



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, October 29, 2019

Day 35

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

First Session

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New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 29, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. members, joining us today in the Speaker's gallery are guests of the hon. Minister of Health: Manitoba's Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living, the Hon. Cameron Friesen; accompanied today by Tara Jago; and Nathan Clark. Welcome to our fair province.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: This afternoon in the galleries we have two school groups. Joining us today from Morinville-St. Albert, guests of the Associate Minister of Natural Gas, are students in grades 6 and 9 from the Legal school. Also with us today from Edmonton-Mill Woods are grade 9 students from the Millwoods Christian school. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: Welcome to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Arts and Culture Industries

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to stand up for the arts and culture community. In my role as the culture critic I've had the opportunity to reach out to stakeholders across the province in varying industries. Their stories are incredible. In those meetings I heard concerns and fears about the potential cuts affecting the culture ministry from this UCP government. After last week's budget address my office has been inundated with questions, concerns, and fears regarding the now imminent cuts to the ministry of culture.

Despite these doom-and-gloom days I want to highlight the incredible work being done across this province. In our communities many families and individuals are embracing and learning about culture, heritage, and diversity in many different venues and mediums. So many in the industry are on the front line of providing safe spaces for Albertans and visitors to learn about the arts, culture, and our history. The work is so important and so impactful. Working to tell the stories of Alberta involves time, research, and a human touch to make it relevant to today's audiences. I want everyone in the arts and culture community to know that their work is positively impacting Albertans, specifically the next generation. Hearing how our little ones are learning about art and culture and having a safe place to ask these questions is incredible.

In closing, I want to extend an invitation to everyone in the arts and culture community that I am here as your advocate for culture. My door is always open, and I will stand with you to fight to preserve and empower the arts and culture community here in Alberta.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park has the call.

Budget 2019

Mr. Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week Albertans were presented with something novel, a reasonable and credible plan to balance Alberta's budget. It's refreshing to see our government take fiscal responsibility seriously and present a realistic plan to get our fiscal house in order.

Years of fiscal mismanagement have led us to a serious financial situation. The mountain of government debt accumulated in the last few years means that we now spend almost \$2 billion annually on our debts. The signs were there, Mr. Speaker: deficit after deficit, credit downgrade after credit downgrade, tax hikes that collected fewer taxes. Nothing went according to the so-called plan. Investors were scared away and jobs disappeared, making life worse for Albertans. The old, tired, tax-and-spend ways of the past just don't work anymore. We needed a more realistic approach to budgeting.

Budget 2019 is a budget we can all be proud of. It lives within our means while caring for those who need our support. It reflects the true desire of this government to stand up for Alberta. It uses investment in the true sense of the word, targeting realistic opportunities with a measurable return on investment. We will have better and smarter public services that deliver for Albertans after years of overspending, with mixed results in return.

The budget tabled last week is a reasonable, measured approach, Mr. Speaker. It protects our cherished health care and education systems. Essential social services are also supported. While my opponents across the way make over-the-top claims about the budget, I've heard from many of my constituents, saying how reasonable it is. What government can't afford 3 cents on the dollar?

Mr. Speaker, unlike others, this government is up to the challenge.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat would like to make a statement.

Education and Health Care Funding

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following the introduction of our first budget the Twitter trolls rapidly spread misinformation in an effort to create divisiveness in our province. I am not at all surprised that they have been echoed by the members opposite. It is true that this budget is not anything like that of the former NDP government. We actually understand the importance of living within our means while simultaneously improving results.

Now, the Twitter trolls and the NDP would have you thinking that we have removed funding from the public school system to support religious schools. That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. The former NDP government spent \$396 million to support students in private, private ECS, charter, home-schooling, and alternative education. Our government has maintained that level of funding and has boosted it by investing another \$4 million in order to support enrolment growth while holding public school funding steady. Our campaign platform promised Albertans that we would not cut public or private education, and this budget commits to just that. Let me be clear. Our government did not increase spending for private schools by \$400 million. We increased the amount spent by \$4 million to support enrolment growth.

But it doesn't end there, Mr. Speaker. The NDP and Twitter trolls would also have you believe that we cut health care. The fact of the matter is that investments in public health care went up by \$200 million. But we also promised Albertans that we would find efficiencies in how we deliver our public health care services while improving outcomes. Any reductions in certain departments were because of efficiencies, and that money has been reallocated to focus on patients, not managers that manage managers. We promised to maintain or increase spending in health care, and that is exactly what we are doing. We promised to find efficiencies in how we deliver health care so that we can better serve Albertans, and this budget reflects that.

The Speaker: I recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Agriculture and Forestry Funding

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As critic for Agriculture and Forestry I was very disappointed to see the budget on Thursday and learn what the government was planning for our agriculture and forestry industry. But from the Unending Cuts and Pain Party this is what we have come to expect: unending cuts and unending pain; all pain, no economic gain; a 9.1 per cent cut in one year and 15 per cent over four years for one of our biggest industries. That is a big hit and totally unnecessary. Agriculture and Forestry, like every other ministry, is being pillaged to finance the UCP government's \$4.7 billion corporate tax giveaway.

We have seen austerity economics fail repeatedly. A recent example was Saskatchewan, which decided to cut while Alberta decided to invest. The result was clear. In 2017 Saskatchewan grew only half as fast as Alberta.

Something that concerns me a lot is the cut to scientists in Agriculture and Forestry and the lack of commitment to take action on climate change. The budget cuts the government's ability to produce its own research on important issues to our agricultural industries. This opposition to science we see throughout the budget and is very concerning. Science should not be the victim of the government's \$4.7 billion tax giveaway to profitable corporations. Then, again, we should not be surprised. It is what we have seen from the Harper Conservatives, who strategically muzzled scientists, causing all of Canada to fall behind on important research fronts. Unlimited cuts and pain once again, Mr. Speaker.

1:40

This decision will have negative impacts on our agricultural communities and producers in the years to come. I hope that the government reverses course and supports science, but unfortunately, from what we have seen from this government, they will likely just keep their ears plugged to concerned Albertans and continue to downgrade the role of science in their decision-making processes. A sad period in Alberta's history indeed: unlimited cuts and pain, no economic gain.

Mother Earth's Children's Charter School

Ms Issik: Mr. Speaker, in late June I visited the Mother Earth's Children's Charter School, which opened its doors in 2003 and serves the children of the Paul First Nation and other communities. As Canada's only indigenous charter school it has a unique cultural approach to teaching and learning. Founded on traditional indigenous teachings, it creates strong, confident indigenous learners. It features a robust academic program tailored to individual student needs, offering student enrichment opportunities to explore art, music, archery, karate, golf, and many more. Mother Earth's

Children's Charter School provides substantial opportunity to its student body, which averages around 85 students all the way from kindergarten to grade 9.

While there I heard stories of students participating in these activities and also growing closer to their cultural roots through participation in cultural ceremonies and events. The school is not only unique for its foundation on indigenous teachings, which instills an appreciation for Mother Earth and the Creator, but also for the innovative funding model supporting the school. The Mother Earth's Children's Charter School is supported by both federal and provincial governments and also by corporations, who support the school's nutrition program and transportation for students. Through this partnership model Mother Earth's Children's Charter School is able to transport students to school and provide an important nutrition program without charging additional fees.

School choice allows parents to choose the educational setting that will best support their children and give them the best opportunity for success. For many indigenous families that school is Mother Earth's Children's Charter School. In the spring I spoke about the amazing example of Connect Charter School and how they demonstrate the success of school choice. Now I hope, with the excellent example of the success of Mother Earth's Children's Charter School, that other members of this Assembly can see that school choice is essential to Alberta and essential to our children.

Seniors and Budget 2019

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I have always made it a priority to connect with all of my constituents and hear their concerns, regardless of how old they are, where they come from, how much money they make, or who they love. I believe it's especially important that I listen to our seniors, who worked so hard to build this great province and who deserve to live in dignity and respect.

Last night I had the opportunity to attend a resident and family council meeting at the Eaux Claires seniors' facility in Edmonton-Decore. I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this government's bait-and-switch budget has a lot of people, especially our most vulnerable, feeling scared and betrayed. I heard from residents who are worried about how deindexing AISH would cut into their financial independence, leaving them isolated. I spoke with residents who are deeply concerned that high turnover rates among front-line staff will get worse and worse, hurting their quality of care. I heard from folks who are scared that changes to the Alberta seniors' benefit program may force them to have to choose between getting the prescriptions they need and getting enough food to eat. I talked to family members who don't know how they'll be able to support their parents now that personal income taxes will rise with deindexing. We are still weeks away from debating this government's budget plan, and the very people that built this province are terrified at how much it could hurt them.

This government campaigned on making life easier for Albertans, but then released a budget that will make life more expensive for the most vulnerable of Albertans. This government campaigned on jobs and the economy, but has seen more than 27,000 jobs disappear since they took office. This is a government that promised to reduce government waste and red tape, but has allocated \$10 million to a brand new ministry dedicated to cutting red tape. Tragically ironic, isn't it?

This is a government that needs to explain to Albertans why they continue to break the promises they were so boastful of over the summer. Our seniors and all Albertans deserve that at the very least.

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

Syncrude Milestone

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I think about Syncrude celebrating the production of 3 billion barrels of oil from one of the world's largest energy deposits, I think about what that has meant for my nation. Because, you see, it doesn't just benefit my constituency. Within my constituency lines alone, though, there are over 2 million barrels of oil a day being produced. This equates to approximately \$40 million a day, or \$14.6 billion annually.

If we look at the jobs that the energy sector in my community creates, well, there are a lot. During peak turnaround there are over 30,000 workers flying in and out of my region. That's over 20,000 jobs here in Alberta alone, and the other third comes from the rest of Canada.

Of those over 10,000 workers that fly in from our confederation, about 4,300 are from British Columbia. Eleven hundred are from Ontario. Newfoundland has about 1,200. Nova Scotia has over 800 workers flying in, and New Brunswick has over 600 commuters coming back and forth. For an industry that is being shunned by other provinces of our nation, it sure benefits those very same provinces.

At an average salary of \$100,000, and, Mr. Speaker, I do lowball that number, Ontario is making \$110 million in salary claims when these folks are reporting to Revenue Canada. B.C. residents are claiming \$430 million. This is money that, after taxes are paid, is being spent on mortgages, on food, on education, and on common and luxury items.

Don't forget the spillover jobs, Mr. Speaker, those peripheral jobs created, because these folks are spending that money in their local stores and on services. We must not forget the taxes that Albertans pay that are being rerouted to the rest of the nation under our current equalization formulas.

Thank you, Syncrude, for your investment in our resource, in our people, and in our nation. Let's hope you can continue to succeed to benefit all Canadians despite our federal Liberal government.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-West has a statement to make.

Serenity's Law

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and address this Chamber.

As you know, my private member's bill, Bill 202, was passed in this House yesterday afternoon. Bill 202 is an amendment to the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act. It is also known as Serenity's law. This bill is named after the young girl, Serenity, whose life was taken from us far too soon.

Bill 202 represents a promise I made to her mother, and it is a promise I am proud to keep. The bill makes two key changes to existing legislation. First, it clarifies that anyone who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is in need of intervention must report it to a director or a police officer. By adding the option of a police officer, this fundamental change will enshrine an existing practice into law. Second, this bill increases the consequences for those who fail to report. Serenity's law will provide clarity on who to report to and the consequences of not reporting.

This bill sends a clear message to all Albertans that we cannot turn a blind eye if we suspect that a child is in need of intervention. It will also ensure that Albertans are held accountable for the protection of our most vulnerable children. I have said it before, and I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, if this amendment saves the life of even one child in this province, then surely it was worth it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of this House for supporting this bill. This has been a long journey, and when I spoke with Serenity's mom last night to tell her about the passing of this law, she was filled with emotion and gratitude.

The passage of Serenity's law is indeed bittersweet. This family may never get the justice that they deserve, but I am proud to say that Serenity's legacy will be one of hope for the vulnerable children in our province. The children of Alberta are safer today, Mr. Speaker, than they were yesterday, and that can only be viewed as a step in the right direction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Budget 2019 and Federal Policies

Mr. Toor: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the Finance minister for tabling our United Conservative government's first budget last Thursday. The budget outlined our priorities for getting Alberta's fiscal house back in order while maintaining the service Albertans rely upon.

Unfortunately, in the same week as the Finance minister released his prudent fiscal plan, Canadians in the other regions decided to re-elect the Trudeau Liberals in Ottawa. The Liberal fiscal plan can be summed up in a single word: spend – running multibillion-dollar deficits when they promised to balance the books, robbing future generations to pay for the reckless spending of today.

Bill Morneau and Justin Trudeau provide a lesson in fiscal mismanagement. Albertans are keenly aware of the lack of support for the hard-working men and women of the oil patch. Their pipeline laws make it impossible to build new pipelines.

Mr. Speaker, there couldn't be a bigger difference between our government and the federal Liberal government of Justin Trudeau. While we make responsible decisions to protect our vital public services and grow the economy, I am afraid that they will simply continue to spend our children's future. While we cut red tape and try to bring investment back to our energy sector, I am afraid that they will continue to drive it away. And while we fight for our country and our critical economic interests, I am afraid that they will continue to divide by setting regions against regions and provinces against provinces.

1:50

So I want to thank the Finance minister and the Premier for their leadership. I know that despite a hostile federal government in Ottawa, Alberta's best days still lie ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Tax Policy

Ms Notley: Yesterday the Premier did not seem aware of the statements made by Husky Energy, so allow me to brief him. On July 25 they told their shareholders that the corporate tax cut meant more than \$230 million in their coffers. Last week Husky's CEO said: we really appreciate it. But instead of investing here, they said that they would be investing in Newfoundland and Wisconsin because taxes are not the issue. To the Premier: why did he give \$233 million away to subsidize investment to Newfoundland and Wisconsin?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, this government has given no subsidies to Husky or any other oil company or any other company, for that matter. What the NDP did was that they raised business taxes by 20 per cent, and guess what? We got billions less in revenue, in fact,

\$8 billion less in revenue than they had projected following their corporate tax hike, clear evidence that their class-warfare economics hurt Alberta jobs. Economists project that the job-creation tax cut when fully implemented will create 55,000 full-time, private-sector jobs. That's our focus: creating jobs for Albertans.

Ms Notley: Well, according to Husky they got \$230 million from this Premier, so they should probably get their stories in order.

The reckless \$4.7 billion corporate handout is a failure, and Albertans are paying for it. No jobs; in fact, at Husky hundreds fewer. No investment. Just higher income taxes for everybody. Mr. Speaker, again: why are we handing over \$230 million to be invested elsewhere, and why are Albertans paying for it as, what the Premier calls, an insidious higher personal income tax?

Mr. Kenney: You know, Mr. Speaker, whenever the NDP talks about tax relief constituting a giveaway, what does that really say? It says a lot about their socialist ideology. They think the government has a prior claim on every dollar earned by somebody and every dollar generated by an employer. Now, they continue to make up numbers. As Professor Tombe at the U of C has said, "the \$4.5 billion claim . . . is a real puzzle. It is demonstrably misleading. (I'd say false)." Even on national television the NDP leader was humiliated and corrected with that falsehood. She should just stop.

Ms Notley: Well, this Premier's \$4.7 billion corporate handout is not working. Right now we should be shipping oil by rail; we should be ending production cuts; we should be seeing higher royalties. Instead, we have a budget that cuts funding for school buses just so companies like Husky can spend it in the U.S., which, coincidentally, helps to pay for school buses there. To the Premier: how much longer are you going to make Albertans subsidize investments outside of Alberta?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the economic illiteracy that is implicit in that question demonstrates why that Premier is the first Premier in the history of this province to have been fired by voters after just one term because of the economic and jobs crisis that she helped to create in part by raising taxes on employers. Now, we're not able to undo all of their damage overnight. In fact, today the business tax rate is still higher than when the NDP came to office. But over time, prudently but with determination, we will demonstrate that this is the best place in North America in which to invest and create new jobs.

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

Calgary Police Service Funding

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, not so prudently, he will make Alberta's kids pay for a major corporate handout to wealthy corporations. That's what he's going to do. But he is also doing the exact opposite of what he promised in other areas. He promised lower taxes. He promised more police. But guess what? Everyone's income taxes are going up. Calgary's property taxes are going up, and get this: Calgary is about to lose the equivalent of 130 police officers because of this government's ticket clawback. To the Premier: why are you forcing Calgarians to pay more property taxes?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, wrong, wrong, wrong. There is no reduction in provincial transfers to municipalities for police. I certainly hope there are no property tax increases because, I can say as a Calgarian, I know that Calgarians expect their city council and mayor to live within the means of taxpayers. For years both municipal and provincial spending has grown faster than our

population, faster than inflation, and faster than economic growth. Families and small businesses have had to find savings. It's time that governments at all levels did the same.

Ms Notley: You know, Mr. Speaker, this government's budget is in writing. When they say things that are not included in the budget, people can tell that they are saying things that are not true. They promised 500 more police, but we're getting 130 less. At the same time they're now charging the police for forensic testing, a user fee for doing their jobs and catching criminals. Good Lord. When push comes to shove, the Law and Order Party is more interested in big handouts to big corporations than actually protecting citizens. To the Premier: why did you table a budget that cuts police in Calgary?

Mr. Kenney: We did not, Mr. Speaker. There are no handouts to any corporations. What there is is a fiscal crisis, according to NDP former Finance minister Dr. MacKinnon – a fiscal crisis. It is incumbent on the leader of the NDP to tell us: what is the alternative? How much higher would she allow the debt to go? How many billions would she be prepared to waste on interest payments? Whose taxes would she be prepared to raise? How many jobs would she be prepared to kill with those tax increases? They were supposed to table an alternate budget, but they haven't. They chickened out because they're not prepared to be honest in answering those questions.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, what we won't do is claw back \$13 million from Calgary's police when we promised them more police. Now, the Member for Calgary-Cross has actually spoken this month about the devastating crime wave in northeast Calgary, but this Premier's answer is to cut 130 officers. This comes after CPS has already done its part to cut costs by reducing training and trimming its fleet. These officers put their lives on the line every day to protect us. Will the Premier reverse the cuts? Read the budget, figure out what you did, get your guy to tell you what he did, and actually change these decisions.

Mr. Kenney: Sounds like a playground over there again, Mr. Speaker: no respect for this place, no respect for taxpayers, no respect for the fiscal future of this province. I just challenged the NDP to tell us: what would they do in the midst of this fiscal crisis? By how much more would they raise the debt? How much more are they prepared to borrow to pay the interest on the debt? How many billions are they prepared to take from schools, hospitals, police, and infrastructure to send to bondholders in Zurich, Toronto, and New York? I can tell you what the answer for this government is. We are going to bring our finances back under order with a modest and smart plan this budget. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. The Leader of the Official Opposition will come to order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*.

Calgary LRT Green Line Funding

Member Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Building Calgary's green line will create 20,000 badly needed construction jobs in that city, yet the Premier has raided the budget for this crucial Calgary project to pay for the \$4.7 billion corporate handout that has created no jobs. Mayor Nenshi now says that the project is in jeopardy. To the Premier: do you realize how damaging it is to Calgary's construction sector to cut this project?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it's not being cut. The funds from the province are being reprofiled into future years. The province

maintains its commitment. But if Alberta's worst Finance minister in history wants to know who is responsible for the 2.8 per cent reduction in this budget then, to coin a phrase, he should look in the mirror.

2:00

Member Ceci: I actually supported Calgary and its infrastructure. This Premier is forcing the city to delay the green line, which will create millions of dollars in unnecessary costs for Calgary taxpayers and delay employment for tens of thousands of Calgary workers. The Premier has touted himself as a champion of the green line in the past but has done nothing to back up his claim since taking office. To the Premier. This is crucial economic infrastructure, and we need to be building the green line now. Why can't you understand that?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, classic NDP: he started by saying, in question 1, that it was being cancelled; then he changed it to "delayed." Neither is true. The federal cash will allow the city to proceed with its current construction schedule, and our reprofiling in future years will allow us to achieve a balanced budget, which is urgently needed because that member quadrupled Alberta's debt, from \$13 billion to \$62 billion. He oversaw six credit downgrades. He jacked up our interest payments by 1 and a half billion dollars. He had us on track for \$100 billion in debt. He ran the largest per capita deficit in the country. He's responsible.

Member Ceci: There are emergency council meetings in municipalities all over the province because of that government, Mr. Speaker.

Stage 1 of the green line would carry more than 60,000 Calgarians per day, rising to about a quarter million trips per day when complete. It is a critical project, and now it's in jeopardy. This government has also raided money that was meant for highway upgrades in Calgary for its failed no-jobs corporate handout. Premier, what do you have to say to Calgarians who've been left stuck in traffic for hours instead of spending quality time at home with their families?

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I have to say to Calgarians is that I as a federal minister committed a billion and a half dollars to the green line in 2015, that was supposed to run 46 kilometres from the far north to the far southeast. It took the NDP government four years to finally make an equivalent fiscal commitment of a billion and a half dollars for half as much rail, half as many people served. They cut the green line in half. That's classic NDP economics. We're going to make sure the transit is there in a way that's affordable for taxpayers.

Budget 2019

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, on track to \$100 billion in debt, \$93 billion to be exact; the deficit is up \$2 billion over last year; the budget is not balanced for years into the future; 2 million Albertans will pay more in personal income taxes than they did last year: why won't the Premier fire the worst Finance minister in Alberta history? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. The opposition will come to order.

Mr. Kenney: Because we already did last April, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] Biggest deficit in Canada, \$60 billion in new debt, six credit downgrades, on track for \$100 billion in debt, higher taxes on everything – the carbon tax, higher income taxes, higher taxes on employers, higher property taxes – a jobs crisis, the worst

economic record since the Great Depression: that's why we fired him in April. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling

Oral Question Period Practices

The Speaker: Order. I can assure the Official Opposition that I'll be more than happy to call the government to order at the end of their 35 seconds, which is exactly what happened to the Official Opposition mere moments ago. I don't need your help. Thank you very much. I am very capable of doing the job on my own.

Budget 2019

(continued)

Ms Phillips: A Finance minister that hiked personal income tax for every single taxpaying Albertan, a Finance minister that brings in his deficit \$2 billion higher than the NDP, yet all these backbenchers are going to have to explain cuts to food banks, arenas, pools, cops, roads, bridges. They will have to explain to each of their constituents why their taxes went up. He's racking up debt and deficits so he can pay for the billions in giveaways to the already wealthy that are detailed on page 144 of the budget. When is the cabinet shuffle, Mr. Premier?

Mr. Kenney: Our deficit, Mr. Speaker? When I was briefed the day after the last election, when that guy was fired by Alberta voters, guess what? I was told by our public service that he and they had overprojected revenues by \$6 billion. They left taxpayers holding the bag. This government is cleaning up their mess, including their disastrous deal on crude by rail. The private sector has doubled its shipments without a dollar of public money at risk. This government is committed to getting our finances in order so that we can preserve our public services in the long run.

Ms Phillips: Well, the average family will pay \$150 more per year in taxes, and the Premier said yesterday that he is a, quote, tax-cutting government, so is the Finance minister prepared to resign – he has undermined his own Premier – or are the folks over there going to continue to lie to Albertans about their high-debt, high-deficit, high-taxes, zero-services budget travesty?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order.

The Speaker: I recognize that a point of order has been called at 2:06 in the afternoon.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, this Finance minister has inherited the worst fiscal crisis in this province since the Great Depression. This Finance minister, even in that context, took great care, working with his colleagues, to develop a modest, thoughtful, and prudent approach that finds 3 cents on the dollar of savings. This is unbelievable. The histrionics from the NDP tell us that they don't even think it's possible to find 3 pennies of savings on the dollar. That's why they had the worst fiscal record in our history. We're cleaning up their mess with determination.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Calgary-South East.

Investment in Alberta

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For too long oil investment has been leaving our province in favour of other jurisdictions that have become increasingly competitive with taxes and regulation. In 2014 Alberta was ranked 14th out of 156 jurisdictions in terms of investment climate, first being the best. Unfortunately, Alberta

dropped to below 40th on this ranking under the previous NDP government. To the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism: are we beginning to see more confidence and interest in investing in Alberta with the change to a government that actually supports the energy sector?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. It is true that there was a great flight of capital from our province under the NDP and that our competitiveness took a blow thanks to their job-killing policies. Our government has taken action to increase our province's competitiveness by repealing the NDP's job-killing carbon tax and through our job-creation tax cut, which will benefit over 100,000 companies, and our red tape reduction measures.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

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

Given that billions of dollars have left our province's oil and gas sector – in 2018 it was reported that investment had fallen by 12 per cent in 2017 alone, equivalent to over \$20 billion – and given that it is our government's priority to see Albertans return to work by reattracting economic investment to our energy sector and given that executives of companies that left Alberta pointed to previous government policies and tax increases as one of the main obstacles to staying, can the minister please explain to this House what our government is doing to bring investment and jobs back to Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you to the member. As I previously mentioned, our government has already taken several measures to attract investment back to Alberta, and we see results already, with Telus making the largest investment announcement in our province's history, \$16 billion, which will create 5,000 jobs. A few other measures include changes that will allow municipalities to attract investment through tax incentives, and we stabilized the royalty regime for natural gas companies.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again, Minister. Given that Alberta is more than just energy and given that it is prudent to work towards a sustainable and diversified economy and given that private investment is critical to helping Alberta come out of this serious economic downturn, that the previous NDP government's disastrous policies intensified, can the minister please report on what is being done by this government to attract investments and what other industries we are looking to attract? [interjection]

The Speaker: Order.
The hon. minister.

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for their interest. Our government is taking action to grow investment in all sectors of the economy. That is what our tax reduction and red tape removal measures have been designed to do. My department will also be investing \$75 million over three years in attracting investment to Alberta, growing our economy, and protecting the taxpayer. The NDP drove investment out of our province, and we were hired by Albertans to clean up their mess.

2:10 Edmonton Infrastructure Funding

Mr. Dang: Mr. Speaker, this Premier declared that his Minister of Municipal Affairs would be a voice for Edmonton at the cabinet table. He is the lone member of the government in this city. But now, in my and his constituencies, residents are shocked and devastated that this minister put a halt to plans for Terwillegar Drive expansions, has cut more than \$150 million annually from city infrastructure funding. To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the MLA for Edmonton-South West: why have you failed the residents of our constituencies and the city of Edmonton?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, working with the Minister of Finance, managed to develop a budget plan that solves the fiscal crisis that we inherited from the NDP while continuing to maintain the highest level of capital spending and provincial transfers to municipalities of any province in Canada, while maintaining \$686 million of capital grants to Edmonton. With the gas tax transfer, that's \$1 billion to the city of Edmonton. We're going from the highest support for municipalities in the country to the highest level of support . . .

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

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It looks like, just like in cabinet, the minister is being benched again.

Given that it would appear that not only does the Minister of Municipal Affairs not have the ear of the Premier, he also has no sway over his fellow ministers – the Minister of Infrastructure has delayed the opening of the south Edmonton hospital; the Minister of Education won't commit to a new and badly needed south Edmonton high school – to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and MLA for Edmonton-South West: is it that you aren't speaking up for Edmonton and for your constituents, or is it that your colleagues aren't listening?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs will answer in just a moment, but the hon. member will know that we're past question 4, and that is a very clear use of a preamble. If he chooses to do it again, we'll move immediately to the answer.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-South West and Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Let me enlighten this Member for Edmonton-South: \$3.25 billion in overall capital funding commitment to the city from our government. We are supporting projects at the U of A, the Stollery, the Jubilee, the Royal Alberta Museum. We are building the Norwood long-term care facility, moving forward on Big Island provincial park, and so much more. We are delivering for Edmonton, and while I understand that this member is currently chasing shadows, we will stand up for Edmonton.

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

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But that's not what municipalities say.

Given that members of Edmonton city . . .

The Speaker: I'm pretty certain that I, immediately prior to the question, gave you a very clear explanation that a preamble would not be accepted. You are testing to find out if that's the case. A question begins with "given." You can create a question following the rules. Let's see if you can do that now.

Mr. Dang: Mr. Speaker, given that members of Edmonton city council are warning that cuts to operating and capital spending could spur another recession and given that the lone Edmonton minister in the government cabinet is the Minister of Municipal Affairs, to the same minister: why is it that you have completely failed to deal with these affairs and represent your own constituency?

The Speaker: Well done.

The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I will not be lectured by this member, who was part of a government that led economic policies that devastated our entire province. If any member in this particular House ought to be ashamed, I think it should be that particular member, who helped, when they were in government, pursue policies that saw more than 200,000 of our fellow citizens out of work. It was the same members opposite, you know, that pursued policies that left us on a path to \$100 billion in debt. This side of the House will not be lectured by that member.

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

Timber Allocations within First Nations Territories

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 18 the grand chief of Treaty 8 wrote to the Agriculture and Forestry minister to express surprise and great concern that the ministry had issued an RFP for the sale of timber allocation within the territories of Lubicon Lake and Loon River First Nations. The grand chief writes, "We will not stand by while your government takes steps to give away the resources in our territories without our involvement or consent." The grand chief calls on the minister to suspend the RFP. Will the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry do this? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member opposite. We have an open, competitive process when it comes to forest management areas in the province of Alberta, and we're open to all different types of investment opportunities that are forthcoming. I've mentioned to them and to others the great leadership and work that the minister of aboriginal affairs has done as leading to the aboriginal opportunities fund. It is something that's a great opportunity for indigenous people here in the province of Alberta, to be able to be partners in prosperity and develop our great resources that we have here in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Feehan: I have a copy of the United Nations declaration that I'll send to your office.

Given that the Minister of Indigenous Relations recently said in the House, "It's time . . . to do the right thing, to show indigenous communities respect instead of patronizing their path to prosperity," and given that these First Nations are demanding respect and control over their own economic resources, will the Minister of Indigenous Relations actually do the right thing and urge his cabinet colleagues to immediately call off this RFP, or were all his fine speeches in this place just patronizing words?

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

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Again I'd just like to reiterate the partnerships, the leadership that this government is actually taking, actions to partner with our aboriginal partners here in the province of Alberta versus the fake rhetoric that came from the previous government. We're not just speaking in hollow words

or terminology; we're actually taking concrete economic actions to be able to partner with aboriginal groups here in the province of Alberta with our forestry sector. It's great. The economic opportunities that we have in our forestry sector are amazing. There are tens of thousands of Albertans employed by this industry, and we're going to continue that great work.

Mr. Feehan: They'll do anything for the community except for listen to them, apparently.

Given that this government only yesterday voted down a motion that I introduced that would have called for First Nations to be consulted before the sale of Crown land and given that this government is disregarding the wishes of the Lubicon Lake and Loon River First Nations regarding their own resources, again to the Minister of Indigenous Relations: is this complete disregard for nations' treaty rights what reconciliation looks like to you?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. It already is the process for the Alberta government to consult when it comes to any Crown land sales, including with indigenous communities. We have committed to that as a government to continue that process. We are continuing to do that consulting with our First Nations partners across this province. It's unfortunate that the NDP government continues to make things up when it comes to that. What's also, I think, significant is the action this government has taken to build partnerships with indigenous communities all across this province. That party, when they were in power, would not even bring indigenous communities up to Government House to have meetings with them. That's how we started our relationship as a government.

Tax Policy (continued)

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, following the introduction of the budget last week we started to hear yet more of the typical fear and smear from the NDP. Then again, I suppose it's not surprising that the party that dedicated its failed one-term government to spending Alberta into a \$60 billion debt hole with \$2 billion in interest per year would be opposed to a measured and fiscally responsible path to balance. That said, I heard one particularly outlandish accusation on personal taxes that I wanted to ask the Finance minister about. Minister, can you tell us if personal income taxes will be going up?

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

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government committed to Albertans that we would balance the budget in our first term without raising taxes, and that's exactly what we're doing. We paused indexation of personal income tax brackets and exemption, but this will not result in additional taxes for Albertans. This is not a tax hike. If you earn the same amount next year as you have this year, you will pay the same amount of income tax as you do this year.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley. [interjections] Order.

Mr. Loewen: Given, Mr. Speaker, that that's what I understood, too, and given that the NDP have been doing their best to spread fear and misinformation on personal taxes and given that they feel that if they say the same lie over and over again, it becomes true, therefore I have a clarifying question just to remove all opportunity for the NDP to misunderstand the facts. If I have a constituent who made \$75,000 last year and paid \$2,655 in provincial income tax

last year and that constituent is set to make \$75,000 again this year, how much will they pay in taxes this coming year?

2:20

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

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not raised taxes, so the member's constituent would pay the same amount, \$2,655, in personal taxes next year. Not only that, but Albertans continue to pay the lowest income taxes in the country.

Mr. Loewen: Given, Mr. Speaker, that we are on the topic of the NDP and taxes and given that it was these NDP members who were the architects of the single largest tax hike that has ever been forced upon Albertans by any government in our 114-year history and given that our government repealed that job-killing carbon tax that they never campaigned on, that punished Albertans for driving to work and heating their homes, to the minister: how much will our government save Albertans next year thanks to the repeal of the job-killing carbon tax?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that by repealing the carbon tax, the tax the previous government put on Albertans, Albertans will save over \$1.2 billion a year. Moreover, the previous government also jacked up income taxes on corporations and sent billions of dollars of investment south of the border and with it jobs and opportunities, and with it lower government revenues. We have delivered a budget that will change the trajectory, that will change the course, that will attract investment, create jobs and opportunities, and increase revenues.

Community Grant Programs

Ms Goehring: Mr. Speaker, when asked on a recent telephone town hall if CFEP and CIP were being maintained, the Minister of Finance could only answer, quote: stay tuned. Well, they stayed tuned and saw a devastating 35 per cent cut to CFEP and a \$5 million cut to CIP in last week's budget. These programs are essential to nonprofits, and those cuts will be devastating to them, all to pay for a \$4.7 billion giveaway that hasn't created a single job. What will the minister of culture say to the nonprofits and other groups gutted by her cuts to CFEP and CIP?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, CIP grants will continue to be available to Albertans going forward. Most importantly, we have presented a budget that will undo the wrongdoing of the previous government. We've introduced a budget that will bring this province back to balance, that will lay a foundation for future Albertans, a foundation of economic growth, responsibility, and prosperity.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that when asked about the impact that slashing CFEP and CIP would have, the Minister of Finance responded by saying that community groups will be required to do more with less and given that this minister has worked in the arts community in the past and she should know that they are often on extremely lean budgets and don't have a dollar to spare, to the minister of culture: have you done an analysis of how many arts groups will cease to exist or significantly reduce operations as a result of your cruel cuts?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women we are continuing to invest in the arts during this tough fiscal situation, and grant

programs are being streamlined to ensure dollars are going to communities, not bureaucrats. When Alberta's economy was booming, funding for the arts grew to more than 40 per cent higher than the national average. I just wanted to share that with you.

Thank you.

Ms Goehring: Mr. Speaker, given that this government expects arts groups and nonprofits to do more with less after giving away \$4.7 billion to profitable corporations and given the minister of culture should know the impact that a 35 per cent cut to CFEP and a \$5 million cut to CIP will have on arts groups and nonprofits, can the minister of culture please inform this House how many job losses in the arts community and nonprofit sector will occur because of her cuts?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Our arts funding keeps Alberta in line with the national average for provincial arts funders. To support this mandate, we are developing strategies to preserve and enhance the unique heritage and traditions of all Albertans. This is the first ministry dedicated to supporting multiculturalism in Alberta in over 25 years.

Thank you.

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

Summer Temporary Employment Program

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to the summer temporary employment program, the minister is all over the place. Online he said that these businesses who supported STEP as a way of hiring young Albertans to give them training and experience were just looking for, quote, free money. Yesterday he called STEP an inefficient use of money. To the minister. You supported a \$4.7 billion corporate handout that has so far only created jobs in Wisconsin and Newfoundland. Are you really arguing STEP is more inefficient than your Premier's failed no-jobs corporate giveaway?

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

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we sympathize with employers and students who were hoping to receive funding under this program next summer, but STEP was an inefficient use of government funds. At the cost of \$10 million it created on average 2,500 to 3,000 summer jobs, and that's only temporary employment and not even in their fields. We are investing in other programs that will deliver, and just yesterday we announced a \$6 million investment in Careers: the Next Generation. This will lead to more than 6,000 paid internships that lead to full-time employment, and it also brings private sector to the table. We have limited funds. We need to invest them wisely.

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

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Dana Cramer, a University of Calgary student said, quote, without STEP I would not have received some of my internships during undergrad; in one STEP placement my work led to the creation of two new Calgary-based tech jobs; this was a government program that created local jobs; it should not have been cut, end quote, and given that that this minister keeps rising to defend a \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway that has so far only created jobs outside of Alberta, to the minister of labour: why won't you take action to create jobs in Alberta?

Mr. Copping: As indicated, Mr. Speaker, this was an inefficient use of government funds, and we are focusing on programs and policies that will make a difference and create jobs. For example, some of the policies and the action we've taken is introducing the job-creation student wage and reducing unnecessary red tape. We are being responsible for our youth. We are not going to leave them with hundreds of billions of dollars of debt. This government was on track to do that. We are going to get our spending under control and create jobs here in Alberta for youth.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, given that the job-creation youth wage leaves university students out in the cold and given that the STEP program placed over 10,000 students in good jobs since we reinstated it, providing them with essential training experience and supporting their employers during tough economic times, can the minister please tell young Albertans why his jobs plan is more focused on generating corporate profits than quality work experience for young Albertans?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, our government will not be lectured by a government that pursued policies that not only put us in significant debt but also resulted in the destruction of anywhere between 170,000 to 200,000 jobs. We ran on and we were elected on a platform of jobs, the economy, and getting pipelines built. That is what we are going to do, and that is our focus, ensuring that we have policies in place for quality jobs for our youth and all Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River is rising to ask a question.

Human Trafficking

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Between 2009 and 2016 across the country there were 1,100 incidences of human trafficking reported. Human trafficking has been on the rise across the country since 2010. Ninety-five per cent of those victims have been women, and 70 per cent of those women have been under the age of 25. Human trafficking is a growing evil in our society and one this government promised to take seriously during our election campaign. To the Minister of Justice: what is this government doing to combat human trafficking in Alberta and defend these young women?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General.

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll be acting by launching the Alberta action plan to combat human trafficking, a nine-point plan that will take immediate steps to establish a task force that will ensure government and partners work collaboratively, increase education for at-risk individuals and public awareness, and create legislation consistent with the Saving the Girl Next Door Act.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for answering. Given that human trafficking disproportionately affects the vulnerable population of young girls and given that our party made a campaign promise to protect these young girls and given that these commitments include adoption of the Palermo protocol for the definition of human trafficking and an eventual task force to deal with human trafficking, to the Minister of Justice: what steps are being taken today to crack down on those convicted of this heinous crime?

2:30

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we're dedicated to making sure that we lobby the federal government to amend the sentencing

guidelines related to exploitation to add the offence of trafficking in persons to the list of offences to which the forfeiture of proceeds of crime apply. We're also going to advocate to provide consecutive sentences for offences related to trafficking in persons and also create a legislative tort so victims can sue their abusers.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: given that human trafficking victims face horrible conditions and suffer often from mental, physical, and sexual abuse and concerns and given that human trafficking is a scourge that degrades women and young girls far too frequently in our society across the country and given this government's multiple campaign promises to support the victims of human trafficking, what is this government doing to ensure that these vulnerable victims and not the criminals themselves have the support that they need?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the hon. member for that thoughtful question. Victims and survivors need to know that their government stands with them, hears them, and will provide the tools and resources necessary to support them. In the budget we committed \$6 million to fund a 24-hour hotline to support survivors of sexual assault and sexual violence. We're also committed to providing additional resources to sexual assault service centres, that provide counselling, support, and advocacy for those in need.

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

Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program Fees

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, when we asked the Premier about new fees for the people immigrating to Canada, he insisted, "There is no such thing," but a quick scan of the budget shows on page 191 of the government's fiscal plan that the Premier was wrong and that there is a new \$500 fee for the Alberta immigrant nominee program. To the Premier: will you apologize to Albertans for the inaccurate statement made to the House yesterday?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I made no such inaccurate statement. The leader of the NDP said that we were raising fees for citizenship applications. I said that the government of Alberta does not process citizenship applications. I think I should know because I was the minister of citizenship for five years. The government of Canada processes citizenship applications. But you know what this reflects . . .

Ms Hoffman: Well, I'm sure the people paying \$500 for AINP appreciate that.

Mr. Kenney: I'm sorry. The heckling and anger from the Member for Edmonton-Glenora won't make this right for the NDP.

What it reflects is that the NDP leader, after four years as Premier, knows nothing about Canada's immigration and citizenship programs. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. When the Speaker is on his feet, members will come to order.

Mr. Deol: Given that while the Premier was making inaccurate claims in the House yesterday, he failed to answer the very serious question raised by the opposition leader yesterday and given that we have cleared up that the Premier did in fact create a \$500 fee for the Alberta immigrant nominee program, can the Premier or the minister of labour please explain why they are imposing a brand new \$500 fee on new immigrant applications?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta immigrant nominee program is not the citizenship program. They have nothing to do with one another. You know what? The confusion on the other side: it finally explains something to me that I've been puzzling over. Why is it that the NDP for four years so grossly neglected and mismanaged Alberta's immigrant nominee program? Now I know why. The former Premier doesn't even understand anything about it. This government is doing consultations on the new Alberta advantage immigration strategy. This province has brought in the fair practices act. This government is bringing in the action plan for fair . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this is another example of how the UCP budget will be hurting Albertans and given that this \$500 fee didn't appear once in the UCP platform and given that the Premier and the labour minister have claimed that they want to encourage more people to immigrate to Alberta, to the Minister of Labour and Immigration: will the minister remove this harmful policy, or is subsidizing a \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway the new requirement for moving to Alberta?

Mr. Kenney: Every province in Canada charges an application fee for their provincial nominee program applications. The government of Canada has always, of course, charged application fees for permanent residency applications. This government is investing an additional 2 and a half million dollars in our action plan for fairness for newcomers. The NDP did the square root of nothing in four years to knock down barriers for newcomers trying to get work at their skill level, to get their credentials recognized. This government is implementing the action plan for fairness for newcomers and bringing onboard the Alberta advantage immigration strategy.

Environmental Monitoring Funding

Mr. Schmidt: The residents of Edmonton-Gold Bar live right next door to two refineries, a waste-water treatment plant, and a whole host of other sources of industrial air pollutants. While many rely on these industries for their jobs, they also rely on the provincial government to make sure that their emissions don't pollute the clean air that we all need to breathe. Thursday's budget includes a \$1.5 million cut to environment's air quality monitoring and management programs as part of this government's attempt to pay for its \$4.7 billion corporate handout. Can the minister tell my constituents why it's more important to make sure that corporations get a handout than that they have clean air to breathe?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, Alberta Environment and Parks will continue to monitor air and water. It's a very important part of our mandate and our file. We are confident, to the hon. member's constituents, that we will be able to continue to do that job, finding some efficiencies within the department and doing our part to be able to help get Alberta on a path to balance, but it will still remain a priority to monitor the water and the air. At the end of the day, what this comes down to is that that member was part of a government who absolutely destroyed our economy, and this government is going to do its part to get it back on balance.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, given that the minister seems to be intent on increasing pollution with his answers and given that a number of air pollutants, including particulate matter and ground-level ozone, in the Edmonton area are already high enough that the ministry is implementing a management plan and given that the \$1.5 million cut to environment's air management budget will only make it

harder to implement that plan, to the minister. My constituents are already choking on a \$4.7 billion corporate handout. Why do they have to choke on polluted air, too?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this is the difference between the NDP and Alberta's current government. Alberta's current government recognizes important obligations that we have, like monitoring air and water. We will continue to monitor the air and water in this province to the same standard that we always have. At the same time, we will work to be able to get our budgets on balance, to be able to make sure that we can get this province to a place of balance so that we stop wasting millions and billions of dollars on interest payments to bondholders that that member's government did.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, given that the minister is intent on wasting money on corporate handouts and given that increases in these air pollutants will mean that my constituents will have more visits to emergency rooms to treat asthma and other respiratory illnesses and given that this budget includes cuts to health care, meaning that those emergency room wait times are only going to go up, and given that CEOs and shareholders who receive that \$4.7 billion handout get to breathe the clean air of Switzerland, the Cayman Islands, or other luxurious locales, why is the minister making my constituents sit longer in emergency rooms while corporations get to sit on \$4.7 billion?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, that is a ridiculous question. First of all, it's already been proven by experts and the media that the assertion of 4 point whatever billion dollars the NDP keep talking about is not true. But if you want to talk about questions that constituents have, my constituents have been asking that hon. member, his former government questions for a long time. Why did you tax our seniors with a carbon tax? Why did you tax our health care system with a carbon tax? Why did you tax our school system with a carbon tax? Why did you punish everyday Albertans with a carbon tax? When is that hon. member going to stand up and apologize for his ridiculous environment policies that hurt this province?

Mr. Schmidt: Why are you poisoning my constituents?

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 2:39.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Falconridge.

Hospital Laundry and Medical Laboratory Services

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents have been pleased to see our government keep many of our platform promises since the election. In our platform we committed to cancelling the NDP's planned nationalization of laundry services as well as their ideologically motivated plan to spend \$50 million of taxpayers' money to buy out lab partner DynaLife. To the Minister of Health: is our government still planning to deliver on the commitment to allow laundry services to be delivered by the private sector?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, absolutely, we are. This is a perfect example, actually, of the difference between our government and the NDP. Three years ago the NDP proudly announced that they were blocking AHS's plan to contract out laundry services. It meant spending up to \$200 million to buy new

equipment, and most of the country already contracts out laundry services as well. To the NDP all that matters is public ownership, not value to patients, not value for money. It's ideological nonsense, and we're reversing it.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that there are contracts in place and given that the NDP pursued these contracts as part of their ideological agenda and given that we are not interested in breaking our word and given that we were elected to uphold our promises, to the Minister of Health: how and when will our government's plan to undo the NDP's reckless pursuit of the nationalization of health care services be implemented?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. AHS has contracts in place already for about 70 per cent of their laundry services. The contract for Calgary expires this coming February, and the one in Edmonton runs to March 31, 2023. We have confirmed to AHS that they are free to issue a request for a proposal aligned with those dates, as they intended to do before the NDP stopped them. Depending on the response to the RFPs, we will avoid up to \$130 million in capital costs and up to \$2 million in annual operating costs.

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

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister.

Given that the NDP pursued a consistent political agenda that was biased against private partners and in favour of public ownership of all assets in the health system, no matter the cost to the taxpayers, and given that Alberta taxpayers want a government that focuses on patients, not on ideology, can the minister assure the House and Albertans that he will put the interests of patients above ideology?

Mr. Shandro: Well, Mr. Speaker, we ran on a commitment to strengthen our publicly funded health care system. We need to focus on patients, not on ideology and not on who owns a building. That means working with nonhospital surgical facilities to get waiting lists down. That means bringing back the successful ASLI partnership with all partners in continuing care. That means working with DynaLife to avoid a \$50 million buyout. We will keep 700 jobs in downtown Edmonton.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b) I wish to advise that the Assembly must meet beyond the daily Routine tomorrow, Wednesday, October 30, for Royal Assent. Although the standing order provides for estimates meetings to be rescheduled if necessary, we anticipate that the ceremony will be concluded prior to the commencement of the committee meetings tomorrow afternoon.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader and Minister of Environment and Parks.

Bill 19 Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to beg leave of the Assembly to introduce Bill 19, the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of the bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

This bill fulfills the commitments of our campaign platform by setting the TIER system in motion. We're proposing changes to fulfill the government's commitment to protect Albertans in our valuable, large industries from federal intrusions while continuing Alberta's 20-year history of taking meaningful action on emissions management.

[Motion carried; Bill 19 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any tablings today? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling page 144 of the fiscal plan 2019 – I would recommend its reading to all members of the Assembly – where it states clearly that all the government's \$4.7 billion no-job corporate giveaway costs exactly \$4.7 billion.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of the hon. Mrs. Aheer, Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, pursuant to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Act the Alberta Foundation for the Arts 2018-19 annual report; pursuant to the Alberta Sport Connection Act the Alberta Sport Connection 2018-19 annual report; pursuant to the Historical Resources Act the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation 2018-19 annual report.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at points of order. At 2:06 the hon. Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

Point of Order Imputing Motives

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I have some indication from the other side of the Assembly that they would already like to withdraw and apologize for this. I don't know if that made it up there. If that's the case, I'm happy to yield the floor to them to do that and not waste your time this afternoon.

The Speaker: That's awfully kind and noble of you, hon. Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would in fact like to withdraw and apologize on behalf of the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West for her comments during that question.

The Speaker: Hon. members, at 2:39 the hon. Member for Calgary-West rose on a point of order, and the hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika also rose.

Mr. Schow: Thank you. I rise on a point of order under section 23(h), (i) and (j), specifically (i), which states: "imputes false or

unavowed motives to another Member.” At the time, mentioned by you, Mr. Speaker, while the hon. House leader . . .

Mr. Ellis: Just yield the floor. They’re going to apologize.

Mr. Schow: Can I continue or not? Okay. Well, I’m going to continue if I can.

Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre was answering a question, and the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar stated, “Why are you poisoning my constituents?” Now, I’m certain that the hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre and their favourite son has no such intention. The only poisoning that I can see here is the poisoning of the decorum in this Chamber by the members opposite. I hope the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar will apologize for his comments.

The Speaker: I might just provide a cautionary tale. This might be your first point of order, but we rarely use points of order to create language that might also create an additional point of order, so I would just caution the Member for Cardston-Siksika.

I’m not sure if the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar would like to rise.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, taking your advice that you just gave us, I will also not use my arguing of

the point of order to use language that will create another point of order although it’s very tempting.

I do apologize and withdraw. The heat of the moment got the better of me, and I wish to withdraw the statement that I made.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I consider that point of order dealt with and concluded.

Hon. members, the daily Routine has now concluded. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays during consideration of the main estimates the Assembly stands adjourned upon the completion of the daily Routine and any matters arising in conjunction with the Routine to allow for committee consideration of the main estimates. Pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b) the House stands adjourned until this evening at 7:30.

The legislative policy committees will convene this afternoon for the consideration of the main estimates. This afternoon, the Standing Committee on Alberta’s Economic Future will consider the estimates for Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women in the Parkland Room, and the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship will consider the estimates for the Ministry of Transportation in the Rocky Mountain Room.

The House stands adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 2:50 p.m.]

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