helping us to move in that direction.

We do know that jobs in Calgary were lost in the downturn, primarily due to the issues that our energy sector is facing. With the issues that our energy sector is facing, I think that what the government has done so far is not helping that sector. For instance, they are cancelling . . .

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

**Member Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was listening, and I understand that the Member for Calgary-McCall was just about to talk about the energy sector and what things would better help that sector in the future. I would really appreciate knowing what that was.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you very much. What I was getting at was that in order to create jobs, I think we need to come up with policies that will help us with the energy sector. I think at this point we do know that line 3 was delayed. We are still awaiting the decision on Kinder Morgan and TMX. Seeing all those things when we were in government, we entered into an agreement to ship our oil by rail. It was an investment in our energy sector which would have created 125,000 barrels a day of capacity for our market. That would have certainly helped us attract investment, knowing that there was some way of transporting and shipping that oil out of Alberta while we wait for the pipelines.

5:50

Now they are threatening to cancel those projects. Without those projects, I think we will be losing more jobs, and we are also shutting down investment because nobody will invest in our energy sector if they don't know if they will be able to transport and ship that product to the markets. We are still waiting to get TMX. We don't have new markets, but with the existing market we do know that there is still a shortfall. We have production, but we don't have the takeaway capacity to match that production, so the steps they are taking are not attracting investment.

Those are the kinds of things, I guess, that Calgarians would want to see and that Albertans would want to see that would attract investment, that would create more jobs, that would help us with the economy. While they are cancelling those contracts and they're making us believe that somehow these clarifications will attract investment and create jobs, I don't think that we are buying it or that Albertans are buying it. I think it's still time for the government to get serious and focus on the energy sector and take the steps that are needed to create more takeaway capacity, take steps that are necessary to help that sector so that we can see jobs, we can see our economy once again booming. These, I guess, political stances and these talking points that these kinds of changes will be creating jobs and attracting investment won't cut it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** With another about 90 seconds under 29(2)(a), are there any other members wishing to take advantage of questions and comments?

I'm seeing the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford standing to speak.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this. I'm surprised that I've been given 15 minutes to speak to it. It's obviously longer than the government took to actually write the bill given that there is only one point to the bill, and that point is to allow municipalities to do something that's already allowed under section 347 of the Municipal Government Act. I know that's deep into the bill, so perhaps in the short time that they've been in government, they haven't had a chance to read quite that far into the Municipal Government Act to discover that that which they are seeking is already present.

As the Member for Calgary-McCall has indicated, even this morning the municipality of the city of Calgary has used this section of the act in order to allow some changes in taxes to occur. So we arrive at the point where both the evidence from the bill and the evidence from the behaviour of the municipalities on this very day indicate that the bill itself is pointless. I mean, I guess one has to wonder, then, what it is that the government is doing when they bring forward a bill that is as pointless as this. You know, they told us during the election that they were all ready to govern and they had already started to prepare bills, and it appears that they've

arrived here not ready to govern at all and looking for filler to put in to give the impression of doing something when they're not.

I guess I'm pretty concerned about this. As the Member for Calgary-Mountain View has indicated, if they had been serious about this as a way to create more jobs, they would have also included in this bill a mechanism for the provincial government to do a similar thing or to support the municipal governments in doing this. They didn't do that, so they're clearly just trying to download onto municipalities some responsibility that they don't want to take responsibility for themselves.

I think we have to then look at what the underlying intention is here since we know that the bill is pointless and that the government themselves haven't invested their own time and energy into this bill. So what's it all about? The only answer can be that it's essentially a dog whistle to their financial masters. The people who will be giving them donations in the next election are being told: we're going to try to find more ways to take money away from the people of the province of Alberta and shovel it to a small few of you who have the financial wherewithal to buy tickets to our fundraisers and donate to private PACs that will argue on your behalf in the next election.

That's the only reasonable purpose, because it doesn't provide any new jobs in the cities in which it's going to be employed. At best we may see some jobs shuffle around the province as municipalities fight with each other to try to create the circumstances that are most desirable for people who will take advantage of this kind of an act in order to create money and then take that money and go somewhere else. Nothing about this says that when a company comes into that municipality, they will somehow benefit or create anything in that municipality. They will just simply receive a smaller tax bill. There's no indication that they will actually spend those tax dollars in that municipality.

I'm very concerned. I think this is an assault on rural municipalities particularly, because they need industry to come in to provide a tax base. If they don't have that tax base, they cannot provide services. Now, big cities have lots of different industries that they can attract, and they can also attract people into the cities because they provide a variety of other services. If we start having companies leaving the big cities to go to the smaller municipalities because they don't have to pay taxes, then we're essentially just putting ourselves into a place where municipalities get all of the

burden of providing the services to those industries without any of the tax base in order to then provide services to the rest of their population.

I'm very concerned that this is an assault on small rural communities, shuffling money from people who will take the money from those small rural communities and spend it not only in other cities, typically larger cities, in the province of Alberta but probably around the world. So, again, here we are, shoveling money out of Alberta into the pockets of people who will spend that money to take advantage of, you know, opportunities and pleasures in other parts of the world.

If this really was about job creation, then I have to ask: why would this government at the same time take away a carbon levy that was providing thousands of jobs in the province of Alberta? Specifically, for example, the Alberta municipal solar program was about creating jobs in the very cities that this bill was supposed to do something for, allowing the cities an opportunity to create a brand new industry, an industry that clearly is about the future, by visionaries like Tesla, who are telling us that solar is going to be more important in some number of years than oil in terms of running our services.

Now this government is saying: we don't want to be a part of the future; we don't want to be a part of what can be; we instead are going to grasp a narrative, a belief system from an earlier era because it makes us feel good. Something happened in the '50s that this government can simply not let go of. They are so attached to it that they will deny the reality that the world is moving on, that businesses naturally do that, that economies naturally do that, that people naturally do that: seek new output, seek new adventures, and create new opportunities by having visions of the future, not by maintaining a rigid past.

**The Acting Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. Two quick things. One, just for clarity, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford was speaking to second reading of Bill 7. Standing Order 29(2)(a) had visually been passed over; however, now we have it on *Hansard* that that is the case.

Secondly, seeing that it is 6, the Assembly is adjourned until 7:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]







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