



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, October 23, 2019

Day 32

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

First Session

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Party standings:

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New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 23, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Hon. members, please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, this afternoon, visiting from the constituency of Camrose, welcome grade 6 and grade 9 students from Bashaw school.

Other school groups joining us: from the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Woods, l'école Frère Antoine Catholic school; and from Leduc-Beaumont, please welcome l'école Notre Dame grade 6 students. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Also joining us in the galleries this afternoon, guests of the Minister of Seniors and Housing, are Danielle Zok and her father, Mr. Tony Zok, visiting from London, Ontario. Welcome. Please join in welcoming them.

Also, just a special note that a little bit later – they haven't joined us quite yet – there will be a number of folks from the public service, members of the public service, who are guests of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Members' Statements

Diwali

Mr. Toor: Mr. Speaker, on October 27 we will join members of Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist communities in Alberta, across Canada, and around the world to celebrate Diwali, Deepavali, and Bandi Chhor Divas. The holiday, known as the festival of lights, symbolizes the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. Families and friends will gather to pray, exchange gifts, share meals, and light diyas in a spirit of hope.

Diwali is also a chance to honour the many communities that celebrate this occasion. Albertans of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist as well as the large South Asian diaspora shape our province better every day. There are a number of traditions associated with Diwali. Many people wear new clothing to thank Mahalakshmi for providing prosperity and good fortune, and firecrackers are set off in the evening. Traditional sweets such as diya-shaped sugar cookies and savory, light mini-samosas and puris are eaten as well as full meals. In the Sikh tradition, we celebrate this day as Bandi Chhor Divas, the day of liberation. The story of Bandi Chhor Divas is a reminder to look beyond oneself and to use the privilege that has been conferred by the Creator to aid those who are less fortunate.

Diwali reminds us to keep the lights in our lives and communities by dedicating ourselves to service and kindness to others. We all want peace and prosperity for our families and communities. Diwali is a time to reflect and act on how we can reach those goals. This message and the meaning behind Diwali reach beyond the Indian community.

Budget 2019

Ms Ganley: I can't believe what you say because I see what you do: in these days of increasing rhetoric this statement has become more important than ever. It's easy to be in support of something when all you have to do is say a few words or post a meme, but tomorrow we see the proof. Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, is budget day, the day when the government will show us what their priorities

really are, the day when all the talking points fall away, and they must actually demonstrate what they think is and isn't important.

So far the government has shown only one priority. They rushed to give \$4.5 billion away to profitable corporations, money they admit has not created one single job. Sure wouldn't have been my first priority.

Here are some priorities I have for Calgary, just a small way for the UCP to demonstrate they have finally gotten their priorities straight and want to put Albertans ahead of profitable corporations: the green line and the Springbank dam, on the original timelines; an actual continuum of care for mental health and addictions instead of tired rhetoric and an abstinence-only model that's not supported by evidence; funding for enrolment growth for students, because investing in our children is an investment in our future; investment in economic diversification, because trickle-down doesn't work and certainly doesn't diversify; investment in affordable housing – it save lives, it prevents crime, and it saves money – court clerks, staff for the Calgary cancer centre, and, while we're at it, the \$16 million missing from Calgary's police grant; and finally, a continuation of the child tax benefit, because we cut child poverty in half. That's our legacy, and I would take it over a \$4.5 billion giveaway to profitable corporations any day.

South Sudanese Community Concerns

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: We all want our children to be healthy, happy, know that they are loved, and have every opportunity to thrive. It is why I was eager to join the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the minister of social services as South Sudanese families gathered to demand better for their kids. They made the courageous journey of leaving their country of birth and everything they knew to seek a brighter future for their families, but now their community has been shocked by the loss of so many young lives. It was devastating to hear the stories of families that have lost their children to overdose and violence. One mother proudly wore a shirt with her son's graduation photo on it. He was a fellow Bishop McNally alumni.

However, in a room full of grief I felt the sense of determination and hope. This community is demanding better. It is why they have risen up as advocates for their children. I heard from the community that isolation is a major factor. How do we combat isolation? We get them involved, and we ourselves get involved. Parents, faith leaders, community members, youth-serving organizations, the Calgary police, local representatives, and youth gathered to start a conversation on how we do better. We all have a responsibility to reach out and care for young people. Government has a role to get behind initiatives like that. We also need leadership at the family level. We as adults need to have open conversations with our kids today.

There is a line in the movie *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*: he may have been your father, boy, but he wasn't your daddy. We can't be parents in name only. We need to be there with our kids, in the highs and the lows, to expose the lie of isolation that drives so many of our kids into self-destructive paths. This is why I ran. I wanted to see better for young people in our community, and I look forward to continuing this conversation.

Thank you.

Islamic Heritage Month

Member Loyola: Mr. Speaker, my son Alonso is in the public gallery, so to him, through you: I love you, son.

It gives me great pleasure to stand in the House today on behalf of my caucus colleagues to celebrate Islamic Heritage Month in our

province. Last year our government proclaimed October as Islamic Heritage Month in recognition of the significant contributions the Muslim community has made to Alberta since 1900. Muslims from across our province enrich our lives and contribute to the prosperity and heritage of our province through their outstanding achievements in many fields, including literature, mathematics, science, sports, and the arts.

This month offers all Albertans a wonderful opportunity to reflect on and learn more about the history of Islam in Alberta and Canada and the cultural diversity of Alberta's large Muslim community. I would also like to thank the directors and members of the many Muslim organizations that work in Alberta to counter racism and Islamophobia. Your dedication and hard work are sincerely and greatly appreciated.

Together let's celebrate the people that make our communities so unique and dynamic. To all my brothers and sisters in Islam as well as all Albertans: happy Islamic Heritage Month to all.

The Speaker: Hon. members, perhaps we could all offer our special welcome to the hon. member's son.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West – East.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to get a pin.

1:40

Agriculture

Mr. Neudorf: Every Albertan knows the value that our farmers bring to our province and our economy. Farmers work extreme hours from planting to harvest to ensure that we are fortunate enough to have access to the highest quality food in the world. The benefits of a strong agricultural sector are well-known facts to most people who call our province home.

What some folks may not be aware of, however, is how vital Lethbridge is to ensuring our agricultural sector remains strong and vibrant. The area surrounding Lethbridge supports over 900 farms, generating farm receipts of approximately \$1.1 billion per year, building on assets of \$3.2 billion. Our fields yield potatoes, sugar beets, canola, corn, and pulse crops while also providing ample space to raise livestock and contribute significantly to our dairy and beef production. Lethbridge is also a clear innovator and hub in the agrifood processing sector. Most recently we celebrated Cavendish Farms' significant investment in a \$430 million frozen potato processing plant. This direct investment into our agrifood processing sector is the largest private investment in Lethbridge's history.

Mr. Speaker, the importance of our agriculture sector cannot be understated but especially cannot be understated in Lethbridge. We are open for business, and we are ready to lead in this industry. That is why we need governments that will stand up for industries on the global stage. To say that our agricultural sector has had a challenging time over the past few years is an understatement. The ban placed on Canadian meat imports by China this past summer directly harmed hundreds of Alberta meat producers, as have similar restrictions to our canola products. Here in Alberta we support our agricultural industries and work hard to ensure that we will not fail them. However, we need to demand more from our federal government, especially when Alberta's agricultural interests are under threat due to unresolved international diplomatic disputes.

Part of my reason for standing in this House today is to recognize the importance of our agricultural industry and our farmers, but I'm also standing to recognize how important it is that we challenge those who don't into action. Our farmers deserve governments that will stand up for them, Mr. Speaker, and I hope to do so.

Thank you.

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

Westend Seniors Activity Centre

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to rise today to recognize the important contributions of the Westend Seniors Activity Centre in my community. I've had the honour of representing the centre and many of its members for the last four and a half years, and I've seen first-hand how important this community hub is to seniors and their families. Whether you are looking to stay active through their daily programming or just want to drop in for lunch, the centre is always bustling, and you are always among friends.

I was incredibly proud to join members of the board as they received the 2019 minister's seniors service award. Among over 50 nominations province-wide, WESAC was one of two organizations recognized with this award, and I truly couldn't think of a more deserving group of volunteers. Executive Director Haidong Liang, President Jay Pritchard, Vice-president Barbara Gibson, Treasurer Spurgeon Gammon, and all of the directors go above and beyond to serve the centre's over 2,000 members. With a wealth of knowledge and experience in the fields of gerontology, education, nursing, and more, the board understands the needs of seniors in our community when it comes to healthy aging, active living, and combatting the isolation that many seniors feel.

West Edmonton is incredibly lucky to have such an important community hub like WESAC. I have made many new friends at the centre and have learned so much from its members. I encourage all members of our community to visit the centre for one of their many holiday and cultural celebrations or on November 11 as we reflect and pay respect to those who have served our country.

Once again, I would like to thank the executive director, Haidong Liang, the board, and all of the centre's volunteers for making west Edmonton the best place to live for seniors and families alike, and congratulations on your well-deserved minister's seniors service award.

Thank you.

Energy Industry

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I am deeply troubled by the villainization of Alberta's oil and gas industry. Under Trudeau's government we saw Alberta's energy industry attacked time and time again with bills C-69, the no more pipelines bill, and C-48, the export tanker ban, which blocks Alberta from exporting our resources but does nothing to stop tankers filled with oil from oppressive regimes sailing down the St. Lawrence or from Alaska down the west coast.

Our energy industry has been crippled by hostile activism, so today I want to highlight some facts that they missed. Albertan oil sands contribute only .15 per cent of global emissions. Last year total emissions from China and India were about 12,000 megatonnes, equivalent to about 150 Canadian oil sands. How is it reasonable for one to argue that Canada's oil sands are somehow a leading factor in contributing to climate change? This false narrative is extremely dangerous to Canada's economic and social well-being. We need a new form of humanitarian activism that is based on drawing these countries into a global response to climate change.

China, India, and developing countries continue to build coal plants. Canadian natural gas has the potential to displace coal as a primary source of power generation in these countries and lower global emissions. Canadian natural gas is some of the cheapest in the world, and when we block the export of this resource, we are

telling developing countries that they must transition without our help.

I am also extremely concerned that three parties in the federal election openly discussed phasing out the oil sands in Alberta. This means phasing out one of Canada's most valuable assets, which pays for pensions, roads, health care, and education and employs hundreds of thousands across Canada. It is time we stopped treating our resources as a burden and started opening our markets. I am proud that our Premier is standing up for Alberta's oil and gas industry, and I am proud to stand there right beside him.

Thank you.

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

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I met with the hard-working, compassionate, and smart women of southern Alberta's FASD network. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder affects 36,000 Albertans who suffer from this preventable injury that results from prenatal exposure to alcohol and is a lifelong condition with no cure. It can have a wide range of effects, from memory and learning difficulties to impulse control and complex social difficulties.

The women of southern Alberta's FASD network shared two things with me. First, FASD is entirely preventable, and much work still needs to be done to communicate and educate Albertans that it's simply safest not to drink alcohol during pregnancy. The southern Alberta FASD network is actively engaged in this work.

Second, these women shared their concerns about the UCP's approach to providing services to those living with FASD. Specifically, they are concerned that this government will amalgamate their organizations under PDD, leaving clients without specifically targeted and co-ordinated services that improve their lives. The UCP election platform on pages 77 and 78 promises to do just that. The advocates that I spoke with fear that this means fewer services, less co-ordination, and a lower quality of life for those living with FASD and the families that help care for them.

The Lethbridge constituents I met with expressed their confusion as to why the UCP would meddle in a series of programs and funding that already work, are already stretched thin, and demonstrate increasing need.

On behalf of the southern Alberta FASD network and all those they serve, I call on this government and this minister to resist the urge to cut these valuable services or otherwise introduce chaos into the FASD programs and supports. Please, Mr. Speaker, don't let it be persons with developmental disabilities or the FASD networks that bear the brunt of UCP arrogance and lack of empathy.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon would like to make a statement.

Genesee Gas Pipeline Construction Contracts

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta provincial motto is "strong and free," and it reflects our desire as a people to be independent, capable of making our own choices. Albertans understand that strong societies are built by people who have the freedom to pursue their own economic self-interest. They understand that the goal is not economic equality but the freedom to pursue economic opportunity and to benefit from their hard work and wise choices.

Today in the constituency of Drayton Valley-Devon a large multinational company is building a natural gas pipeline to the Genesee power plant. This announcement was welcome news to the many service companies in my community that have barely survived the last five years. This project could mean the difference between

keeping their doors open, keeping people employed, and paying mortgages. They looked forward to bidding on third-party contracts, but their dreams were dashed when it became evident that there was not going to be a free and open bidding process. This billion-dollar company had hired a unionized Ontario-based company to build the pipeline for them. Now the many non-unionized local companies would be excluded from the bidding process. Many local companies came to my office frustrated that union politics appeared to be restricting their freedom to bid on third-party work.

Let me be clear. These companies only wanted a shot at placing their experience and capacity into the bidding process, and that was not happening. It appeared that out-of-province workers were signing up at local union halls and were being hired while experienced local workers were having to rent out their homes to the influx of outside workers and move in with relatives in order to make their own mortgage payments.

Where was the freedom to compete? Why could they not be given the opportunity to prosper off the resources that are being harvested and transported in their backyards and that would be used to light their homes? This is not some esoteric university economics exercise.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

Federal-provincial Relations

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This Premier has raised the equalization formula as a matter he'll invite Albertans to weigh in on. Now, this is a complicated issue, and facts matter. Here are some of them. In 2007 the Harper government, of which this Premier was a part, changed the formula to give the province of Quebec more from equalization. In 2009 the Harper government, that this Premier was part of, made another change that cost Albertans well over a billion dollars every year. Will the Premier commit today that when he starts his public hearings, will they begin with an apology for his role in making the equalization formula even more unfair to Albertans?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, complete rubbish. In fact, the Harper government increased health transfers to Alberta by a billion dollars a year, and when the last equalization formula was set, we didn't have other provincial governments or Ottawa blocking and killing pipelines. But the Leader of the NDP just voted for a pipeline killer. She just voted for the party that campaigned against Alberta workers. She voted for the party that she said had thrown workers under the bus. She voted for the Leap Manifesto party. She voted for the leader who said: I'm firmly opposed to Trans Mountain, I've always been opposed to it, and I'll continue to fight against it. She was wrong to support that.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, this Premier claims to love Canada in one breath and then stokes notions of separating in another. He has announced a panel of Albertans to look further into our role in Confederation, but even Conservative Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister said that he doesn't like listening to talk of separation from western Canadian friends of his. To the Premier: why won't you listen to your colleague and refocus on uniting Canadians instead of driving them apart?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it's precisely in order to listen to Albertans that we will ask some prominent members of Alberta society to listen to Albertans and their rightful frustration about having gone through a federal campaign where this province became a punching bag for federal parties, including the NDP. Now, all

Albertans are asking for – and the NDP will never understand this – is a fair deal. What we're saying to the rest of the federation is: if you want to benefit from the resources that we develop in this province, then help us to get those resources to global markets instead of supporting parties like the NDP that are fighting to shut down pipelines.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, to be perfectly clear, the equalization formula that the Premier is screaming about is one that he wrote. If Albertans are angry, they should be angry at this Premier.

Now, another thing that will not bring this country together is this Premier's continued efforts to deflect the very real threat of climate change. In the federal election two-thirds of Canadians voted for a meaningful plan. This Premier and indeed his own staff have done nothing but mock Alberta citizens concerned about climate change. To the Premier: why won't you admit that your polarization plan is a dead end that's letting down Albertans and letting down Alberta's oil and gas?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, what we're hearing from the NDP today, what we're seeing in their vote for the federal NDP, what we saw by them participating in the so-called climate strike is that they decided to go back to being a fringe rump party in this province. That's why they got 11 per cent of the vote this week. You know, the climate strike they're talking about is committed to the immediate shutdown of the entire oil and gas industry, leaving all of our resources in the ground, opposition to every single pipeline, that would create economic devastation in this province. The mask has slipped. Now we can see that they have always been against Alberta.

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

Provincial Fiscal Policies

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, today I was joined by Albertans who will be paying the price in tomorrow's budget. I was joined by students, health care workers, parents, and persons with disabilities who are worried that the services they rely on have been put on the chopping block to pay for the Premier's zero-job, 4 and half billion dollar corporate tax giveaway. To the Premier: please explain to the people who came to the Legislature today – they're right up there in the gallery – why big corporations get billions and they get nothing.

Mr. Kenney: Well, they don't, Mr. Speaker. It's just a continuation of the NDP campaign to try to deceive Albertans. They tried it in the last campaign. You know what happened? They were first one-term government to be fired by Albertans. There is no, quote, \$4.5 billion giveaway. There is the job-creation tax cut. Why? Because we are in a jobs crisis bestowed on this province by the NDP. Economists, multiple credible economists, indicate that will create 55,000 new full-time private-sector jobs. [interjections] Instead of heckling job creation, they should be part of a plan to actually create new jobs in this province. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Hon. members, we will have order.

The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Ms Phillips: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's little arrogant trip down memory lane is cold comfort to the health care aide in Vegreville that was laid off earlier this month and that joins us in the gallery. The Minister of Health has refused to do anything to help her or the 51 other workers laid off. The minister for status of women told her to go back to school even though the Advanced

Education minister is planning to hike tuition and cut postsecondary funding by 25 per cent. To the Premier: they're right up here; explain to the workers in Vegreville and right across this province why you aren't keeping them working and also are cutting off their access to further education.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the workers from Century Park from Vegreville when they were able to come a few weeks ago to the Legislature. I thought it was a productive meeting. They had many questions for me. Just today we were able to reply to their questions through correspondence, and I thank them again for meeting with me and expressing their concerns throughout the process.

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, this government moved to rush through a 4 and a half billion dollar giveaway claiming that it would create jobs, but yesterday we saw the results. Husky made almost a quarter of a billion dollars from the corporate giveaway and then laid off a large number of Calgary workers. This corporate handout is not a jobs giveaway. Premier, can we expect no more no-jobs policies in tomorrow's budgets, or are you too busy stoking the fires of separation and undermining the principles of a united Canada to think of any?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, you know what stokes the fires of separation? It's federal parties who campaign against this province and its workers. It's federal parties trying to shut down this economy and push Albertans out of work, federal parties like the NDP, supported by that member, a party that was rejected in a historic electoral mandate. They got 11 per cent of the vote because they spent weeks campaigning against this province and Alberta jobs. When will they listen to Albertans?

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview has a question.

Budget 2019 Consultation

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, stay tuned: that's all Albertans get from this Finance minister as they brace for this government's budget tomorrow, one we know will cut health care, education, and other services Albertans rely on. A hundred and eighty minutes was all this minister could spare to talk to Albertans about this budget during a tightly controlled telephone town hall that was full of, frankly, nothing, no details, no confirmation of funding for schools or hospitals. To the Premier: for the record, on the eve of this budget do you think this was an appropriate amount of consultation?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, we spent five weeks consulting with Albertans nonstop during the last election campaign, and they gave this government the largest democratic mandate in our province's history to undo the massive damage to our economy, to jobs, and our province's finances inflicted by the NDP. We've spent the last six months listening to Albertans, and they've continued to tell us that it's time to stop kicking the can down the road, that we can no longer live off our credit card, that we can't spend money that we don't have, and that we need to make challenging decisions to get our fiscal house back in order.

Mr. Bilous: Clearly the Premier says one thing in this House and something else outside.

Now, Albertans can pay \$125 to the UCP campaign war chest for a seat at a fundraising breakfast being hosted by the Minister of

Finance this Friday, where it appears an actual conversation about provincial finances will occur. To the Premier: do all budget consultations hosted by this government require Albertans to sign up for a UCP membership and donate to your political party?

2:00

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I don't know where that member or his colleagues were on Alberta election day in April, but Albertans gave a very clear response to the consultation on the fiscal and economic direction of this party by over a million of them, for the first time in history, voting for a government that committed to balance the budget by growing the economy and restraining spending. That party left behind – they quadrupled the size of our debt. They had us on track to a hundred billion dollar debt, wasting \$4 billion a year in interest payments. We are not going to let the future of this province be jeopardized by reckless NDP fiscal policies.

Mr. Bilous: Once again, Mr. Speaker, one thing in this Chamber, another thing on the campaign trail.

The budget will be introduced tomorrow, and I have no doubt it's a done deal, in this government's mind. They'll attempt to ram it through this House and claim that the election was real consultation. If that's so, to the Premier: can you please point me to announcements you made in the campaign about cutting postsecondary by 25 per cent, moving to an American-style health care model, or throwing a 4 and a half billion dollar corporate handout that hasn't generated any jobs to date? Premier, the clock is ticking.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, this government will keep its platform commitments, on which we were elected. We will keep our word with Albertans, as will be evident in tomorrow's budget. But, you know, the member can take a look at the polling done by the government of Alberta on this budget. You know what Albertans are telling us overwhelmingly? To get our spending under control so that we stop mortgaging our future. They certainly agree. Albertans in those polls massively disagree with the NDP's alternative, which is to raise taxes on Albertans. No. We won't do that. We won't dig our hands deeper into Albertans' pockets. Instead, we'll get our spending under control.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has risen.

Calgary and Edmonton Finances

Member Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an op-ed published yesterday, the Minister of Municipal Affairs accused our two largest cities of spending recklessly without being able to provide any examples. When asked outside the Legislature on Tuesday to name an example of reckless spending, he couldn't. Perhaps the Premier can do the minister's job for him now. To the Premier: can you name one example of a project that the city council in Calgary wasted money on? Please be specific.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it is clear from the minister's opinion article that based on data, the two largest cities have increased both spending and taxes faster than inflation, economic growth, or population. That's the point he made, and that is statistically true. You know one of the reasons for that? Well, one of the reasons is the guy who just asked the question . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kenney: . . . Alberta's worst ever Finance minister, who voted for massive spending increases and, year after year, tax increases. Albertans can't afford that kind of tax hike anymore. That's why that government was defeated in the last election.

Member Ceci: Distract, deflect, distract. You're coming after me because you can't do a thing for Calgary.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order.

Member Ceci: Mr. Speaker, clearly this Premier and this minister are trying to demonize the city councils in Edmonton and Calgary as they search for scapegoats to justify cutting infrastructure funding for municipalities. While I don't agree with every decision those councillors have made, I fear greatly that the Premier will do damage to our cities. To the Premier: which project will be on the chopping block for Calgary tomorrow? Will it be the green line, the Springbank dam, or is it both?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's worst ever Finance minister still doesn't get it. What does damage to our cities, to our public services, and to our future is a massive debt hole that we can't get out of. If we continue with the NDP's fiscal direction, with over \$100 billion of debt, you know what that means? Didn't the finance bureaucrats explain this to him? It means spending billions of tax dollars on interest payments to bankers and bondholders instead of building infrastructure, schools, and hospitals. We won't do that. We will not allow this province to be sunk in a . . .

Member Ceci: Pay-as-you-go gets you nowhere and builds nothing, Mr. Speaker.

I find it disturbing that this minister and this Premier would accuse our cities of wasting money, when this government has handed over a \$4.5 billion, no-jobs gift to big corporations. Their plan hasn't created a job. It's lost 27,000 since they came aboard. To the Premier: let me ask you this; do you really think you can take the moral high ground here on waste when you have failed us in Alberta and given money to corporations for a scheme that hasn't created any jobs?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons he's going to go down in history as the worst Finance minister since 1905 is because he increased taxes on everything, including on incomes and businesses, and revenues went down. He tried to play old-school socialist, soak-the-rich, class-warfare politics . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, order. Order. We will not have yelling from the back row.

Mr. Kenney: It's yelling from the entire Official Opposition because they can't defend their failed record. Mr. Speaker, he raised taxes on businesses. Less revenue came into the treasury. We, instead, are sending a message that Alberta is open for business to create jobs.

Support for Persons with Disabilities

Mr. Yaseen: Mr. Speaker, across Alberta people with disabilities face unique challenges, from finding employment to accessible housing. This group often faces barriers when it comes to accessing the services they need. To the Minister of Community and Social Services: can you please tell us how the government is removing barriers to these essential services?

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you to the Member for Calgary-North for that question. Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to an open, transparent dialogue with the disability community. Through my new disability advisory forum I'm working with the community to gain insight and perspective on specific topics impacting people with disabilities. Input from the forum helps us identify how our programs can more effectively support Albertans. Alberta Supports

offices across the province also help people with disabilities every day to access the services they need.

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

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that roughly 400,000 Albertans are living with a disability and given that this group tends to have much lower incomes and higher unemployment, can the minister outline what our government is doing to help persons with disabilities find gainful employment?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, our government supports Albertans with disabilities to live full lives and have access to equal opportunities. We are taking action on several fronts for inclusive employment, including building on successful programs like Abilities at Work and the Rotary employment partnerships. We are also providing funding to support these partnerships to facilitate job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Mr. Yaseen: Given that Alberta was left in a fiscal mess by the NDP's disastrous overspending and reckless policies, as verified in the MacKinnon report, and given that our government has committed to supporting those with disabilities, can the minister outline how our government will continue to support persons with disabilities while also staying on track to balance the budget?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, a significant platform commitment was that we would enhance employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities. We know that the unemployment rates in the disability community are unacceptably high, and we're committed to making job opportunities for all Albertans. We also understand the fiscal constraints and financial realities that we're dealing with. This is why we need to ensure that our programs are sustainable for the long term, sustainable for generations to come.

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

Education Funding

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was very pleased to read yesterday that the Minister of Education has decided to expand the NDP school nutrition program by 20 per cent in this upcoming budget. That certainly is good news, and I want to express our gratitude and appreciation for that. What I was surprised by, though, was the last comment in the media yesterday, when the minister said, quote: I wish I had enough money to feed everyone. News flash: you did. There was \$4.5 billion that, instead of being given to focus on things like health care and education and poverty, has been invested by giving it away in a no-jobs corporate handout, so to the minister: you did. You made your priority . . .

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education is rising.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. We're very happy to be increasing the budget for the nutrition program. We are absolutely committed to education. We've said that. You only have one more sleep to find out how much we are committed to it.

Ms Hoffman: Only one more wake-up, Mr. Speaker. If only this government would wake up.

Given that the minister could have tripled the nutrition program for the price of the Energy minister's war room alone and given that she could have fed even more hungry kids with the money that the Attorney General is spending on his witch hunt public inquiry, how

many times did the Minister of Education fail to speak up for children, or is it that none of her colleagues listened to her? Why aren't you feeding all the kids you're so eager to feed?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. We've been very clear that there are no cuts to education. We are looking through the lens of what is best for children and what will improve student learning. Stay tuned tomorrow. You will see the budget.

Ms Hoffman: Given that shareholders are celebrating while Calgary workers are being laid off this week, Mr. Speaker, and given that we've also met with parents in Calgary whose kids are crammed into classrooms with more than 40 students and others who have complex needs seeing their students' bus times triple, to the minister: thanks for realizing that the school nutrition program has value. It really does. Will you now work to correct the other problems that you've caused in education through your dithering, delays, and cuts?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Again, this is just more fearmongering. The NDP have been wrong on enrolment growth. They're wrong on the nutrition program. They're wrong again.

Energy Efficiency Alberta

Mr. Schmidt: Yesterday I spoke with the Deputy Minister of Environment and Parks at Public Accounts. Unlike this minister, she actually gave me some real answers. She told us that Energy Efficiency Alberta had invested \$200 million, which will save Albertans about \$700 million in energy costs, not to mention reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6 million tonnes. The minister's own data shows that Energy Efficiency Alberta is a success. Is the minister still planning to cancel it and return Alberta to being the only province without an energy efficiency agency?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is going to have to wait to see a couple of things; first, the budget tomorrow, which he knows I can't talk about today. Second, as I've said, I'm looking forward to tabling TIER inside this Assembly to talk about our plan when it come to climate inside this province. I can tell you – and I've told this House many times – it won't be like that hon. member's plan, which was all economic pain and no environmental gain. We will not go out of our way to tax hard-working Albertans with no environmental benefit. Instead, we'll focus on technology, innovation, and working together with our great energy sector in this province to work our way through this problem.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, given that that was the closest thing to a real answer we've heard from that minister in weeks and given that Deputy Minister Yee went on to tell us that Energy Efficiency Alberta is driving \$850 million in economic activity and given that that's \$850 million more in economic activity than this government's no-jobs corporate handout has created, why is the minister so opposed to a successful energy efficiency program and yet so supportive of a \$4.5 billion corporate handout?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, we're not supportive of energy efficiency and things along those lines. What we are not supportive of – let me very, very clear – is the NDP's approach of taking hard-working Albertans' money out of their pockets and then spending

it on companies, like from Ontario, on light bulbs and shower heads. This side of the House has a very different approach to climate change, one that will actually work and that focuses on technology and innovation. It's a big contrast, and Albertans made it clear in April which one they wanted. They don't want the tax NDP, they want the solution-based current Alberta government.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that our program bought shower heads for average Albertans while their \$4.5 billion handout gives ivory back-scratchers to corporate CEOs and given that Energy Efficiency Alberta created 4,300 private-sector jobs, why won't the minister face the facts from his own deputy minister that Energy Efficiency Alberta is a success and his corporate giveaway is a big failure?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. That party, that member, and that member's leader of that party sold out Albertans by her own admission just a few days ago by voting for a party whose leader said: I am firmly opposed to the pipeline; I've been opposed to it, I will continue to fight against it, and I will absolutely continue to fight against it. This side of the House won't be lectured on how to stand up for Albertans because that side of the House has sold them out at every single opportunity. Albertans can rest assured that their current government will stand with them every day and continue to fight for our largest industry. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. We will have order.

The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika has the call.

Animal Rights Activist Protests at Farms and Ranches

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's agriculture producers need to feel like this government has their back, and we do. Today we learned that four people had been arrested in connection with the dangerous and illegal invasion of the Jumbo Valley turkey farm, an issue that is particularly concerning to me as an MLA who represents 29 Hutterite colonies and over \$2 billion in farm gate sales. Can the minister tell this House how this aligns with his new policy to protect farmers and ranchers?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the member for the question. The RCMP did arrest four adults and one youth that did invade the Jumbo Valley turkey farm. During the farm freedom and safety act tour that I did over this summer, there was a huge demand and a cry from rural Alberta to make sure that there was restored faith in our justice system. I think this is a big first step to be able to address that. RCMP are actually laying charges against individuals that were trespassing and effectively stopping farmers from being able to do what they do best.

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

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta farmers and ranchers treat their animals well by adhering to world-class quality standards and given that they have the right to manage their operations without the threat of illegal harassment from militant trespassers acting like weak, petulant children and given that this government is committed to supporting our farmers and ranchers, how is this minister going to prevent future biosecurity breaches and deter individuals and organizations from putting Alberta farmers and ranchers at risk?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I'd like to thank the Member for Cardston-Siksika for that great question. Radical activists who do this type of illegal activity, who actually go into barns, whether they be turkey or dairy or any barns that have biosecurity hazards protocols – it's a danger to the protestors, if you want to call them protestors, as well as to the animals. I'm committed to amending the Animal Health Act to be able to have for a first offence a \$15,000 fine and for subsequent offences, \$30,000 plus one year in jail. That's something that our farming community expects from this government.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for that answer. Given that Alberta farmers and ranchers want action on this issue and given that the fine people of Cardston-Siksika are tired of watching these misguided trespassers run roughshod over the rule of law and given that we saw concrete action today by the RCMP, can the minister tell the House if this is the end of the story, or is there further action to be taken to deter this irresponsible and ridiculous behaviour?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is reassuring to rural Albertans that there is a culture of enforcement. There seems to be a culture of enforcement from our police services. To me, it's important as a minister and also as an Albertan and as a farmer to see that rural Albertans' concerns are being addressed. There is something that the Justice minister is working on as well as amendments to the Animal Health Act, the Provincial Offences Procedure Act, so that compensation awarded by a court would go from \$25,000 up to \$100,000. Again, the Justice minister has been working diligently to make amendments to the trespassing act, again increasing fines and jail time for these radical activists, that have no place in our agriculture community.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre is rising to ask a question.

Vegreville Century Park Supportive Living Facility

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Albertans should be worried about the health care they receive as this government continues to choose corporate handouts over funding quality public care. This Minister of Health turned his back on seniors in Vegreville when a B.C. corporation, Optima Living, fired all of their primary caregivers. "But don't worry," he says; he's monitoring the situation closely. Is this minister aware that the Optima Living facility in Vegreville has failed three consecutive Alberta Health inspections while he has been minister, including as recently as October 3?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that is true. We are monitoring the situation closely. We are working with AHS, who is continuing to oversee the transition to the new provider. We're going to continue to get updates from AHS as they let us know what is going to continue to happen with Century Park.

2:20

Mr. Shepherd: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that this minister knew that and still has taken no action, it's equally disturbing and given that this Minister of Health has just apparently recently learned what a chemical restraint is and given that this inappropriate overuse of medication is common in these sorts of private facilities

with underpaid, undertrained, and unfamiliar staff, will this minister explain why he's apparently okay with medicating Vegreville seniors into submission as long as it maximizes value for Optima's shareholders?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry; I don't understand the hon. member's question. I don't intervene in the operations of AHS or our nonprofit partners or our private partners in continuing care or our public partners in continuing care. I have no idea – I'm happy to answer any questions that the member might have for me offline. I'm not intervening in the operations of this facility.

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, given that if the minister is watching closely, he's apparently not seeing much and given that the Vegreville workers are currently at the Labour board to make a last ditch appeal for these seniors and for themselves and given that this minister has refused to lift a finger to help them, is it any surprise that the lawyer that's been hired by Optima Living, the man arguing against Alberta workers and Alberta seniors, is a big money donor to the UCP? To the minister: how much do the workers of Vegreville need to donate to your party for you to lift your finger to do your job?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we're talking about continuing care and while we're talking about dollar amounts, let's talk about the debt that we were left with by the NDP. Let's talk about the amount of money that we spend every year on servicing that debt and the amount of money that we are sending to bondholders and to bankers. With that money we could spend on over a thousand new beds in continuing care per quarter, 4,000 beds per year. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Shandro: Instead, because of their debt we are not able to do that, Mr. Speaker. It's a problem that we're going to fix in this government because it's a problem that we were left by the NDP government.

Child Mental Health Services in Edmonton

Member Irwin: Last week I met with a constituent who is deeply concerned about her child's mental health. Her child has been waiting for months for access to mental health supports at the Royal Alexandra hospital. She was relieved to hear about the commitment by our previous NDP government earlier this year to fund and build a new \$226 million children's mental health centre right here in Edmonton. To the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions: have you advocated for the construction of this new centre, and if so, what have you done to make it a reality?

The Speaker: The hon. the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions or the Minister of Health.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has committed to caring for Albertans, and we have made an unprecedented commitment to mental health and addictions in the scale of \$140 million to provide a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy. While the members opposite recklessly spent government money and created this huge debt, that put the services for Albertans at risk, we are going to do it right.

Member Irwin: Given that my caucus colleagues have heard from constituents about the importance of funding supports for mental health and given that the supports such as those that will be offered

at this centre are desperately needed and given that wait-lists are long for many families across Alberta, will this minister commit to supporting the mental health centre, or will these young people be more victims of his government's \$4.5 billion giveaway to large corporations?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, obviously we can't speak about what is going to be in the budget tomorrow. I think that the hon. member actually does not understand what was going to be built at CAMH. I don't think that the hon. member understands the amount of new spaces. It was actually only going to provide an additional five new beds. It is a project that was going to centralize a lot of the beds into the one facility. There is no crisis in child mental health right now, and our government actually . . . [interjections]

Member Irwin: Unbelievable.

Given that there is a crisis and given that kids are hurting as they wait for supports, whether it be through self-harm, suicide attempts, and, sadly, in some cases, lives are being lost and given that these supports have far-reaching impacts related to many other issues systemic to mental health, like homelessness and poverty, will this minister stand in the House today and pledge that he will choose children over corporations and commit his support to vulnerable youth and move this project forward?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, obviously, what I meant to say – we were talking about the spaces for child mental health. That's what we were talking about. Obviously, our government is spending a hundred million dollars on a mental health and addictions strategy. This has been a focus and a priority for this government. It's going to continue to be. This is a focus. Quite honestly, if this is such an important issue for the hon. member, why is it taking us only five months to fix a problem that they couldn't do in four years?

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

Support for Alberta Artists

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All of us have been moved by art and culture at least once in our lives. We have all experienced the power of a favourite song or witnessed the beauty of a remarkable work of art. In my riding of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain art is visible everywhere. Stony Plain even offers a special tour of just the murals that dot the landscape of our downtown. To the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women: what is this government doing to support made-in-Alberta arts, and what are we doing to encourage the next generation of Albertan artists?

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

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the member for this question. Our government, obviously, values world-class art and the artists that call Alberta home. Our government currently – we're really excited about this – is working to support Alberta arts and artists through the development of the arts professions act.

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Given that artists work very hard at their craft and many artists have told us that receiving proper payment for their work is one of the largest issues for everyone in the sector and given, Mr. Speaker, that many of these artists are further asked to deliver work at a discount or even for free, what will this government be doing to ensure that artists are being fairly compensated for their work?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of culture and multiculturalism.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The government's platform commitment is to grow the arts and cultural industries by \$1.5 billion, or 25 per cent, over the next decade. As an artist and as anybody else who is an artist in this space knows, we dedicate and donate a lot of our time to causes that are very important to us. As a person who's involved in this work, we know that art is work. It's a very important piece. The adoption of the arts professions act will ensure that artists are given formal recognition. It will protect their freedom of expression, their freedom of economic and contractual . . .

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

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that we have hundreds of talented artisans all across the province and given that we should be shining a spotlight on homegrown talent within our communities and given that we so often see communities paying artists who live outside of the country for their work rather than supporting our local artists, can the same minister please explain how this government is encouraging our communities throughout the province to utilize our local artists?

Mrs. Aheer: Well, we are very excited to keep this platform commitment. Part of it, of course, Mr. Speaker, is building partnerships between the arts and the philanthropic and business sectors. These partnerships will provide more local opportunities for artists who work at home. Also, I think a larger piece of this puzzle is consulting with the artists – they are the experts in their field – to make sure that we understand how best to support arts and culture. Every one of these industries has an immense ability to grow. We're really excited to help get that job done.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods would like to ask a question.

Employee Labour Relations Support Program Law Firm Contracts

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta government recently launched the employee labour relations support program. This new program is apparently meant to provide Albertans with information about working in unionized environments and about the certification and decertification process. It's been discovered that in certain cases this program will be providing inquiring Albertans with access to free legal advice, the cost of which will be covered by the government. Can the minister of labour share with us the full list of law firms that were part of the so-called limited request for proposal to do this work and how those firms were decided?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. minister of labour.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member across knows, Bill 2 established a program to provide support and assistance to unionized employees or employees that may become part of a union in order for them to better understand and exercise their rights. This was launched on October 1. It was part of our commitment that we made in our platform, and it was part of Bill 2. I was very excited that we actually were able to launch this and provide advice to employees so they can actually get the answers that they need when they sometimes don't understand the code.

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

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in the labour relations community it is very well known that some law firms are considered employer-side, some others are considered employee-side firms, it will be very interesting to see which firms this government is paying to provide free legal advice to those Albertans interested in union-related matters. Can the minister guarantee that there will be an equal mix of employer-side and employee-side law firms providing this government-paid-for advice to inquiring Albertans?

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

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The intent of this line is to provide neutral advice and provide advice in relation to the code, nothing more, nothing less. It's not going to be from either side. Really, the intent behind it was to allow employees – potential unionized employees and those who are already unionized employees – to get neutral advice, not from the union, not from management, but from the government and a government source.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that covering the cost of legal counsel could potentially quickly add up and given that the government claims to be making tough choices when it comes to spending in so many other areas to pay for the \$4.5 billion hole they created with their corporate tax giveaway, to the minister. There are serious concerns that this will become a biased hotline offering free antiunion legal advice. Is that a good use of taxpayer resources?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, the suggestion that this program is biased in any way is simply incorrect. We are committed to providing Albertans with information so they can make informed decisions. The maximum amount that we will provide in terms of legal counsel is one hour for a question. It's primarily designed to deal with procedural issues.

Thank you.

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

Early Learning and Child Care Centres

Ms Panholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I tabled two petitions from over 2,500 Albertans from across the province urging this government to continue the ELCC \$25-per-day child care pilot program and expand it to be universal. Twenty-two child care centres were part of phase 1 of that pilot program. The \$25-per-day support from the ELCC program will end in these centres in March 2020, just five months from now. The Minister of Children's Services has said that no decisions will be made about the continuation of the program until she has completed a review. To the minister: when will your review be complete?

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The terms of the pilot have not changed since they were put in place by the former government. The review will be complete also on the timeline set out by the former government. We're looking forward to receiving that data. But what I can tell you about the pilot is that it was set up in a way that tracked one ideological approach to child care, universality. It did not track need, it did not track income, it did not track employment, and it did not track wait-lists. I'll continue to work to listen to Albertans and ensure that parents have access to . . .

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

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try again. Given that these 22 child care centres have indicated that they have to make decisions by January, two months from now, about how much they will be able to pay their staff and how much child care fees will have to increase for parents without the continuation of the ELCC grant, to the minister: will your review be complete by January?

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to work towards a system of child care to support Alberta families, not by picking winners and losers, not by choosing have and have-not child care centres and have-not parents. That is not going to be our approach. You want to talk about the record of the NDP: \$5 million a day in interest, \$2 billion a year; \$100 billion dollars in debt. We will remain fiscally responsible, and we will support Alberta working parents and families.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not asking questions about ideology or records; I'm asking a straightforward question about timelines, that the minister should be able to answer.

Some Hon. Members: Preamble.

Ms Pancholi: Given that these 22 phase 1 child care centres are saying that many of their current families would not be able to afford the child care fees if the \$25-per-day program ends and given that these families will have to make decisions soon about whether they can find alternate low-cost child care or whether a parent will have to quit their job because they can't afford child care, to the minister: will you be able to give these parents an answer by January about whether they will continue to have affordable child care?

The Speaker: I appreciate the hon. members' support in determining what is or isn't a preamble, but I think that I'm capable of doing that.

The hon. minister.

Ms Schulz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've reached out to child care centres across the province, the 22 who were involved in the first phase of the pilot, to let them know that we understand their need for predictability. We will let them know as soon as the decision is made. I do want to point out, though, that the vast majority of child care centres in the pilot have been operating in Alberta and serving Alberta children and families long before this pilot was put in place. We will work with those child care centres no matter what we choose going forward, and there are also subsidy programs in place to support working Alberta families who need it.

Indigenous Opportunities Corporation

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, Justin Trudeau's time in office has been marked by a lot of platitudes and broken promises, particularly on indigenous issues. The indigenous people that I have discussions with are tired of empty gestures and flowery rhetoric. They're encouraged that our government is committed to making Alberta First Nations and Métis full partners in prosperity. Can the hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations tell this House what progress has been made in launching the Alberta indigenous opportunities corporation?

The Speaker: The Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, hon. member, for the question. I can tell you that we've been moving forward rapidly. When I was first elected, I met with the grand chief of Treaty 6, and he told me that there's been a lot of talk about reconciliation. He said: what we really need is reconcili-action. I just love that term, "reconcili-action." That's what this government is all about, action. We've moved forward quickly on this. We've put Bill 14 forward, and we've got third reading on it, and we're just awaiting proclamation and royal assent to put that into place. We've been working on the board. We've got members coming forward, and it's all coming together quite nicely.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

Given that indigenous peoples are one of the fastest growing populations in Canada but continue to be the least well-off demographic and given that despite billions of dollars having been spent at a variety of levels of government to improve living conditions for indigenous peoples, we have not seen the desired outcomes, can the hon. minister explain why this Crown corporation could prove a sustainable model for First Nations prosperity?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you, hon. member. This summer we went out, and we heard from stakeholders across the province, and what we heard clearly was that they're looking for a hand up, not a handout. They're proud people, and that's what they're looking for. So we worked hard on putting the program together. We're looking at putting the board together right now. We've got some great applicants in there. We've got a lot of good indigenous people that have come forward and put their names up, and I'm really looking forward to getting the board in place and getting the whole program up and running. Like I say, there are some really good people that we're going to be putting on the board.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister.

Given that indigenous issues remain largely under the purview of the federal government and given that the legal framework surrounding subjects like consultation is complex and ever-changing, can the hon. minister assure this House that the Alberta indigenous opportunities corporation can overcome its legal hurdles?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you to the member. Our staff has been working very hard putting this whole program together and reviewing it to make sure that it has no legal implications, to make sure that the Alberta indigenous opportunities corporation is being set up properly. I can assure you of that. Our government's consultation process is committed to making sure that indigenous concerns are heard and addressed and that industry has certainty out there. We need to make sure that everyone has been heard, and we've been working hard to get that all put into place.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein has risen.

Petrochemical Industry Development

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are blessed to have a skilled workforce that has revolutionized the way we

develop natural gas here in Alberta. We know that a lack of pipeline access has created an abundance of natural gas in Alberta, driving the price of this commodity down. Albertans deserve to get fair value for their resources. We also know that the low price of natural gas has created an opportunity for Alberta to attract major private-sector investment in petrochemical diversification and upgrading. To the minister: what is the government doing to attract investment to our province in the petrochemical industry?

2:40

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Natural Gas.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is Canada's largest petrochemical producer, and we have a real opportunity to attract major private investment to our petrochemical sector by leveraging our abundant supply of inexpensive natural gas liquids. Our government committed to showing the world that Alberta is once again open for business, and we are doing this through things like our reduced corporate tax rate and speeding up the regulatory review process.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the petrochemicals diversification program was actually originally established by the PC government in 2014 to encourage companies to invest in Alberta through the construction of large-scale petrochemical facilities and given that members opposite ideologically thought that handing out millions of dollars in grants and loan guarantees would bolster our province's economy through programs like partial upgrading and petrochemicals feedstock infrastructure, to the minister: what has this government done to limit the financial risk that the former NDP government was quite willing to put on Albertans?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, it's become abundantly clear that the members opposite took absolutely no issue with saddling Albertans with billions of dollars in debt as they pursued their socialist utopia. That's why earlier today I along with Alberta's Energy minister announced that our government has discontinued the NDP's partial upgrading program as well as the petrochemical feedstock infrastructure program. These programs relied heavily on grants and loan guarantees, and it puts far too much risk on the Alberta taxpayer.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that tens of thousands of Albertans work in the natural gas sector, including related industries like the petrochemical sector, and given that a real estate company in Houston, Texas, is actively trying to recruit Alberta companies to relocate to the United States, to the minister: what are you doing to encourage petrochemical companies to come to Alberta and remain here?

The Speaker: The associate minister.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Our government is working hard to restore our reputation with investors as a great place to do business. We've lowered taxes, reduced red tape, and we're easing the burdensome regulations on our natural gas industry. We've also given municipalities the power to offer tax holidays. Thanks to the actions of our government, we're putting our province back on track and making Alberta a more attractive place to invest.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will continue with the daily Routine.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Bill 204 Election Recall Act

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being private member's Bill 204, Election Recall Act.

[Motion carried; Bill 204 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have here the requisite number of copies of an article that I referenced in my debate on Bill 17. The article is titled *Clare's Law: Unintended Consequences for Domestic Violence Victims?* by Jennifer Koshan and Wanda Wiegers, written October 18, 2019. It was issued on the University of Calgary law blog.

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

Ms Sigurdson: Okay. Thank you. I have a tabling that is from the Alberta Electric System Operator. It is, of course, concerning Bill 18. I referenced it in my remarks last evening, where they're recommending, of course, a capacity market. I have the requisite number of copies.

The Speaker: Now Edmonton-McClung if you'd like to table your document.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to table documents I referenced yesterday in debate on Bill 18 regarding the benefits of a capacity market versus an energy-only market. These documents were generated by EnergyRates.ca, and I have the requisite number of copies.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a tabling on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, supportive statements she read out during the debate on Motion 506.

I also have an article I referenced yesterday in question period, by the CBC, *Seclusion Rooms Used Over 700 Times in 1 Month at Edmonton Public Schools: Report*.

Finally, another article by CBC, *Suncor CEO Slams Climate Change Deniers, Politicians Who Cater to Them*.

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

Ms Issik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make some tablings today. I have the requisite number of copies of each of these. The first is a news release entitled *New BHE Canada Wind Farm Expected to Start Construction in 2020*.

Second is a news article by Michelle Froese, published on August 1, *CanWEA Applauds Alberta's Return to an Energy-only Market*. CanWEA is the Canadian Wind Energy Association.

The third is from the *National Post* on October 7, entitled *Solar Power is the Red-hot Growth Area in Oil-rich Alberta*.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there other tablings?

Statement by the Speaker

Tabling Cited Documents

The Speaker: I would just like to offer a very brief comment with respect to tablings for the benefit of all members. If an article or a document has been previously tabled inside a session and then is referred to a subsequent time, it is not required for the article to be retabled, say, today or any other day. Just as a point of clarification for all members. Now, I recognize we may not keep track of every document that's been tabled, but if you are aware, there is no requirement for it to be done.

Now, hon. members, we are at points of order. I see the hon. Government House Leader shall rise.

Point of Order

Addressing the Chair

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do rise on this point of order. I refer you to page 610 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, for those following along at home, yourself, of course, in the chair. In the Remarks Addressed to the Chair section:

Any Member participating in debate, whether during a sitting of the House or a Committee of the Whole, must address the Chair.

It goes on to say that they must not address the House, a particular Minister or Member, the galleries, the television audience, or any other entity.

Now, I chose to wait quite a way into question period though there are several examples of this issue. I rose in regard to the hon. member for – his constituency changed, Mr. Speaker, but whoever was asking the question at the moment that I rose on that point of order. The former Finance minister of Alberta was speaking. I will give you the example of what I referred to. I have the benefit of the exact quotes that were used during that time. I don't know if you have the Blues yet yourself. He says, "To the Premier: can you name one example of a project that the city council in Calgary wasted money on?" He goes on to say, "Do you really think you can take the moral high ground here?"

Now, Mr. Speaker, earlier in the order the hon. Opposition House Leader also said, "Do you think this was an appropriate amount of consultation?" He goes on to say, "Can you please point me to announcements you made in the campaign?"

And earlier than that, the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West goes on to say in a question that she provided the House, "why you aren't . . . Are you too busy stoking the fires?"

There are many examples of that, Mr. Speaker. These three members who I referred to are experienced members of this Chamber, former ministers of the Crown, members of Executive Council, who do understand parliamentary procedure and understand that they need to speak through the chair inside this place. I do understand that they are all posturing for future leadership races and what is going on and the turmoil in the NDP at the moment, but it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we follow the procedure in this House, that we speak through you for many reasons that you understand, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask that the House try their best to follow that rule in the future.

The Speaker: I think it's probably advantageous if we take it under advisement and move on.

As a result, we are at Orders of the Day. If the Government House Leader would like to be the Speaker, I'm sure at a later time he'll be able to do that.

Ordres du jour.

2:50

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 18

Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019

Ms Sweet moved on behalf of Ms Ganley that the motion for second reading of Bill 18, Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 18, Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

[Debate adjourned on the amendment October 23: Member Irwin speaking]

The Speaker: Hon. members, I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West would like to join the debate.

Mr. Eggen: Yes, I would, very much so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to speaking on the amendment in regard to Bill 18, the Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019, that I believe the Member for Calgary-Buffalo did bring forward, I believe that she brought forward a referral amendment, that this be moved forward to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

I think that, you know, considering the scope and the importance of the regulation of our electricity markets here in the province of Alberta and really the scope that Bill 18 is trying to encompass in regard to terminating a capacity market here in the province of Alberta, I believe that it's sometimes wise to take time to ensure that this essential service is supported through regulation, supported through legislation, and that Albertans are protected from wild variations in electricity prices both for family consumption and industrial consumption as well.

Our electricity markets have gone through quite a number of changes over the last number of years, and what I think we all don't want to go back to is the bad old days, where we had wild fluctuations in the market rate for electricity and we were not keeping up on a consistent basis to build capacity to meet the needs of our growing domestic consumption and industrial consumption as well.

I mean, it doesn't take very long to think back to, let's say, five or six or seven years ago, where you could almost predict when there was going to be a brownout, or an electricity shortfall, here in the province, and, you know, it caused a lot of disruption and confusion for people with both our domestic rates and in regard to industrial certainty as well.

I remember probably, maybe I'm thinking 2005 or 2006, when as the Energy critic for the New Democrat opposition I, again, perhaps jokingly with a journalist from the *Calgary Herald* said: you know, there's going to be a brownout tomorrow. Sure enough, like, boom, the end of June with a heat wave and extra pressure on the grid with people using air conditioners and so forth, there it was. He phoned me up and said, "Yeah. The brownout's on," and I said, "Yeah, for sure. I'm stuck in my garage right now because my electric door opener doesn't work." You know, it was funny, but it

was also quite concerning because, of course, this was an annual occurrence at that time.

Having, I think, a stable market – right? – and a capacity market is absolutely essential. Reversing this change to allow fluctuations: I think, you know, there's a lot of concern. There's a lot of concern from the regulator here in the province of Alberta. There's a lot of concern from those who are depending on industrial certainty for electricity, both for prices and supply. I believe that there are other ways by which we can deal with this.

We know that the potential for exposure to considerably higher prices for electricity for both regular consumers and for industrial consumers is a big concern. I believe that, you know, while we don't want to be static in our approach to producing electricity here in the province, I think that taking further careful second deliberation on this is the appropriate thing to do at this time.

I think that, for example, one emerging area of development that we should be pursuing in the province here is having both domestic and individual consumer capacity and then industrial capacity to produce more renewable energy. We know that allowing a differential in price, let's say, for electricity that might be generated through solar panels, for example, to pump back into the grid has tremendous potential, that is being realized in other jurisdictions around the world. By always trying to diversify your electricity production, you are creating a built-in security and safety element to that same system as well.

Traditionally, when we have had only maybe six or seven main sources of electricity generation here in the province of Alberta, if one or more of those big generators goes under, let's say, for regularly scheduled maintenance or it goes down for any reason, then suddenly we're stuck. We're caught out. I know that different electricity companies such as Enmax realized early on, quite a number of years ago, that by having smaller generators in different locations around the province, you actually increase efficiency – right? – through the reduced line loss of electricity. But you also build in an element of certainty and security by having so many more generators available. If you lose one of the big ones or you lose a number of the small ones, you still have sufficient backup and capacity to serve the needs of Albertans.

I mean, all of these are factors that make it complicated – right? – to be able to ensure the safety and security of our electricity grid here in the province of Alberta. I'm certainly interested in ensuring that we do not go down the road of other jurisdictions that you can see quite literally, very clearly, had unregulated areas of their electricity market and ended up with a very volatile, expensive situation.

Again, I think back to when I was Energy critic, to a very classic case study in Texas, one of the states of the United States, where they experienced significant brownouts for a number of years and even rolling blackouts which had to be mitigated by rationing electricity and so forth. The extreme price swings also left Texas consumers exposed. You know, again, you leave yourself open, with a lack of regulation, to unscrupulous speculators in electricity. We certainly don't need to revisit that kind of situation, as they saw in Texas. We saw some small versions of that here in Alberta when we did not have a regulated market.

Again, thinking of other jurisdictions around the world in regard to unregulated electricity markets, we know that New Zealand was having quite a time with price spikes and so forth. You know, the price spikes do not just hit people in the pocketbook, right? They also create sort of an element of uncertainty that discourages economic investment to your jurisdiction. If the electricity supply is unstable – right? – or subject to surges and/or brownouts or even rolling blackouts, then, again, you know, that's one of the things that investment will tick off in the negative column. If you have

electricity supply markets that are unstable, then I think that everyone loses as a result.

3:00

Really, again, I see this amendment – right? – that the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View is bringing forward as just, you know, a friendly, constructive, I think, addition to this debate. It's not to suggest that our electricity markets still do not need to evolve. I firmly believe that they do need to continue to evolve, as I said, to allow for more recognition and encouragement of renewable energy here in the province of Alberta by having domestic arrays of solar panels for domestic consumption and then to sell back into the grid. This is the next, I believe, way by which we can both produce electricity in a sustainable manner and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also create more stability and security in our electricity system.

Yeah. I mean, I think that we see lots of potential here for growth in the province of Alberta and indeed greater co-operation with other energy grids here in Canada. I know that we're a big country, but, you know, it's a great way to help to share and build a spirit of co-operation and unity by having increased trade in energy.

We all know the tremendous difficulties that we've had with regard to moving our pipeline energy capacity through other jurisdictions and provinces around the country. Again, another way by which we can help entice, perhaps, other jurisdictions to allow us to build the pipelines that we need for the Canadian national economy and Alberta's domestic economy is to look for ways by which we can invite trade between our different energy systems, perhaps looking to encourage more hydroelectricity that we can buy and share with those provinces who produce more hydro – right? – Manitoba and British Columbia and so forth.

There are lots of different ways to approach this. I believe that there's a strength in building a diverse grid that extends not just throughout our province but across western Canada. There are lots of ways to approach this.

A way to make sure that we're doing it right is to have sufficient regulation built into the system. You can't just throw it back open, you know, terminating the capacity market in its entirety. I believe that this doesn't serve anybody's interests in a positive way necessarily. I think it's a bit reactionary, quite frankly, and there are other ways to approach this in a much more reasoned sort of way. Of course, one of the best mechanisms we have available to us in this Chamber and in the Legislature generally is to make reference to a bill to the appropriate standing committee, that might be able to cast better light and perhaps some different options available to us to ensure that the electricity market is stable and affordable and sustainable here in the province of Alberta.

I'll leave it at that. I'm certainly supporting this amendment, and I encourage other members of this House to do so. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anyone wish to make quick comments or questions.

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to REF1? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much. I am happy to again stand up and talk about Bill 18 and just the change this government wants to do regarding moving from our plan of the proposed capacity market and going to the energy-only market. You know, I have found it very helpful to refer to an independent body, the Alberta Electric System Operator, to understand, really, what this bill is about and what it will do and what it will change.

Certainly, our government previously had proposed to move towards a capacity market. To understand that, I just want to quote a bit from the AESO website. They explain:

A capacity market is actually two markets in one: a market for providing capacity, or the ability to produce energy, and a market for the actual production and delivery of energy. A capacity market pays electricity generators for having the ability to reliably make power available regardless of how often they sell energy onto the grid. The purpose of the capacity market is to ensure there will be an adequate supply of electricity to meet the province's demand.

So, you know, a capacity market, according to the AESO, is something that will create reliability and make sure that Albertans have the electricity they need when they need it.

This change by the current government to move towards an energy-only system is actually of concern. Really, there are three major concerns that I have regarding it, and the citizens of Alberta will be burdened with this shift. It's really them that will be paying for the cost of this shift. It's a step backwards, I would say. There are three issues. One is financial, the other is accessibility, and the third is just about climate leadership, which are, you know, three pretty significant concerns.

One of the things that's built into the energy-only market is that there are price spikes that happen. The minister herself spoke about this yesterday, that this is just something that happens. She actually referred to it in a more positive way and felt that this was good for the generators because they would receive more, you know, revenue from that. Not once did she mention the concern of: who's going to pay for that extra revenue that they're getting in these price spikes, that are erratic? It's the citizens of Alberta. It's maybe good for the big corps but not so great for citizens. That's a concern.

There has been some analysis done that says it could cost Albertans up to 10 times more on their electricity bills when these price spikes go. I would think that this would be something that the minister is very concerned about – certainly I am as a representative of constituents – that we can't create more stability. We know that people budget month to month, trying to make sure that they have enough funds to pay for all their bills, but when something is erratic, which is this, these price spikes, and you don't know, and really it's way beyond your control as a citizen, then you are absolutely vulnerable to that.

That could create great hardship for the citizens of Alberta. That's why the capacity market, which is the market that we were moving towards, was a much better, much more stable, much more fair type of process than these energy-only markets. Certainly it will hurt consumers, and that's something that I'm certainly very concerned about.

The second piece, of course, is accessibility. My hon. colleague was just talking about, you know, being sort of in his garage and not able to get out because there was a blackout. There was no access to electricity. He couldn't actually get out, drive his car out. That will create great havoc for Albertans, if they can't have access to something. Certainly, we're all plugged in. I have three sons. I can't imagine what would happen if they couldn't access electricity and just the chaos that would create in our family.

I know I'm not unique in that. We all rely heavily on electricity, and if we do not have stability, if we don't have a system that will make it certain that we have electricity, and the capacity market has been very clearly demonstrated to produce more than an energy market, then we will have this very volatile and less reliable situation with the energy-only market.

3:10

We know that a capacity market is safer, more reliable, and it's sustainable and affordable. These are just qualities of this type of

market. That, of course, is why AESO, this independent body, did recommend to our government to actually, you know, move in that direction. I'm saddened that this government is taking steps backwards with this Bill 18. Certainly, the amendment that is before us: you know, I recommend that the House does support it because we do need to make sure that we have a capacity market.

Then, the third aspect of my concern – I've already talked about the financial; I've already talked about the accessibility, you know, the stability of having a system that is reliable for everyone – is climate leadership. We know that the capacity market was meant to transition to an electricity market that would meet the goals set out in our climate leadership plan. Of course, we know that climate leadership is real. We are a province that needs to have a plan. I know that we did have a plan, but, unfortunately, one of the first things that this government did was to eliminate that plan.

We don't have much time. The clock is ticking. There is apparently, you know, some say, eight years that we have to actually really make a difference so that we do have a proper climate leadership plan that's going to protect us all. I certainly hope to be living on this planet for a very, very long time and my children and potentially my grandchildren. It's something that is just a responsibility of the governing party, the government, the UCP in this case, to make sure that they're standing up and not really avoiding or putting their heads in the sand on this issue.

The benefit of the capacity market is that its structure increases the share of renewable energy in the energy mix. That means there's more green energy, and that of course is good. It's important for us to be responsible about our environment. In fact, this shift to the capacity market encourages more capital investment due to the inclusion of renewable energy. It's becoming less and less popular – you know, I know that some of the international investors in the oil sands are pulling out because they feel like it's not an investment that is green enough. They're looking for green investments. They're looking for alternative energy sources like solar and wind, so it really would actually increase the amount of investment.

Another thing the minister indicated is that the energy-only market was something that the investors wanted. It was more stable. But it seems a bit, you know, opposite, I suppose, of what she said and what, certainly, other experts in the field have shared, that investors are showing less willingness to invest in energy-only markets due to the risks of that, and they want this capacity market because it does have a greater mix of renewable energy.

Again, this is not something that is, you know, unique to Alberta. AESO suggested, recommended that we move in this direction. They didn't do this sort of in isolation. They looked around North America, internationally. The United Kingdom has this type of a market capacity. Many jurisdictions in North America have that. I mean, the majority of them do, so it is sort of a tried-and-true method in other places. In places where it isn't in place wholeheartedly, like Texas – I know I spoke about this last night, and my colleagues have, too – there are concerns with the things that we've already identified: the reliability, accessibility of electricity for all the citizens. There are rolling brownouts and blackouts much, much more commonly.

That price-spiking nature of the energy-only market means that citizens, consumers have to pay for that. That, again, is very difficult, you know, and it's something way beyond what an individual can control. Actually, it's incumbent on governments to sort of soften those spikes and set up a system that is more manageable and fair. Certainly, I think that that's the role of government. Moving to a capacity market would do absolutely that, but this energy-only market would not.

The other point about moving to this kind of a system, moving to the capacity market, is that it does support the decarbonization of

the electricity grid. It attracts green energy and investment and provides reasonable prices on electricity. There are many, many positive aspects to this capacity market. This amendment, I really encourage my colleagues to look at it and see that this would actually create more stability for their constituents. It would create more accessibility of electricity. It would be a move to support our environment.

Of course, it would have less volatile price spikes, which I also know that citizens and consumers would really appreciate because that's tough when you're on a budget, and then all of a sudden you have a much higher bill that comes and you can't predict it. You can't predict it. It's a much more complicated system than an individual can control or understand, so it can be very hard. Let's face it. Certainly, for myself as a single mom and years ago when I was younger, I mean, it was very close. Sometimes I couldn't pay for all my bills. So when we're downloading this onto the individual Albertans, I think it's really, you know, disrespectful and not very responsible of our government to move to this energy-only market, and a big reason is just the financial burden on individuals.

I'm just going to go through, again, the Alberta Electric System Operator's very thoughtful, well-articulated reason for their recommendations. You know, these are experts in the field, and they have come forward and said to us: this is why we are recommending this.

The key objectives of any power market is to incent enough generation to meet demand today and in the future.

The AESO recommended that Alberta's electricity market needs to transition following research that indicates the existing energy market structure will not ensure the necessary investment in new generation that Alberta requires.

It's to support, actually, more investment, and this is the best method that AESO felt would actually do that, not the energy-only market but the capacity market.

The AESO studied a number of structures and found that a capacity market best fit Alberta's characteristics and objectives with the least amount of risk.

Certainly, governments should care about that. They're looking specifically at what the characteristics of Alberta are and decreasing risk. I mean, these are all very positive qualities.

A capacity market ensures continued reliability of the system in a cost effective manner while enabling the transition to a cleaner, lower-carbon electricity system over the coming years.

Again, these are all important reasons to move to a capacity market. It's through the research, evidence-based work that this organization did that they've come to these conclusions and had recommended to our government at the time. I just call on the current government to also see and review what AESO has put forward and reconsider this bill. We would really appreciate them looking at this amendment.

They go on further about the key benefits of a capacity market.

[It] provides the following combination of benefits which no other single . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has risen.

Member Ceci: I just wonder if the hon. member can finish her thought. Of course, she's talked a lot about the renewables and the benefits to society of a greener electricity grid. Could she perhaps expand on that?

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford. 3:20

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Riverview. I totally apologize.

Ms Sigurdson: Riverview, yes. Thank you.

Certainly, you know, as the hon. member just asked, focusing on making sure that we use more and more renewable energy, energy that will support our planet – we are running out of time to really make a difference. We need to be responsible stewards of the environment, and all the steps that we take in that direction can make a significant difference in our lives, our children's lives, and our grandchildren's lives. This market very clearly says that this helps move to a more green system, a system with much more renewables.

You know, besides just the sustainability of our planet, which is, of course, paramount, there is an economic argument for this. Investors want to be investing in more green projects and more green capacity markets because they're wise. They see the importance of making sure that we're responsible stewards of our environment. People are moving away from an energy-only market, so it's just such – I can't overstate how important it is and how the time is ticking and how much I really want to stress to the government to really take all these things into consideration when they're making decisions for Albertans.

I certainly know in my own riding of Edmonton-Riverview that I meet regularly with folks who are concerned about climate change and are working oftentimes in nonprofits themselves or advocating, volunteering, really raising awareness and making sure that we are being responsible stewards of our environment.

Just going on to the other question that the hon. member asked, it was just for me to sort of finish my thought. I was going through some of the key benefits of the capacity market that AESO did identify. One of them was:

- Ensures reliability as Alberta's electricity system evolves
- Increases stability of prices
- Provides greater revenue and certainty for generators [and]
- Maintains competitive market forces and drives innovation and cost discipline.

These are pretty significant benefits of a capacity market. I think that anyone who looked at this would see that this is, you know, obviously, a pretty strong argument to move toward a capacity market and not move backwards into an energy-only market.

I know some of my hon. colleagues on the other side of the aisle have said: well, we've had this for 20 years or so, and it's worked fine since then. Well, we do have a different conversation. I think 20 years ago we weren't so aware and knowledgeable, didn't understand the science about climate change. I mean, that in itself is a big reason for change, a huge reason that we should be moving to make sure that that mix of more renewable energy is part of the equation. Again, the capacity market, like this amendment suggests, is the best way to go about that.

But, I mean, then there are just the other fundamental things that I have expressed already, just the fairness to citizens of this province, not expecting them just to, you know, be able to manage something that really isn't manageable by an individual. That needs to be managed by government, so these price spikes that are endemic to this type of market need to be addressed. Again, the capacity market doesn't have that quality and therefore is much more fair for the citizens of Alberta.

Again, I just really encourage my colleagues across the aisle to see that and, you know, make sure that they are strong advocates for their own constituents because . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members looking to join debate on REF1? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has risen.

Member Ceci: Thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to debate on this and speak to it for the first time. I'm going to not go

over the same ground that has been well researched and explained by my two previous colleagues who got up to speak to this. My colleague from Calgary-Mountain View has put a referral motion before us that would of course move this, if it were supported, to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2. I am the vice-chair of that committee. I have the pleasure of working with the chair and the other members of the committee. We have done good work of late, and I think there's no reason to think that we wouldn't capably take on this referral and work with it at that committee.

I do want to say that, of course, I support the work that we did as a government around the capacity market, and when I think about that work, I know at the time that there was extensive outreach to experts in the field. I don't consider myself an expert, and I of course take a great deal of counsel from people who work directly in the business, who have risen in many cases to the top of their organization. I want to be able to give a few thoughts about what those experts in energy have said, too, publicly on the record in places like the *Globe and Mail* and the *Calgary Herald* and different business circulars of theirs as well as news releases and those kinds of areas where this information has been gathered from.

It goes to the points that my colleague was just making. Many of these points go to renewables and the stability of prices. For instance, the CEO of TransAlta Corp. hailed the movement towards a capacity market or the overhaul, as she called it, as a courageous decision by the government. It opens up opportunities to invest both in our existing assets and new assets as we move forward. As my colleague was just saying, the attractiveness to companies that make energy from renewable sources is what this CEO is talking about, that this opens up opportunities to invest both in our existing assets and new assets as we move forward.

Further, in a release from the government of Alberta that CEO goes on to say: "We welcome a shift to the capacity market in Alberta. It will enhance our ability to make investments in existing and new generation to the benefit of [our] customers and other stakeholders in the services we provide."

There's one expert who goes on to say that it's a very clear roadmap emerging with the previous Premier's announcement with regard to Alberta's commitment to support the conversion of coal-fired plants to gas. As we know, many of those companies have taken the signal to start that work, and ultimately we of course have significant gas supplies in this province, which are being used close to source, and when that is done, there's a benefit to the economic production of cheaper electricity.

She goes on to say: TransAlta has already completed a significant amount of work on the logistics and timing of plant conversions; accelerating TransAlta's coal transition while ramping up our renewables, including hydro, wind, and solar, is critical to keeping Alberta competitive, and we look forward to being active participants in the transition. That, from an expert, all sounds like a significant endorsement of a capacity market, which this bill is going to be terminating or proposes to terminate.

3:30

That same person goes on to be quoted in the *Calgary Herald*. The quote is: if you don't have enough of a price signal in an energy-only market to attract new capital, you won't get new capital, and you'll run up against a wall. The number one change – this is not a quote – that the government has to think about is in pricing. Then it follows with that quote from the CEO: if you don't have enough of a price signal in the energy-only market to attract new capital, you won't get new capital, and you'll run up against the wall. We, of course, know that this current government's efforts to attract new capital across many sectors are not happening. We do

know that the giveaways across the sectors to corporations are significant and haven't resulted in any new employment.

I'll go on to share what the Capital Power CEO said at the time. He said that a capacity market would encourage not only his company, which is Capital Power, to resume investing in Alberta but probably get interest from larger North American and European producers. All good news, to be sure, and that's what the CEO of Capital Power said.

He goes on to say:

We look forward to engaging with the Government of Alberta on the evolution of Alberta's [energy] market design, including participation in stakeholder consultations regarding the design and introduction of a capacity market. A well-designed . . .

And, of course, that's important.

. . . and fairly implemented capacity market can deliver an affordable power supply for Albertans, reduce market price volatility, and provide certainty that generation capacity will be there when needed.

One of my colleagues talked about price spikes and how damaging they are to the affordability of a family's pocketbook. Of course, it was reported by that former member that there are all sorts of spikes that have happened in an energy-only market just to our south, which we compare ourselves to frequently, that being Texas.

There is another former executive vice-president of the Tennessee Valley Authority and PJM Interconnection. That person at the time, when this quote was taken, said:

I spent the last eight years of my career as the CEO of PJM Interconnection, which has a mature capacity market structure.

Something we were trying to work towards in this province: a mature capacity market structure.

He goes on to say:

Private investors from around the world have built over 30,000 megawatts of new generation in PJM under this market structure, which kept the lights on at stable prices.

Stable prices are what we all look to to ensure that we can plan for our family's future and know what our costs are going to be.

He goes on to say:

Investors have shown a growing reluctance to invest in the riskier energy-only market designs around the world, preferring the price stability and revenue certainty provided by a capacity market structure. I am confident this model will work well in Alberta too, ensuring future stability in your admirable and smooth transition to a lower carbon electricity system.

Of course, the lower carbon electricity system is fuelled in part by the shutting down of coal-fired generators from 2050 to 2030. The move that this former government made was in the direction of ensuring that those coal-fired generators had a smooth transition, as is said here, and supporting their employees, their workers in that transition was an important aspect of the work we did as a government.

This collection of quotes goes on to include the president and CEO of AltaLink. At the time Mr. Thon said:

New capacity will be needed to back up renewables in Alberta as it transitions to a cleaner energy future. We have seen the government take steps to ensure low costs for Albertans by requiring new generation be sited near existing transmission, by offering long-term contracts and by focusing on universal, or grid-scale, projects. We are confident the government will continue on this path and find the lowest cost way to add new capacity for Albertans.

I know that there are many admirable things in that last quote that the president and CEO of AltaLink was speaking to, the sense of this effort made by the previous government. Of course, that's not the direction that this government is going in, but we believe that there are advantages, and they are highlighted by my colleague just before me, in terms of addressing them.

The managing director of Morrison Park Advisors goes on to speak to:

In our discussions with lenders, equity providers and electricity facility owners and developers, we found positive interest in a potential capacity market in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits of a capacity market include, as one person said, getting your . . .

The Acting Speaker: My apologies for interrupting the hon. member. Though there has been no disorder caused or anything of the nature, I do, however, just want to take this opportunity to remind all members that according to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, 2017, page 614:

There is no Standing Order which governs the citation of documents . . .

A speech [however] should not consist of a single long quotation or a series of quotations joined together by only a few original sentences.

My intention for doing this at this moment is not to single out any individual member, because I don't think that that is the intention of anybody here. There are always opportunities to table documents, et cetera, but I would just like to take this opportunity to remind the House of those stipulations according to, again, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which I'm sure you all have readily available at your desks at this time.

If the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo could please continue on this. You have another two minutes and 30 seconds. Thank you.

Member Ceci: Thank you. I will just point out that many individuals very high up or at the top of the chain of these organizations all applauded the government of Alberta for its activities in developing a capacity market, moving in that direction, the decision to transition from an energy-only market to a capacity market. We, of course, know that the current government is going to terminate that, but it doesn't address the support that was given at the time, when we made the decision to move in that direction.

We will of course have the opportunity, potentially, of debating these things in further detail at the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship. You know, we have the ability at that committee, I believe, as we just showed through the examination of the sunshine list and the discussion about how we wanted to recommend to this House that the sunshine list should be amended or changed or improved. We had the ability to hear from people. Hearing from presenters, from witnesses, as it were, really helped all members of the committee better understand the issues with regard to the sunshine list.

That same sort of outreaching to potential experts around the capacity market and the electricity-only market I think would be useful in regard to making sure that we take the right steps at the right time and not do anything that would be harmful to pricing for electricity for the citizens of Alberta.

Thank you.

3:40

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anybody wish to take advantage of that.

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to referral amendment REF1? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-West has risen.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, certainly, I think we have some robust discussions that are going to go on today. I would like to ask unanimous consent of the House to go to one-minute bells so we can get through, hopefully, our agenda this afternoon.

Thank you.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-West, should he continue speaking to REF1.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I understand that this is my time to speak to this particular part of the bill, and I thank you and everyone for indulging me the opportunity, but I have no further comments at this time.

Thank you very much, sir.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has risen.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo for really bringing the thunder in that last speech. It's intimidating to follow such a barnburner, but I will do my best.

I'm rising to speak, of course, in favour of the amendment that we have before us. I think it would be wise for this House to send Bill 18 to be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2, because what's become apparent to me and I think become apparent to all members of the House is that we all have significant questions around what reverting to the energy-only market will do for Alberta's electricity system.

Certainly, I think one of the benefits that sending this bill to committee would provide would be to allow the members on that committee to have a detailed briefing about what the current energy-only market is like, how it's structured, to get the appropriate briefing from department officials, perhaps other people, other stakeholders, I mean, in the electrical system operation so that all members have a clear understanding of what we're talking about when we talk about whether or not Alberta should stay with the electricity-only market or convert to the capacity market.

The electrical system operation is not simple, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I know that our government was briefed for hours and hours on this issue before we made any decisions about any changes that we made to the electrical system here in Alberta, and I think it would be a benefit to all members of this Assembly to receive that same detailed briefing so that we can have a much more informed debate about the changes or – sorry – the reversion to the energy-only market that this bill proposes.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there have been some questions that hon. members from both sides of the House have raised in this question about whether or not we should keep the electricity-only market. Last night in my remarks I expressed some concerns, that were echoed by my colleagues here on this side, about the potential for increased prices of electricity. Certainly, the minister shares some of those concerns because when she provided a letter to the Electric System Operator on July 25 informing them of her decision to stay with the electricity-only market, the energy-only market, she did raise some concerns that she had heard through the consultation process that she conducted through the summer.

In fact, I'll just quote briefly from the letter. She said that "the AESO must provide [her] with analyses and recommendations on whether changes are needed to the price floor/ceiling and shortage pricing in Alberta's energy-only market." And she asks that a status update on this work be provided to her on or before February 1, 2020.

Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously, the minister herself has some questions around whether or not the energy-only market puts consumers at significant risk of untenable price volatility. I think it's only fair that if she has questions, the rest of the members of this Assembly also get the chance to learn from the people that she

is consulting with and have those questions answered as well because she's not the only one who has those questions. We've raised it on this side of the House. Other members from the government caucus have raised this issue around price stability. I think that it would be wise to send this bill to committee to share in the learning that the minister is willing to do so that we all have a clear understanding of what we're talking about before we make a decision on whether or not Alberta should stay with the energy-only market or convert to the capacity market, as we proposed.

In the same letter, Mr. Speaker, she also said that she heard repeated references to concerns with market power and market power mitigation. Last night in my comments I did refer to the issue of market power as having a significant negative impact on the price of electricity for consumers. Economic withholding is something that is currently allowed by the Electric System Operator. In fact, TransAlta, as we know, was prosecuted successfully in 2015 and fined more than \$50 million for their activities, withholding electricity from the grid in order to drive up prices.

Clearly, the minister has seen that this is a problem that needs to be addressed as well, and I don't think it's fair, Mr. Speaker, that only she be informed about what changes the Electric System Operator is recommending to the energy-only market, and I specifically don't think that it's fair that we have to wait until after this legislation is passed to hear those answers. I think the prudent thing for this House to do would be to send this bill to committee so that we, too, can ask this question around market power and market power mitigation and what the AESO would recommend in terms of changes to the existing electrical system to prevent the exercise of market power to drive up prices and punish consumers for the ability of certain players in the electrical system to game the prices that consumers are charged for electricity.

Those are a couple of the issues that the minister herself has asked the AESO to chime in on, and I think, as I've said many times already, that it's only fair that members of the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship be provided with the opportunity to explore these issues around price ceilings and floors, market power, and market power mitigation before we make a decision on whether or not we should revert to the energy-only market or remain with a capacity market. These are critical questions that need to be answered.

Now, I understand that the minister has introduced the bill. I don't think that she's answered these questions to the satisfaction of the members of this House. Perhaps during debate on this legislation the minister will provide us her insight into what she thinks will need to be the recommended changes made to the energy-only market to address these issues that she herself has raised. I would like to hear her thoughts on what she thinks needs to be done to the energy-only market to prevent these significant risks of price uncertainty for consumers.

3:50

The other significant question that we've heard over and over again in this debate is the question of whether or not lowering greenhouse gas emissions is best done through the capacity market or through the existing energy-only market. Now, when we were briefed on this by the AESO, they told us that the capacity-only market was probably the best way to facilitate the phase-out of coal-fired power and convert to natural gas and it was also the best way to incent the development of renewable energy in the province of Alberta. We've heard conflicting reports from members on both sides of the House as to whether or not the capacity market is the best way to do this.

Certainly, it's our assertion that switching to the capacity market would be the best way to facilitate that conversion of coal-fired

power plants to natural gas plants. That's a significant question that I think the constituents in Edmonton-Gold Bar are asking me because climate change is a very important question to them, and they want the government to take meaningful action on climate change. Shifting from coal-fired power to natural gas is one of the significant moves that this government could do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, allowing existing coal-fired power to switch over to natural gas is an important matter for the communities where those coal-fired power plants exist. The ability of those power plants to switch over to natural gas and keep some of their power plant employees on staff is a critical issue to many members in this House. Certainly, the Member for Drumheller-Stettler, the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland both have a number of jobs at stake. I think it's really important that they understand as well as I do what not shifting to the capacity market will do to the jobs at risk in their constituencies so that if they vote in favour of this bill, they know the impact that it will have on the jobs in their ridings. Certainly, you know, the government does not have an admirable track record of job creation. They've lost 27,000 jobs in the last two months. I'm sure that those members aren't keen to go back to their constituencies and say: we're adding to the job losses by creating an electrical system that will not allow you to keep your jobs at the power plants here at home.

Now, on to the matter of renewable energy. Of course, through our renewable electricity program we set a target of 30 per cent of Alberta's electrical energy to be generated by renewable energy sources by 2030. Now, in the latest long-term outlook provided by the AESO, they've downgraded that target so that by 2030 less than 20 per cent of Alberta's electricity will be generated from renewable energy sources, which is remarkable, Mr. Speaker, given that the 30 per cent target is a legislated target. I know that the members opposite are keen to make sure that Albertans comply with the law. It is interesting to me that the minister and the government are so keen to not be in compliance with their own legislation to provide 30 per cent electrical energy from renewable energy sources here in the province of Alberta. I hope that the minister or somebody from the government can explain to us how staying with the energy-only market will allow us to meet the legislated target of 30 per cent renewable energy by 2030. If not, then I think it's only prudent that we send this bill to committee so that we can ask that question: what will the impact of staying with the energy-only market have on the legislated target of 30 per cent renewable electricity by 2030?

The Member for Calgary-Glenmore, of course, disputes our assertion that staying with the energy-only market will inhibit Alberta's ability to meet that legislated target. She tabled a couple of documents earlier today indicating that there is still strength in the renewable energy market here in Alberta. I've read those documents that she referred to, and certainly I'm glad that there is still enthusiasm for renewable energy. The problem is that there is no target anymore, Mr. Speaker. The government has, as I said, apparently quietly abandoned their 30 per cent target. They've certainly abandoned the renewable energy purchasing program that we started, so I'm wondering what the basis for this enthusiasm for renewable energy is, given the fact that the government is renegeing on its legislated commitment, as I said, to provide 30 per cent of Alberta's electricity from renewable energy sources.

I think that by sending this bill to committee, we would have an excellent opportunity to hear from renewable electricity providers their views on whether the current energy-only market is satisfactory for meeting that commitment or if changes to the capacity market are needed or if, perhaps, some modifications to

the planned capacity market or modifications to the current energy-only market are needed.

But it's critically important, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta meet its legislated commitment for renewable energy because there are a number of jobs on the line. We know that renewable energy creates more jobs per dollar invested than many other industries here in Alberta. Certainly, every member in this Chamber is interested in creating jobs. Certainly, you know, if I'd been elected on a platform that included jobs, economy, and the pipeline and I'd lost 26,000 jobs since I was elected, I would be keen to do everything I could do to create some jobs in Alberta. Perhaps taking \$4.5 billion and investing it in renewable energy would be a good way.

Anyway, we should send this bill to committee so that we can ask those questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anybody wish to make comments or questions. I see the hon. Member for St. Albert has risen.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, that was just riveting, and I'm wondering if the member would care to continue and expand on his line of thinking.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the hon. Member for St. Albert for her question. As I said, the potential for the development of renewable energy and jobs that come from the development of renewable energy is something that everybody is excited about in the province of Alberta, but we need to have a market that's properly structured in order to create those jobs. So I think it's only appropriate that we send this bill to committee so that we can ask the question of how the electricity system can be structured so that we can properly provide the incentives for the creation of renewable energy here in the province of Alberta. There's a lot of investment on the line. There are a number of jobs on the line, and I think the responsible thing to do would be for this House to look at this question by sending it to committee.

Now, I see that the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul is pointing to the Election Recall Act, so I'm sure that he's concerned about what his constituents will do when he goes back to them and says: not only have we lost 27,000 jobs since I've been elected, but we're keen to keep piling on the job losses by not properly incenting renewable energy development here in the province; oh, by the way, we're going to give \$4.5 billion in corporate handouts that don't actually go to anybody in Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul but actually go to foreign shareholders, Hong Kong billionaires like the owner of Husky.

Anyway, I want to thank the hon. Member for St. Albert for asking that question. I urge all members here in this House to vote for this amendment and send this bill to committee so that we can get the information that we need to make the best decision based on the evidence available.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

4:00

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) for another two minutes and 20 seconds should anybody choose to have comments or any more questions for the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to the referral amendment, REF1? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has risen.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to rise on this important motion asking that the subject matter of this bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with 74.2 of the standing orders. The reason I say that it's important is because the subject matter of this bill will impact Albertans across the province. It will impact constituents in our constituencies. It will impact their bottom line, their monthly bills, so it's important that we take time to discuss the subject matter of this bill thoroughly and how it will impact Albertans. There are a number of reasons why we should do that, but one is that it will impact Albertans, it will make their life more expensive, it will make their electricity bills more expensive. So it's important that we refer this bill to the Resource Stewardship Committee, where it can be studied thoroughly.

There are a number of other reasons why we should study this bill in more detail. I think I can start with consultations. The UCP announced consultations on this bill, that they will consult for 90 days, and they cancelled those consultations after just 30 days. They didn't even consult for what they promised. Promise made, promise broken. I think that referring this to committee will be an opportunity for Albertans, for all those who are concerned, and for us MLAs to discuss this bill, discuss its impact more thoroughly. That's the number one reason: the UCP has failed to consult on this bill properly. They didn't even consult for the time period they promised they would. They cancelled their consultation after 30 days. That's simply wrong. This motion will make sure that Albertans have the opportunity to weigh in on this change. This will make sure that we as MLAs have the opportunity to weigh in on how it will impact our constituents and their bottom lines.

The second thing I would say: again, it was also claimed by the UCP that nobody in the sector was asking for it. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that there can be nothing further from the truth, that nobody was asking for it. When we moved towards the capacity market, I think we had experts, analysts, and, more importantly, AESO, the Alberta Electric System Operator, who were suggesting that we should move towards the capacity market. There is a written report from AESO that's on record. So saying this, that nobody was asking for it, can't be true when the Alberta Electric System Operator was clearly asking the government to move towards the capacity-only market.

Not just that, but they analyzed the energy-only market, and they outlined their reasons why they wanted the Alberta government to move towards a capacity-only market. Those reasons were that that move will ensure that Albertans have safe, reliable, sustainable, and affordable electricity. These are the things that Albertans wanted. These are the things that were recommended by AESO. Claiming that the sector was not asking for it and that nobody was asking for it: that's not true. When we moved towards the capacity market, at that time TransAlta Corporation, Capital Power, AltaLink, Western Interstate Energy Board – and there were many other stakeholders who were in favour of this move, who supported this move, and who we worked with towards implementing the capacity market.

The third thing was that this government is claiming that an Alberta energy-only market works. It doesn't matter how many times you say that in the House – it works, it works, it works – the evidence is that it doesn't work. We have seen that from rolling blackouts. We have seen that from spikes. The fact is that under an energy-only market the price of energy is determined 8,640 times a year. The price of electricity is determined approximately 8,640 times a year in an energy-only market. It means that it's determined every hour. When you're determining that price every hour, I think the result is that you will see spikes because you're determining that price every hour. So it's the function of an energy-only market that you will see these price spikes.

Saying that that's the best market: that's not enough. It doesn't matter how many times you say in the House that it works; the fact is that it doesn't work. Except for Alberta, Texas, and some states in Australia and New Zealand, everybody has adopted some other form of market. Again, evidence was there that Alberta needed to move towards some other form of market that works better, that doesn't run into price spikes and rolling blackouts, brownouts, and those kinds of things.

Referring this bill to the committee will also make sure that we have that opportunity to verify those claims, whether it works or not, and why AESO was recommending just three years ago that Alberta needed to move towards a capacity market. What went wrong with their assessment that they did just three years ago? That's another reason why it's important that we send this bill to the committee, so that we can study the bill, its impacts, more thoroughly.

There were other things that were also outlined by my colleagues. When we moved towards a capacity market, the renewables auctions, we were able to procure electricity at really a very reasonable price, and I think that that was the lowest price that we ever got. There is also evidence that there are other forms of electricity that we can procure that are way cheaper and that will help lower the electricity bills for everyday Albertans.

Also, when you procure for a longer duration, let's say for a year, you know what the price is, you're able to budget for that, you're able to predict what your bills will be, and it's a lot easier to do so in a capacity market as opposed to an energy-only market, where the price is determined 8,640 times a year. That was another reason that we moved towards a capacity market, and that's another reason that we'd send the subject matter of this bill to the committee, to look into it further and to verify also the claims that the government is making.

Among other issues that were outlined, I think, when we were moving, one concern was economic withholding within the energy-only market. You can bid the generation at a sufficiently higher price, hoping that you would not be asked to run it. An example is that you can bid it at \$999 per megawatt hour. When you are able to do that – and we haven't heard from this government what they are going to do about it – that spikes your price. That jacks up your price. That impacts everyday Albertans' bills. That changes their bill every month for the same product that they are using every day. They are paying every hour a different price.

4:10

The capacity market has that function to it that because of long-term contracts, because of yearly procurement, because of longer duration procurements, there is stability to it, and Albertans can have more reliable and sustainable and affordable electricity. It's important, from that standpoint as well, that we refer this bill to the committee and talk about economic withholding, discuss economic withholding: how it impacts the companies who are providing the generation, how it impacts Albertans, their bottom line, their bills on a monthly basis.

Another thing was that when we transitioned, we put in a cap that guaranteed Albertans that their bill won't spike more than 6.8 cents per kilowatt hour. That was, again, there to protect Albertans, to protect their bottom line, to protect their monthly bills, and at the same time they can have reliable, sustainable electricity while making sure that it's affordable as well. We haven't heard a word from this government, even when asked, on what they're going to do with the 6.8-cent cap. If they are going to remove it, certainly that will hit the bottom line of Albertans. That will hit Albertans' pockets, and they will be on the hook to pay for the spikes and whatever comes with the energy-only market.

Then there is another price cap, where nobody who is generating is able to bid more than \$1,000 per megawatt hour. We have asked before and we will ask again: are we keeping that cap? Is it going to stay there? Are we changing it? In an energy-only market I think there are suggestions that we may need to raise the cap to attract investment whereas in the capacity market we already attracted a lot of investment, almost \$10 billion in investment, for renewables. Again, these are the things where the Resource Stewardship Committee will be in a better position to invite experts, invite stakeholders, invite AESO and all those who are concerned and, more importantly, invite Albertans to weigh in on this important bill that will impact their bottom lines.

One other thing that I would like to highlight is that within the existing guidelines, the offer behaviour enforcement guidelines, economic withholding is allowed. If they are moving towards the energy-only market, reverting to the status quo, will they let companies continue with economic withholding, and if they will do so, how will it impact Albertans' bills going forward? These are all important issues that the public has a vested interest in, and they deserve an opportunity where they can discuss these things in more detail.

I do know that when asked about any consultation, any input from the public, they will start swinging their mandate and say that in the election there was a clear mandate, so they can do whatever they want. But I don't think that any Albertan voted for a higher electricity bill, that any Albertan voted for price spikes or brownouts and blackouts. They want a sustainable and affordable supply of electricity. We have seen from previous experience in Alberta that there were problems with the energy-only market, and that was the reason AESO and all other experts were asking the government to move towards . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for questions, comments.

Seeing none, anyone looking to join debate on REF1?

[Motion on amendment REF1 lost]

The Acting Speaker: Moving back to the bill proper, are there any members looking to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak to the main bill in second reading, the Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019. You know, the main issue that I think that we all need to look at here is looking for reliability and looking for capacity and the incentive to build capacity in our electricity grid system and to reach across to build different ways by which we could generate electricity so to increase the security of the overall grid system.

As we had spoken briefly about before, with the way that our electricity generation has evolved, we had a reliance on a handful of very large generating facilities, coal-fired generating facilities, that, you know, left us exposed in quite a number of different ways in terms of both energy pricing and energy security. I had mentioned before that if we did have one or more of those plants go down for regular, scheduled maintenance or for a problem, then we were in a tight spot in terms of generating electricity, and if that happened to coincide with high-use, high-demand times such as in the summer during a heat wave, then you end up with brownouts or even rolling blackouts. We don't want to go back to the bad old days, when that was an issue.

We want to encourage generation from smaller producers in many different places across the province so that security can be achieved and that you can achieve higher efficiencies through

reduced line loss between, you know, the source of generation and where the electricity is being used. Considering that, again, I think that we need to build incentives through regulation to expand the grid interaction between jurisdictions here in the province of Alberta and other provinces, including British Columbia and Manitoba, where there are lots of potential supplies of hydroelectricity. Again, all of those are ways by which we can help to strengthen the affordability of electricity here in the province of Alberta and reliability as well.

[Mr. Jones in the chair]

I'm not suggesting that the situation that we're in here now is static, that we should be using this current circumstance that we're in for generation of electricity. We know that we have the evolution, the phase-out of coal power, for example, moving to more natural gas electricity generation, which is a process in motion now, a process that I hope that this new government will continue to accelerate. I think that the benefits of the phase-out of coal power generation are not just to reduce carbon emissions but also particulate pollution in immediate areas around where coal plants are being used, right? We can see a demonstrable increase in health benefits by reducing coal-fired power, and we know that, you know, this is a path that we need to continue to move down and not have the interests of science and good health be delayed or compromised by political action.

4:20

I believe as well that, you know, we only have to be students of history to see that the market-only electricity systems have been notoriously unreliable in regard to security against speculation, right? You see electricity price spikes on an energy-only market that will curl your hair, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, and will again expose Albertans to very expensive price spikes during different times of the year. I believe that we have learned to move past that.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

You know, I know that this new government is interested in their summer and fall of repeal and terminating this and that, but common sense must prevail. I believe that there is a better way by which we can do this and there's a better way that we can look for both security and affordability in the market. I believe that as an opposition we will look to other ways by which we can strengthen the market through regulation and through perhaps the introduction of some amendments to this bill. You know, we certainly in the spirit of constructive criticism will offer those alternatives here in this Chamber in due course, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Section 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, any members wishing to speak to the bill? I see the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 18, Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019. I'd just like to sum up a couple of things that my colleagues have said this afternoon and also last night. I think it's important for Albertans to know and to remember that this decision was based on advice from experts about how to protect consumers while modernizing our electricity market. You know, obviously, the UCP want to reverse this change, again letting foreign markets decide the price of energy on any given day, where the bottom line will be that Albertans will have to pay more for less, resulting in less stability, less predictability, higher electricity bills,

and some of the other related issues that my colleagues have talked about.

Although, you know, for a lot of Albertans affordability is, I guess, not a really big deal, for far too many Albertans not having the reliability and the predictability of monthly bills is actually a problem, particularly for people that are struggling, whether they're struggling on AISH, whether they're folks that are unemployed. We've heard repeatedly, sadly, how many people recently have lost their jobs, and there will be more and more Alberta families really struggling.

The electricity market, the one that we made alterations to, would have ensured that Albertans have safe, reliable, sustainable, and affordable electricity. This current move could potentially cost Albertans 10 times more in electricity bills and take us back to the time of rolling blackouts. I've heard some of my colleagues talk about some of their memories about rolling blackouts or brownouts, and I didn't actually recall those. I'm not entirely sure why. So I did a quick little search.

An Hon. Member: Maybe you didn't have your lights on.

Ms Renaud: Maybe I didn't have my lights on.

I did a little search and just reading some of the articles from that time, I guess it really caused me to think. I looked at some of the images that were available, and it really caused me to think of, you know, the harm that a blackout can do when something like that is entirely preventable with the creation of a new market.

It's interesting. One of the articles I looked at had a photograph of some traffic being backed up on I think it was 124th and 102nd Avenue because the signals were out, and we certainly rely on that. Think about the harm that that causes, and not just folks maybe being late for work or late for school or meeting a friend, but emergency vehicles not being able to get to where they need to go. Then I started thinking about, you know, certainly that our hospitals and clinics would have backup generators, but not everybody is being treated in a facility like that. So you think about an unplanned outage like that and the damage that that can cause to people's health. Again, it was caused because of heavy demand on the power grid, and it was caused by the first heat wave of the summer.

Now, I'm going to use this a little bit to swing into the very sad reality that – and I know that not everybody in this place believes it to be a crisis – climate change is indeed a crisis. When you have consensus of over 95 per cent of global scientists that study climate telling us that we have a global crisis, I believe them. Canada released Canada's Changing Climate Report, the CCR, on April 1 – I'm trying to think: was that last year? – and some of the things that I just wanted to highlight are why it's so important to have a reliable market so that rolling blackouts and brownouts aren't something that becomes normal for us. Again, I'm not saying that climate change causes summer heat waves or any of the other storms that we're seeing around us, but it certainly exacerbates things. Some of the highlights from Canada's Changing Climate Report: it is projected that Canada overall will warm at twice the global average regardless of what we do to fight it. This is what scientists are telling us. Now, certainly that doesn't mean that we can't mitigate these changes – there is a lot that we can do – but there are a lot of ways to reduce future global warming.

More than 40 scientists who worked on that particular report for Canada also presented evidence that humans have caused irreparable damage to the climate, primarily through our use of fossil fuels – of course, we know that – to the point that the Earth will continue to warm to some degree even if we stop all emissions now, which we all know. I think one of the things that I was really proud of in the climate leadership plan was the early phase-out of

coal-fired electricity, recognizing that burning of coal does create a lot of pollution, but it also takes a heavy toll on people's health.

One of the things that I wanted to talk about and just to remind people – I'm sure that people understand that reducing coal-fired electricity significantly allows us to lower greenhouse gas emissions. I think it was Ontario that made a fairly quick transition from coal-fired electricity in 2014, and as a result you're seeing that their greenhouse gases have come down significantly. One of the things that the market changes that we introduced when we were government allowed us to focus on was climate leadership and some of the things that would help us to do that.

We know that coal-fired electricity is a very significant source of carbon pollution. Coal electricity is actually the largest source of air pollution in Canada. These pollutants cause significant impact on small children and the elderly, as I'm sure you can imagine, and really are a burden to our health care system. Once again – I think I talk a lot about the importance of prevention in terms of health – this is essentially something that we can do as a cost savings to our health care system. We understand and we realize that this causes problems.

4:30

On a more global approach or global scan, about 40 per cent of the world's electricity comes from burning coal, which significantly contributes to climate change. It harms the health of Canadians in a very significant way. It produces, actually, more than just carbon dioxide that contributes to global warming. Burning coal releases particulate matter such as sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury, so the air pollution in burning coal produces particles that actually lodge in our lungs and are associated with worse respiratory and cardiovascular health, higher death rates for those near or around coal-burning plants. We also know that, actually, the burning of coal causes water and soil pollution, so we are contaminating the ground and the nearby surface water.

I talk a lot about climate change in this House. Almost on any topic I think that we can focus the discussion on climate change or on the climate crisis we have because it actually is a crisis and it does impact every aspect of our lives. When we looked at making the changes that we did, we did that because it allowed us to take some bold action, I thought, around climate leadership. The reasons for the changes to a capacity market were to enable the transition to an electricity market that could meet goals set in our climate leadership plan, such as the transition off coal, and increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix.

Beginning in October, as my colleague mentioned earlier today, AESO revised its forecast for Alberta renewables, stating that Alberta is now expected to fall short of its renewable targets, the changes in the electricity market being an important factor. AESO began its work on evaluating the sustainability of the electricity market in 2013 and recommended implementing a capacity market independent of the climate leadership plan and early coal phase-out to ensure long-term reliability. As a government we worked with the Alberta Electric System Operator, who showed us that the capacity market is the best choice to deliver reliable energy, good environmental performance, reasonable cost to electricity consumers, economic development, and the lowest transition risk. They recommended to us to adopt a capacity market.

It's unfortunate that the members across decided to vote down the amendment to refer this to committee to allow more time for consultation or review because I think this is another lost opportunity. I mean, when I think of a theme for a lot of the legislation or changes that have been happening lately, it seems to be about going backwards, so going back to the old ways of doing things when, really, the challenges are in front of us, as are the

opportunities. I think this is a lot of lost opportunity, passing on to Albertans a lot of unnecessary risk, and really missing the chance to take some bold leadership steps around this climate crisis.

I just want to remind people again why I continue to focus on this. It's that Canada is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world. [interjections] It's kind of weird that people think that's funny, but okay.

In northern Canada temperatures have risen by 2.3 degrees annually since 1948, and Canada's annual average has gone up by around 1.7 degrees Celsius. Now, that may not sound like a lot, but on a mean climate scale it is quite dramatic. Again, I don't think any of the scientists who, you know, publish their science – and it is peer-reviewed science – are telling us that it isn't climate change that is causing some of the very damaging weather events that we're seeing and not just weather events – we have flooding, we have horrific forest fires and drought – but that it will continue to exacerbate. You can't have this kind of warming happening in our country, particularly in the north, and not feel the impacts of it. We might not see it every day, but things will continue to get worse.

I'd just like to express my concern that once again this piece of legislation looks at taking us backwards and really is a missed opportunity while passing on a lot of unnecessary risk to consumers in Alberta. With that, I will end my comments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member for St. Albert.

There is 29(2)(a) available should anybody be looking to take advantage of that.

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to the bill? I see that the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View has risen.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise and speak to this particular bill. I know it's something that's comparatively complex, but I actually think it's an incredibly important file. I want to begin my comments by actually complimenting a number of the staff that used to reside within . . .

The Acting Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. However, given the fact that REF1 was moved on your behalf by Ms Sweet, it is my understanding that you therefore, according to that, have already spoken to the bill proper.

Ms Ganley: Okay.

The Acting Speaker: There are other members in the House who could join the debate. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods has risen to speak.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think I would like to start off along the same vein as the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View because I believe that the hon. member was going to start by complimenting the staff who work in the ministries supporting the decision-making and doing the work on what is a very, very complicated system.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

As I begin my remarks on Bill 18, the Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, I really appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak to this bill. One of the things I'd like to say right off the bat is that in some of the communication that government has put out on this, they've stated outright or suggested using different language that the capacity market is complex and that going back to the energy-only market would be more simple and straightforward. I would like to dispute that

because our electricity system is incredibly complex, and the people who work within and manage the policy around this – the work the AESO does is incredibly important. To suggest that the capacity market is complex and the energy-only market is simple would be incorrect. I certainly want to point out that we are dealing with something that not only is critically important to Albertans but is really complicated, something that I learned in my time being briefed on the files that relate to this.

As some of my colleagues have mentioned in their response to this bill, there were a lot of very, very detailed, very, very technical briefings made to us when the original decision was made to move to a capacity market, a lot of complex information that we needed to understand and evaluate as we considered how to move forward on this very important file. Moving forward in a way that would work best for Albertans, that would provide a strong, stable, predictable energy market was really important because we want Albertans to have that predictability. We want investors to have that predictability. All indications suggest that thanks to low-cost renewables, low-cost natural gas, and the capacity-market development that was under way, price stability and system stability were what we were achieving.

Now, when there is price volatility, instability – a number of my colleagues have talked about some of the impacts we know, a lot of potential impacts to consumers, individual Albertans. I would like to stress the impact that it has on businesses because in Alberta we have a lot of energy-intensive manufacturing. We have a lot of energy-intensive businesses. When we talk about the price spikes that happened between 2001 and 2014, not only was it individual consumers that were impacted, but business and investment were significantly impacted. There were incredible . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Hon. members, the hon. member is speaking. If we could just keep the noise down, that would be great. Please proceed.

4:40

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, price spikes impacting businesses as well as individual Albertans had become frequent in that period between 2001 and 2014. In 2007 the price for electricity spiked up to 11.5 cents. In 2018 it went as high as 12 cents and spiked again to 11 cents. In 2011 it spiked to 12 cents. Then it spiked to 12.5. Then it spiked to 13. Each time those spikes were happening, please reflect not only on the individual consumers and how that can put stress on the family budget but on agricultural operations, on energy-intensive manufacturing. Cement in our province is very energy-intensive. Different industries had real struggles dealing with the price spikes. In 2012 it went as high as 15 cents, and if we're talking about that time period between 2001 and 2014, I believe that's as high as the spikes got. That puts incredible pressure on both household budgets and business budgets.

This was all happening under that energy-only market that the government is returning us to. The reason that the conversations were being had to move to a capacity market was informed a great deal by the recommendations of the AESO, including some very in-depth, ongoing grid sustainability analyses that they started back in 2011. That's when they started to notice shifts in the willingness of investors to develop new generation in Alberta. Combined with the global shift towards markets with more stable revenues and the trend toward increased renewable generation as well as coal retirement schedules, all of this caused the AESO to conduct a very in-depth market assessment.

In 2016 they presented the government of Alberta with four market structure options and a recommendation to introduce a

capacity market for the added benefits of reliability as the electricity system evolved, encouraging competition in driving innovation, providing greater revenue certainty for suppliers, increasing price stability, and increasing investment confidence. That investment confidence is incredibly important because we're not talking just about investment in the electricity system. I believe that there is a real impact on business around the province when price spikes and price volatility can impact that business.

Now, the AESO is a really important player in our electricity system. We need to strongly consider their input because, of course, they're responsible for implementing changes to the electricity system. They're also responsible for ensuring sufficient investment in system reliability in whatever system is in place, so their perspective is critically important. They identified real issues with the energy market. Through the debate I have not heard of my satisfaction how confidence has been achieved that an energy-only market will provide adequate amounts as well as price stability within our province.

Now, we have heard that different industry players have a strong desire to move back to an energy-only market. I can certainly understand that that perspective is important and needs to be considered, but we also need to remember that industry also has a desire for market profits. Price volatility often improves profits. My colleague from Edmonton-Gold Bar spoke about different actions that had been taken to maximize those profits, and oftentimes that's done in a way that is not helpful to the consumers or to the businesses that need that electricity to run and to operate. So there are two competing drives: the market profit drive that industry has and then the consumers' desire to have lower electricity prices and to have that price stability.

When we're looking at and evaluating this, we need to make sure that we've got the modelling behind it and the certainty to know that there will be the investment necessary. In 2016, when the AESO was making its recommendations to government, it was incredibly clear. They created, in fact, an entire report with recommendations suggesting that in an energy-only market it would not be sustainable, that there were significant risks, that there would be inadequate supply, that there would be inadequate investment in the creation of additional electricity sources, that there wouldn't be a willingness and financial capacity of investors to build new generation in Alberta.

For these reasons I'm very concerned about what Bill 18 proposes to do in reversing that change to capacity market termination. I think that making sure we have an electricity market that ensures Albertans have safe, reliable, sustainable, affordable electricity not just when we're thinking about somebody's home but when we're thinking about the cement manufacturing that happens in our province or when we're thinking about chemical manufacturing that happens in our province or a number of other energy-intensive manufacturing that happens in our province, this is an important perspective that we need to take into account. The work that was done to move to a capacity market was done specifically to address concerns raised to us by the AESO.

I mentioned near the start of my comments my concern that the government is treating capacity market as if it was complex and energy only as simple. I strongly disagree with that characterization. The entire system is very complex, and we need to address that at face value when we're looking at these complicated issues. We know the history of the energy-only market in our province. We have the historical context. My colleague from St. Albert was reading about some of the impacts that previous price spikes and brownouts have had. There were regular price spikes happening between that period. I listed a few of them going as high as 15 cents. That causes uncertainty and that causes financial

hardship. This isn't an imaginary bogeyman that the opposition is raising. Price volatility is a direct concern, and making sure that government is addressing that for both citizens and business is incredibly important.

Now, in their original report, including the analysis that they did, the AESO also spoke about how they would need to modify the current energy-only market if it were to be maintained. The modifications that they recommended to encourage the investment, make sure that there was enough power to run the province and all of the industry, included doing things like raising the price cap, that was currently at \$1,000 per megawatt hour, up to \$5,000 per megawatt hour. To simplify that or to explain what that means, it just means that there's way more room for volatile price spikes. The spikes that we saw in the past could get even bigger.

I look forward to the debate at Committee of the Whole, where we will have a little bit more back and forth with the minister and we can talk about how these things will be managed. Resulting in even bigger spikes than we saw in that period from 2001 to 2014 is of serious concern to me, and if the energy-only market modification, changing the price cap, is the only strategy put forward, then we have a real issue, knowing that volatility and what can happen looking into other jurisdictions like Texas and where similar market forces have performed.

In my comments in response to Bill 18 I strongly wanted to talk about the impact on Albertans, both homeowners and businesses, the risk to those consumers. I understand that there are industry voices with a desire to maximize their market profits. Those need to be weighed and balanced with the needs of consumers and the stability of the overall market, and I'm strongly concerned about this decision given the varying depth, briefings, and work that we really dug into and did on this file. The decision being made to move to capacity market was based on the advice of experts about how to protect consumers and modernize the electricity market.

4:50

Other colleagues of mine have talked about that need to get to 30 per cent renewable energy and the capacity market's ability to help facilitate those goals, to make sure that we have low-cost, reliable energy sources from renewable industries. Other colleagues have spoken at length about the interest in Alberta citizens, particularly our youth, in making sure that we have those renewable energy projects and that that's part of our system makeup.

Allowing Albertans to pay more for less, to get back to that time of volatile price spikes is of concern to me because higher electricity bills, I think, will come from Bill 18, and I'm concerned about the consumers in the province given all the information and all of the analysis that went into the original move to a capacity market termination. Through this process of bill debate I have not seen sufficient analysis or information that would assure me or other consumers that that's not going to be the result because the best predictor for future behaviour is past behaviour. The energy market in the past has had volatile price spikes as high as 15 cents, and with the modifications to the energy-only market those price spikes could go even higher.

What we need in our province is that reliable, predictable, sustainable, safe, and effective electricity system, and in my mind Bill 18 and the debate that we've engaged in so far does not give me confidence that moving back to an energy-only market will provide that for our businesses and our households.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Are there any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to the referral amendment? Oh. My apologies. That's what happens when you come in halfway through.

Anybody else wanting to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, shall I call the question? Hon. Minister of Energy, would you like to close debate?

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. At this point I would just like to close debate.

[Motion carried; Bill 18 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 18 Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019

The Chair: Are there any members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to move an amendment, and I have the requisite number of copies.

The Chair: Just wait until I have a copy, hon. member.

This will be known as amendment A1. Hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, please proceed.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you. The amendment, I have to read that into the record, right?

The Chair: We'll make an exception this time, hon. member. I think it will be acceptable to not have to read it into the record.

Mr. Sabir: Okay. I will explain this amendment. In short, this will make it clear that the electricity market will have rules against economic withholding. That's the crux of this amendment. Economic withholding is . . .

The Chair: Sorry, hon. member, to interrupt you. I hesitate to interrupt. Just so everyone is aware, this amendment is two pages. As it is being distributed, please make sure that you have two.

Sorry, Member. Please proceed. Go ahead.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Chair. This amendment is to make clear that the electricity market will have some rules against economic withholding. Economic withholding is illegal in many jurisdictions. It leads to higher costs to consumers, and it is questionable if this is a fair practice. It was explicitly allowed in Alberta under the offer behaviour enforcement guidelines, which were revoked by the Market Surveillance Administrator, MSA, in 2017. Economic withholding was allowed to incentivize investment, but the MSA stated that due to the capacity market, it was no longer needed. This means that our reform eliminated the need for intentional price spikes, and it is unclear if economic withholding is coming back with the changes that this UCP government brought forward.

Based on the MSA ruling, Bill 18 might be a way to reintroduce it back into the Alberta electricity market. This bill leaves it open, so this may be a way to reintroduce it through the back door, and if the government doesn't take action against it, it shows that they are

just too happy to raise the cost of living of Albertans, just like their car insurance rates. Simply, this amendment is asking all members to think about whether they are in favour of economic withholding or not. It's that simple. If the government wants to continue with economic withholding and shift the burden to Albertans, they can certainly choose to vote it down, but we believe that economic withholding results in price spikes and affects consumers' bottom lines.

I will urge all my colleagues to vote in favour of this amendment, vote in favour of reasonable, fair, sustainable, and affordable electricity for all Albertans and your constituents.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment A1? The hon. Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, the intent of the amendment – we certainly want to ensure that electricity is affordable and that there aren't spikes, and that's exactly why, when we announced that we would be sticking with the energy-only market, we asked AESO to come back to us with some proposals on how to improve the energy-only market. These are the types of things that we believe and we think that they will come back to us with, but I think that it's premature to put this in this piece of legislation because we know that we're going to get a suite of proposals coming back from AESO on how to improve the energy-only market. In that case, we would be proposing that we not agree with this amendment. We certainly do not have a problem with the spirit of it and certainly do not have a problem with something that supports the fair and efficient and openly competitive operation of the electricity market, and these are exactly the things that we've asked the AESO to come back to us with and tell us where we can find some improvements.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Always a pleasure to get up in the House and speak and specifically to this amendment. Of course, in representing the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie, I've had a number of opportunities to speak with constituents, from even before being elected to office, that were concerned about this particular issue in terms of price spikes, in terms of electricity and how difficult it was for a lot of families trying to make ends meet from month to month. In terms of costs when it comes to not just their electricity bill – but we're speaking specifically about that right now – it was mentioned by several constituents.

5:00

This is something that we really need to be concerned about because, of course, what the capacity market was intending to do was to really be able to address this issue for many Albertans, who were having issues making ends meet from month to month. The capacity market was a structure that would ensure reliability as the electrical system evolves. It also increases the stability of prices, as has been mentioned by several of my colleagues here. So we as the NDP government changed the way that Alberta pays for their energy providers so that it's more stable and fair to the average consumer. That decision was based on advice from experts, of course, on how to protect consumers and modernize our electricity system.

Here we find ourselves yet again, where we have this new government that wants to take us backwards rather than

modernizing our province and really being able to address issues and concerns of Albertans that, quite frankly, are having to make ends meet month to month. The UCP wants to reverse this change, letting foreign markets decide the price of energy on any given day, and Albertans will have to pay more for less, of course. Less stability, less predictability, and higher electricity bills are what this bill will cause if it's passed. These reckless and short-sighted changes will cause uncertainty and instability, and Albertans are going to have to pay the price for that. Our electricity market would have ensured Albertans have safe, reliable, sustainable, affordable electricity. This move by the UCP could cost Albertans about 10 times more on their electricity bills and take us back to the time of rolling blackouts, as has been mentioned by a few of my colleagues already.

As I stated before, the government is turning back the clock and is destroying progress on economic diversification, and this is just more of the same. It's, you know, a big \$4.5 billion giveaway to big corporations while Albertans are having to pay the price yet again.

One of the reasons for the changes to the capacity market was to enable a transition to an electricity market that could meet goals set, of course, in the climate leadership plan such as the transition off coal and increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix. At the beginning of October the AESO revised its forecast for Alberta renewables, stating that Alberta is now expected to fall short of its renewable targets and that the changes in the electricity market are an important factor. The AESO began its work on evaluating the sustainability of the electricity market in 2013, and the AESO recommended implementing a capacity market independent of the climate leadership plan and early coal phase-out to ensure long-term reliability, again, for the specific needs of Albertans.

As a government we worked with the Alberta Electric System Operator, who showed us that the capacity market is the best choice to deliver reliable energy, good environmental performance, reasonable cost to electricity customers, economic development, and the lowest transition risk. Of course, it was them that recommended the move towards the capacity market. Before our reforms the market had less consumer protection such as economic withholdings. The capacity market is a good tool to ensure that the coal phase-out will work smoothly. The coal phase-out already saved three times Vancouver's emissions, for example.

Energy-only markets are more volatile and they're less reliable than capacity markets, and of course this is what this is really about. As we turn back the clock towards a less reliable system, it's Albertans that are going to have to pay the price on this, and many of those are constituents of ours, people that we're supposed to be here to represent. It's really unfathomable that we have people from across the aisle who are here representing all Albertans – we understand that it's important that everybody's views are represented here, but we need to make sure that all views are represented. It's for this reason that I will be supporting this amendment, and I strongly encourage all members of the House to do so.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I'm really happy to see this amendment on the floor here this afternoon. One of my biggest concerns when there are changes being proposed to the energy market is that it creates a window of instability – right? – a window of transition that can result in an insecure electricity supply and potential insecurity around the determination of reliability of pricing. Both of these are essential consumer

concerns, for individuals and for industry. I'm glad to see that these changes, as brought forward by the Member for Calgary-McCall, seem to address this issue.

You know, the AESO is very essential in making sure that we discourage scarcity pricing in the electric markets during tight supply conditions, and we need to make sure that that is enshrined and protected by law. We don't worry so much about the electricity when we flip the switch and there it is, but when you have a scarcity of supply due to a major generation system maybe being taken off for maintenance or whatever or you have some loss during some storms maybe or something like that, I mean, that's the time when you have to have fail-safe measures in place to protect the individual consumer and the industrial consumers as well.

I don't applaud just the spirit of this amendment to Bill 18 but its substance as well. I am completely behind this idea of strengthening Bill 18 to ensure that Albertans are protected, that our electricity supply is protected. This is an essential service that cannot be compromised at any juncture.

I certainly support this amendment, and I encourage others to do so. I will hand it over to someone who might be able to offer some more insight in that regard.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am pleased to rise and to speak to this amendment today. I think it's an incredibly important amendment. Obviously I, like my colleagues, am not generally in favour of this bill. I think the reasons I'm not in favour of the bill and the reason I am in favour of the amendment tend to tie together in this instance.

The concern, obviously, with the bill is instability. I think we've seen evidence in the past that this sort of energy-only market creates price instability. The evidence we had at the time we were making the decisions and the evidence that was put before us by the officials in this instance, who were incredibly good, who did an amazing job of providing summary and information on this, was that that instability would increase as time went on. That's a big concern.

5:10

It's one thing if you're a very large corporation that understands how these things work and can model it and can shut down your production to ensure that you're not hitting the peak rate. But if you're an average consumer, you don't know that. What that creates is a situation of unfairness, where people who are average consumers, who can't be expected to be watching this sort of thing, are the ones who are ultimately bearing the cost of the system. I think that's what bothers me about this bill. Ultimately, this is a decision about who will bear what cost in the system. I mean, really, every economic decision is basically about that, about how we're distributing costs and who will bear which cost. In this case what we're deciding is that consumers and average Albertans are going to bear the cost in terms of this massive, radical sort of price instability that we're likely to see, and I think that that's a huge issue.

One of the reasons that I ran for office originally was my concern about income inequality. We hear a lot about this. It's increasing. It's harder and harder for those sort of middle class and below to be able to get by. One of the things that's challenging about that is budgeting – right? – doing your household budget. I think that this sort of price instability makes it very, very challenging for people who are really doing their best in trying circumstances to keep their head above water, to put food on the table, to put a roof over their

head, and to provide for their children. I think that that's unfair, and that's my sort of general objection.

What's important about this amendment is that it prevents what they call economic withholding, basically the ability of a company to withhold power generation at a critical moment to drive the price of power up in order to maximize profits. I mean, that's a huge concern. Again, it's large corporations with wealthy shareholders profiting while everyday Albertans pay the price. Obviously, that's not something that I am in support of.

I think it's worth sort of backing up and looking at what this bill is doing overall. They have for many years, and I suspect still do, you know, sort of taught in the first-year economics course – when you go there, they talk about natural monopolies. The example that tends to be given is power system infrastructure because the upfront cost to invest is so high that you don't generally get lots of participants in the market. That's actually the case here in Alberta as well. What that means is that when we originally changed to this market many moons ago, they had to sort of create what I would call the illusion of competition. It isn't actual competition. We have all the sort of, like, retailers, if you will, the Enmaxes and the EPCORs of the world, but actually they're not generating their own power to sell. They're not competing in that sort of way. They're purchasing that power, and then they appear to be competing even though they're really all competing with identical products with slightly different marketing.

Because of that extra layer, what is created is that there's a contract to sell to those retailers, and that contract has automatic interest of 8 per cent. You and I can't buy into that contract. We can't go out into the market and purchase that 8 per cent because we have to have a huge amount of capital to be able to buy into that. That's a pretty big concern for me, when you're creating a situation where those who have an enormous amount of capital, who were born with money, have the ability to go and invest that money and get an 8 per cent return because they are large investors or large funds. They're able to do that whereas small people don't have the access necessarily to the same opportunities. That's – I don't know – I guess one of the things about the world that has always sort of bothered me, right? Again, this is what we're talking about here.

This economic withholding, that we're trying to prevent: this is, in my view, incredibly bad behaviour. If we don't rule out bad behaviour, the obligation that falls on these companies is to maximize the profits of their shareholders. It doesn't say to maximize profits of their shareholders ethically. It doesn't say to maximize profits of their shareholders having regard to what the average person would think is fair. It's just to maximize profits. So the concern becomes that they can use this, essentially, to do exactly that, to drive a price spike intentionally to make you and me and everyday Albertans pay those costs, and then the companies get huge profits.

This amendment will remedy that. Obviously, it isn't a remedy to everything. My preference would be simply to move to the capacity market. There is a reason that the vast majority of jurisdictions in the world have gone in this direction, and that reason is that it works more efficiently. Now, that isn't to say that there aren't differences from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Geography will actually have an impact on this. But, interestingly, geography is one of the factors that drives the decision towards a capacity market in Alberta. Our geography, especially in the northern parts of the province, where you have a small population spread out over a large area, is one of the things that drives this.

I think it's probably been said by many of my colleagues that Texas is the only jurisdiction that does it this way in North America, and with due respect to Texas I don't think they're necessarily right although they may have different geographic and population

considerations than we do. All I can say with certainty is that the advice that we received from the experts in Alberta was that the capacity market was the way to go.

This bill will essentially mean that Albertans pay more. It will mean that there is less stability and less predictability, and it will mean higher electricity bills. I think it's a bit reckless, because even beyond the higher electricity bills, that uncertainty is very challenging for people who are living on a specific budget or on a very fixed income to deal with. I think, you know, of seniors, who have a certain fixed income. Students who are in university often have, like, a certain number of hours that they are able to work, and they have a lot of costs, and it can be super, super challenging if your power bill shows up with an extra hundred dollars on it that month. That's a real problem for some people, and I think this government should consider the fact that that's a real problem for those people and take that problem seriously because it's our duty to do that.

This amendment, while it won't fix that entire problem, will fix at least some of it. It will at least prevent deliberate bad acting. It won't do away with the volatility and, from what our advice was, what would be increased volatility over time. It won't completely prevent people from having sort of price shock on their bill, you know, one month or for a couple of months, but what it will do is at least prevent deliberate bad acting from causing a spike in the price or aggravating a spike in the price to essentially be able to move money from average Albertans to the wealthy. One wonders if perhaps that was the intention of this bill.

I think, yes, this is a complicated system, and, yes, it's very difficult to explain to people. I remember this. When they initially made this change, I was a younger person, and at the time my father, actually, had an enormous amount to say about this because he was very, very troubled by this move, I think for some of the reasons I've stated, that this tends to be unstable and because, I suspect, if you look at it in depth, it isn't really competition. It's only the illusion of competition. It's competition at the retail end, but if you're taking the vast majority out of the business, out of the competition stream, I mean, is it even competition anymore? I'm not sure.

5:20

I think that, overall, this bill is a huge concern. My preference, obviously, would be not to move forward with it at all. But I think that it is our job as opposition not simply to oppose what comes forward but to propose ways to make that better. Even though this doesn't solve all of the problems that this bill is creating, it will solve at least one problem, and that, at the end of the day, will help at least some Albertans out there who will have challenges paying their bills as a result of this piece of legislation. I think that if we can help those Albertans even a little, we ought to do it. I don't think there's any reason not to.

This, again, very clearly prohibits nothing but bad acting. You know, when the members of the UCP talk endlessly about markets and the wonderfulness, I don't think that what any of them are talking about is bad actors. I believe genuinely that when the members opposite talk about the market, I don't think they're talking about bad actors. I think it's my view that I would imagine that everyone in this House will be supportive of something which doesn't prevent what the aim of the bill is but simply prevents bad actors from, essentially, intentionally abusing that market to drive up the spot price and to gain profits at the cost of Albertans.

So, with that, I will say that I am definitely in support of this amendment. I would urge all members to vote in favour of this amendment, and I would urge members of the government to seriously consider what it is this amendment is doing, because I actually think that it's something that we can all agree on.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to rise and support the amendment as proposed by the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall. I mean, this is an important conversation to be having when we speak specifically to this bill. I recognize that the minister did say, you know, that in the legislation it speaks to the fact that AESO has been asked to write a recommendation and that they have till November 29 to do that, to recommend what the capacity market would look like, what we would do moving forward. Maybe economic withholding will be part of that recommendation. We know that in other jurisdictions across the country economic withholding is prohibited.

Alberta is one of the few jurisdictions that doesn't do that. I think this is a way that we protect Albertans from being impacted by the volatility of the market and not having to pay when, as my hon. colleague said, there may be or may not be bad actors within the industry. Economic withholding, as we know, allows to incentivize some industries and some people within the industry to look at having a way to drive the market up. But what it also does is that when we look at our smaller producers, so our green energy producers – our solar, our wind – the ones that aren't able to produce the same capacity into the market as some of our bigger generators, it actually pushes them out of the market. The struggle with that is that there becomes a question around the ability to invest from small producers into the market to diversify and look at green energy.

Now, the reason I brought up the comment by the hon. minister was that when it comes to the recommendations – and I'm very confident that she is aware of this – on January 26, 2018, a report did come out about the Alberta capacity market and the comprehensive market design. It was drafted by AESO. It is public, online. You can read it. You can see what the different options are when it comes to looking at how capacity markets versus the current system would work, why this recommendation was made. In fact, the report speaks to the transition to the end of 2019 and how, in looking at this report and these recommendations, we would be able to do this with limited impact on the industry, minimizing the regulatory requirements, and about the fact that many of the industry partners that have been working with AESO were able to actually speak to the fact that they had been working towards this transition already.

They were prepared for 2019, which is right now. Because they are preparing and because they recognized what the price model was going to look like, they recognized the fact that there were conversations and commitments around the contact impact tests, all of the energy market monitoring and the mitigation requirements that would be required under the new system, and dispatching scheduling summaries. All of the questions that the industry was asking were written in a report to the minister.

I guess my question and what I don't understand – and I do appreciate this amendment – is when the minister stands and speaks to the amendment and says: well, we're waiting for the report. The report is done. It was done on January 26, 2018. It's not that old; it's a year and a bit. All the questions that we're talking about here have been answered, I think, in the report. So my question to the minister would be: what's missing that doesn't answer the question around why we would move to a capacity market? Why wouldn't we take the recommendations that already exist within this report that speak to the fact that economic withholding would actually be addressed within this? It wouldn't be allowed to continue. There is a comprehensive market design created to support the industry.

Why is the government now saying, “Well, we want a report for November 29, 2019, so that we can make a decision”? It’s been done.

My question, again, goes back to: who is this really designed for? Is this about protecting Albertans and making sure that they have a regulated, consistent energy and electrical market where they know what their bills are going to be every month, or is this about looking at giving another opportunity to big corporations on the backs of Albertans? That’s what it looks like, because the argument from the government right now that we need a report to tell us what to do when it already exists from a year ago doesn’t make any sense, except for the fact that it doesn’t actually say what the minister wants it to say, which is: let’s give money to big corporations while Albertans pay for it. That is what’s going to happen.

In saying that, I think that the consideration needs to be made and the honesty needs to happen around the direction that we’re trying to go when looking at not moving towards this capacity market given the fact that the industry is ready. It says right in this report that they transitioned. They knew it was coming. They had the map. They had the plan of what they needed to do for the market. They were prepared to go, and now all of a sudden we’re going backwards, and we’re telling the industry that we’re going backwards. I would be more than happy to table this report tomorrow for all members to be able to review it and to respect the fact that I’ve now referenced it.

I would encourage all members: when you’re standing here representing your constituents and talking about the fact that you want to make life more affordable for Albertans and that you don’t want them to have to pay any more than they’re already paying, when you’ve already increased their insurance costs and now you’re looking at removing the electricity market so that they’re going to have volatile bills every month to pay for their heating and for all the other things, you’re not really making life more affordable. So stand up for your constituents. Make sure that the economic withholding amendment is passed. Then at least your constituents will know that they have a consistent energy bill every single month because they won’t have to deal with the volatility of the market.

Thank you.

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Mrs. Savage: I move that we rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

5:30

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 18. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? Please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. Carried.

Government Motions

Interprovincial Infrastructure Projects

34. **Mrs. Savage** moved on behalf of Mr. Jason Nixon: Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly denounce all federal political parties that would enable a provincial government to unilaterally prevent the construction of interprovincial infrastructure projects of national importance, including natural resource pipelines.

Ms Hoffman moved on behalf of Mr. Bilous that the motion be amended by adding “and that would roll back progress on efforts to reach Canada’s current greenhouse gas emissions targets, including the abysmal federal TIER plan” after the words “prevent the construction of interprovincial infrastructure projects of national importance, including natural resource pipelines.”

[Adjourned debate on the amendment October 22: Mr. Kenney]

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

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: We are back on the motion. Are there members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Thank you. I rise to move an amendment on behalf of my hon. colleague Heather Sweet. I will – oh. Sorry. On behalf of my colleague the MLA for Edmonton-Manning. I will let you distribute that.

The Deputy Speaker: Give it a moment, hon. member. It may be a good time to point out how hard it is to remember riding names every now and then, like myself.

This will be known as amendment A2. Hon. member, please proceed.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. What this amendment is attempting to do is to change the motion just a little, because I think that our leader and many of us have been very, very clear about our disagreements in certain areas with the federal party. I could go on at length with respect to my own personal disagreement. I think the position of opposing pipelines is generally incorrect, obviously, and I think it’s not well thought out for a number of reasons. So we disagree with that policy; we disagree quite strongly. We disagree with a lot of policies.

We also disagree with parties who refuse to take seriously approaches to tackling climate change. I think that that’s pretty important. I think it’s important to note that those two goals are not mutually exclusive, and as long as we see them as mutually exclusive, we’re going to continue to have this hyperpolarization, where people just sort of stomp their feet in an attempt to convince one another. Madam Speaker, I think this is a Legislature full of people with varied experiences, but all of us have been in rooms with someone we’re disagreeing with, that we have to negotiate with. I think that anyone who’s been involved in law, anyone who’s been involved in business, anyone who’s been involved in most anything can tell you that stomping your feet and shouting almost never results in progress, and it’s not really how most grown-ups behave, and it ought not to be, either.

I think that we are able to say that those things can work together. I think that we are able to say: “Yes. You can take climate change seriously. You can believe that it is human-caused. You can believe that we ought to do something about it, and that doesn’t mean that

you have to be against all oil and gas development.” I think that those two things, economic development and the environment, can absolutely go hand in hand. In fact, I think I could cite a number of examples where investments that were made by the NDP when we were in government had huge effects, positive effects on economic development and positive effects on the environment. I think that making that a dichotomy choice is wrong-headed. It leads to divisiveness, and I just don’t think it’s appropriate. We disagree with those things.

We also disagree with parties who tolerate divisive, antichoice, homophobic, or xenophobic views in their parties. I think that that’s a totally legitimate position to take as well.

I think that what this motion should not be about is mudslinging at federal parties and mudslinging at individuals. I think it should be about standing up for Albertans, and I think that you can do one thing without doing the other. I think, Madam Speaker, that it is absolutely and completely possible to stand up for yourself, to stand up for your neighbours, to stand up for your province, and to do that without the name-calling or being petty or slinging mud. I think it’s possible to do it without misrepresenting deliberately the policies of other individuals.

I think we should absolutely continue to fight to secure market access for our energy. There’s very little, I think, that is more important to Albertans. I think that we absolutely can and should do that, but I think that we now find ourselves in a position where we know what the outcome of the election was, and a minority government brings us the possibility of co-operation, which can advance the interests of Albertans. At the end of the day, I think that should be our goal. If our goal is to advance the interests of Albertans – and I think we all agree in this room that that goal is significantly furthered by increased market access – then I think we should consider: what is the most reasonable way to achieve that goal? Then we should execute on that basis. We shouldn’t act on the basis of rage or fear or pettiness.

We should act on the basis that we are serious people here in this room who care about our province, who care about market access, who care about the environment, and who want to take reasonable steps to move forward, so we are going to do our best to achieve our goals. We’re not going to stand and scream because that doesn’t achieve our goals. Instead, we’re going to talk about policies and why they are right or why they are wrong because we don’t need to stand and scream, Madam Speaker. We’re right. I think that’s a significant advantage. The members on this side want Albertans to be heard and supported by the federal government, and I genuinely believe that the members on that side also want Albertans to be heard and supported by the federal government.

Again, I think this is about: what can we do to make progress? We believe that there is room for progress on a national pharmacare program, a national dental care program, and, at long last, real progress on establishing a national child care program. I think all of those things are fantastic goals. I think they’re incredibly important to Albertans. They’re important to me, and I think they’re important to a lot of people.

We urge the provincial government to accept this amendment. If the amendment fails, I think it’s worth getting one more thing on the record. If this amendment fails, I believe that the motion which is left isn’t about fighting for Albertans. I think that what it is is another disappointing attempt by this government to try to play partisan games ahead of focusing on what Albertans elected them to do, and what Albertans elected them to do is create jobs. I mean, every time this current Premier stood up, that’s what he said: jobs, economy, pipeline. I think that that is what people voted for. I think that we should focus on that and we should set about achieving those goals. I think that we’re all agreed on those goals. To play

these sorts of games when instead we could be trying to move forward in the interests of all Albertans, I think, is inappropriate and beneath the dignity of this place.

5:40

I think, at the end of the day, what we need is a government that cares about Alberta jobs and families, and I think that many of the members around me in this room on both sides do care deeply about that. I urge them to very strongly consider this amendment because, at the end of the day, what the amendment is doing is altering the motion to talk about policies instead of people. I think it’s incredibly important to speak about policies instead of people because, again, we all have the same objectives. We want to further the interests of Albertans. We have the same objectives. We want market access for our products because that furthers the interests of Albertans. At the end of the day, it is absolutely and completely possible to do that in a way that doesn’t involve mudslinging. It is absolutely and completely possible to take that as our common goal and to all move forward together and to achieve that by the most likely means, which, like I’ve said – I think anyone who’s been involved in the business world probably knows – isn’t screaming and stomping your feet.

I urge members to seriously consider accepting this amendment, to seriously consider that we should be talking about policies and not people and that we should do our best to move forward for the people of Alberta. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to this amendment? The hon. Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. This amendment does not adequately reflect what happened in the federal election. In the recent federal election we had three – at least three – federal parties who ran a platform on anti oil and gas, antipipeline, and anti-Alberta. We had three federal parties who failed to understand that Alberta has the exclusive constitutional right to manage and develop our natural resources, including oil and gas and electricity. Clearly, they don’t understand the Constitution. Likewise, those same three federal parties don’t understand the Constitution and that it is a federal constitutional right to manage the interprovincial pipelines and projects of major national importance, and they’re prepared to give a veto to provinces.

Madam Speaker, this is what the resolution is about. This is about standing up for Alberta’s oil and gas industry and telling the federal parties to respect the Constitution. It’s not about single policies and saying we disagree with policies of some of those parties. It’s much beyond that. It’s a failure to understand the Constitution. Diluting this motion to say that we disagree with policies just doesn’t cut it because those parties ran on a platform that was unconstitutional, clearly did not understand the Constitution, was anti oil and gas, antipipeline, anti-Alberta.

We can’t support the amendment to this motion. It dilutes the whole, entire purpose of what we’re trying to achieve: to tell the federal government, the federal political parties to respect the Constitution. It dilutes it too much. I’m opposed to this amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to this amendment? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words in regard to the amendment that was brought forward on behalf of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning. Yeah. I mean, I think that it’s an important differentiation, to talk about policy, because, of course, the policies of any given political party or movement or so forth are diverse in their totality

and have different meanings or different effects in different places. Certainly, we have been unequivocal in regard to the opposition of the federal New Democrats and their position on the TMX pipeline. You know, it's been a very difficult circumstance, and we have not wavered in regard to our opposition to this position.

We know as well, with the benefit of the outcome of this election that we saw in the last 24 hours, that now it is a minority government with a much-weakened governing party, the Liberals, and, I think, lots of opportunity, I believe, to – although, you know, it's unfortunate that there's no representation from either our province or Saskatchewan in that Liberal caucus. I think that they have a lot of motivation to make sure that they stand up for the best interests of both Alberta and Saskatchewan. Quite frankly, part of the engine of what has made Canada successful over this last 10 or 15 years is the success of the economy here on the prairies.

You know, we should look at this, and we certainly must redouble our resolve to ensure that Alberta's interests are reflected in the national interests. We must redouble our resolve to ensure that we have access to export markets through pipelines for our energy industry.

But I think as well that we must redouble our resolve to work through constructive ways by which we can achieve those goals because, you know, whenever we start to see polarization, either between provinces or between the provincial and federal levels of governance here in this country, more often than not that bears no productive result or the bitter fruits of division, that have a tendency to linger in people's minds, not in a rational way but an emotive. I believe that it's important always to keep the door open and to clearly express the logic and the passion by which we all, I believe, in this House will fight and continue to fight for our interests and our energy industry, access to markets and so forth, but to be able to differentiate between those policies and categorically building these divisions that can sometimes reach over and have unintended consequences, to the detriment of both our interests here in the province and the building of this nation of Canada.

I strongly believe in our place in Confederation. I strongly believe that Alberta's star is still on the rise, and for us to, you know, otherwise just look at the national situation and the circumstances of individual provinces as being different from our own and being opposed to our own – I think we have to be realistic, but at the same time we must stand to build bridges and to build a strengthened economy and a sense of understanding between the provinces and between Alberta and Canada.

With that, I certainly do support this amendment, and I encourage all members of this House to consider that as well. Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other speakers to the amendment on the motion? The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was obviously very intently listening to the Member for Edmonton-North West and as well the Member for Calgary-Mountain View before that. You know, they talked a lot about how this motion needs to be amended to account for co-operation and advance of Alberta's interests. Well, it would be news to me that Alberta's interests would include chanting, and I quote: no new approvals, no new approvals, no new approvals. It seems a little bit of a strange take on what the interests of Albertans really are, but I digress.

We have here a former Education minister, who politicized Alberta's curriculum. It's kind of interesting to think what exactly he might have put in there, but I think that "no new approvals, no new approvals, no new approvals" might be an indicator of, you know, what some parents might be concerned about.

I was also privy to a video that came onto a Facebook page just a few minutes ago, and in that video it showed multiple members of the NDP caucus supporting the Extinction Rebellion. Now, for the record, what is the Extinction Rebellion? Well, the Extinction Rebellion is the radical group that protested outside of the Legislature, and they had some really interesting things to say, including discounting fossil fuels and talking about how horrible our energy industry is, and then – my personal favourite, which was just ignorant, in my opinion, Madam Speaker – it was talking about the extinction of beef as well. I'm a proud Albertan, and I'm a proud Canadian, but there are very few things that I'm more proud of than our beef and our oil industry.

5:50

Then we also hear about them talking about us doing what we were elected to do. Well, the last time I checked – and it was drilled into my head as well. I believe it was one of our candidates in the election, her daughter. She said so eloquently: "What are our priorities? Jobs, the economy, and pipelines." Those priorities are very clearly articulated in Alberta's interest.

Jobs. We implemented a job-creation tax cut, that will see more jobs created. We see that with Telus's investments. We see that with investor confidence coming back to Alberta. As well, jobs: how do we stand up for Albertan jobs? By getting Alberta's resources to tidewater, Madam Speaker. We need to absolutely do that because people like my dad rely on those jobs, and what's happening right now is that you see Alberta's workers: they're uneasy, they're scared, they don't know what's going to happen next because of Justin Trudeau and his policies, his proclivity for radical groups and, let's just say, interesting behaviour outside of the House of Commons.

Now, our economy. As we know, our economy is – we need a strong Alberta to have a strong Canada. I heard that, you know, a minority government is a really good thing, according to the members opposite, for things like progress on pharmacare. Well, I think I would ask the members opposite: how do you plan to pay for that?

I would ask Jagmeet Singh the same thing, and he'd probably say: from the abundance of wealth that our country creates. Now, the next question I'd have for him, if that was, in fact, his response – I'm not even sure he'd know how to respond to that, but he would say probably something along those lines, and then I would say to him: "Well, you're probably going to need Alberta's help with that because you're going to need money from our oil and gas sector. You're going to need money from our resource sector and the hard-working men and women that contribute to Canada's equalization as well as the fiscal capacity of other provinces." When we're talking about that, it really doesn't make sense to me. I'm just trying to – you know, one plus one equals two, Madam Speaker. When it comes to these kinds of things, pipelines plus tidewater equals market access.

I'm just confused at how that side of the House can't seem to see that, and instead of actually voting in favour of our economy and voting in the best of Albertans' interests – and when they want to talk about being multipartisan: well, then show us that. Why didn't you vote for the Conservatives in the federal election? That was your opportunity to be multipartisan, and you didn't do that. I know, for me – like, I don't get up here and stand on some, you know, sanctimonious perch about co-operation, but I know for a fact that what we can do is that we can co-operate with all leaders in the federation, but what we can't do is to stand here and pretend to be acting in the best interests of Albertans when we're voting for an antipipeline leader.

On the topic of pipelines, you know, I've said many times that I'm very proud of my dad. He's one of the, I think, smartest guys I know. He often refers to himself as Joe Voter. He's saying that he's just an average Joe. He's just a guy. When he came to the Legislature, one of his first comments was just: how grand it is. He said: I never thought I'd be here, and I definitely never thought my daughter would be here sitting in this chair. He's very proud of Alberta. He's proud of the resources that we create because he's one of the guys who literally builds those pipelines. I'm proud of him. I don't need my dad to be in the ivory towers of Zurich. I don't need him to be some big fancy guy. I'm happy with him just the way he is. The way that he is is that he's a man of integrity who works extremely hard to put food on the table for his family and has for years, and so do my uncles, so do my cousins. People all around me are constantly working to make sure that Alberta is a better place and our country is a better place because they believe in Alberta.

I think it's really important here that we just take into consideration how important this motion is in standing up for our country and standing up for our province. But, you know, this amendment, Madam Speaker, doesn't do that at all. In fact, it stands in direct defiance of what we're trying to do here. We need to make sure that we are standing up for Alberta. This motion does that, but this amendment: all it does is that it puts us one step behind for getting this passed and showing Albertans how much we care about our energy industry.

With that, Madam Speaker, I'll resign my time.

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

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the amendment?

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak on Motion 34?

Seeing none, shall we call the question?

Would the hon. minister like to close debate on behalf of the Government House Leader?

Mrs. Savage: I would simply say that we support this motion. It's about supporting our oil and gas sector. It's about standing up for our Constitution. It's about asking and imploring the federal government to respect our constitutional right to develop our

resources and to act on and actually fulfill their constitutional obligation to get our resources to market. It's a very simple motion, it's a very timely motion, and I would just encourage everyone to vote for it.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 34 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:56 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Long	Rutherford
Amery	Lovely	Savage
Barnes	Luan	Sawhney
Ellis	Nally	Schow
Getson	Neudorf	Schulz
Glasgo	Orr	Sigurdson, R.J.
Hanson	Panda	Singh
Horner	Rehn	Stephan
Issik	Rosin	Wilson
Jones	Rowswell	Yao
Kenney		

Against the motion:

Ceci	Gray	Sabir
Eggen	Loyola	Sigurdson, L.
Ganley	Renaud	Sweet

Totals:	For – 31	Against – 9
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[Government Motion 34 carried]

6:00

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

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We have no evening sitting this evening. I think we had some excellent progress throughout this afternoon, and I would like to adjourn the House until 1:30 tomorrow.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 6:01 p.m.]

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