



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, November 4, 2019

Day 38

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.

Monday, November 4, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Peter Matthew Neil McMillan. I would invite you all to join us in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. members, it is my absolute honour and pleasure today to welcome a number of visitors to the Legislative Assembly. A familiar face to this Assembly is the former Member for Calgary-Elbow Mr. Greg Clark.

Also in the gallery this afternoon is the Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development from our good friends just to the east, the province of Manitoba, the Hon. Blaine Pedersen.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have a number of folks joining us in the galleries this afternoon. If you are in the gallery and you hear the name of your group called, I invite you to rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

From Edmonton-Whitemud, please welcome the School at the Leg. group, Earl Buxton elementary.

From Edmonton-Strathcona: St. Martin Catholic school.

Also joining us in the gallery today is a group of 20 hard-working public service employees from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury Board. Thank you so much for joining us and for all you do.

Lastly for this group of introductions, hon. members, I am very pleased to introduce to you 32 teachers from across the province who are forming the first-ever Teachers Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. I invite you all to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Hon. members, our anthem singer this afternoon is a constituent of the Member for Calgary-Buffalo, Mr. Matthew McMillan. He applied to lead the Assembly in *O Canada* because of the work that he does with Canada's Cadet Organizations. As a naval lieutenant and cadet instructor Matthew works with the royal Canadian sea

corps *Undaunted*, where youth 12 to 18 learn healthy living, Canada's military traditions, and citizenship. He notes that every Tuesday his corps sings *O Canada* before their training, something that has been done by *Undaunted* for over a decade. It was a natural extension for him to lead us today. While not predating the province, *Undaunted* is one of the country's oldest sea cadet corps, and it is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Great job, Matthew.

Also in the galleries this afternoon are guests of the Minister of Health, here for the annual rural residents in the Legislature event. There are 12 members and four staff of the PARA, the Professional Association of Resident Physicians of Alberta.

Joining the Minister of Advanced Education are members of the University of Calgary Students Union.

Lastly, welcome Todd Banks, a guest of the Member for Sherwood Park.

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen: your guests.

Ministerial Statements

Family Violence Prevention Month

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say thank you to the hon. members of this House for their support of Family Violence Prevention Month this November. The purple ribbons you are wearing signify what we as a government and we as a province are doing to put an end to family violence and prevent abuse. Many vulnerable Albertans out there need help, but they're unsure of where to turn, and we must do what we can to protect them from harm, to help them feel safe in their homes and to feel safe in their relationships.

Family Violence Prevention Month is an opportunity to raise awareness of what help is available and where to find it, but support does not end when this month ends. We want Albertans to know that help is available all year long. Those experiencing or at risk of family violence can find resources, helplines, online chat, and more at alberta.ca/endifamilyviolence. Our family violence info line is also available 24 hours a day in more than 170 languages. Albertans just need to dial 310.1818 to speak with someone about how to get help in their area.

This government has prioritized putting an end to family violence. Not only have we been working to raise awareness of supports; we have passed legislation to protect people from violence and abuse. Once the Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act is implemented, people at risk of domestic violence will be able to apply to obtain information about a romantic partner's history of domestic violence. This will empower those at risk to make an informed decision while helping to prevent abuse and potentially saving lives.

These are important issues, which is why I'm thankful for your support this month as we raise awareness of family violence prevention. I hope you will get involved where you can and wear purple to recognize Family Violence Prevention Month. You can also show support on social media with posts and pictures using the hashtag #wheretoturn and #gopurpleab.

Thank you again for keeping Albertans safe. I'm proud to work together with all members of this House to help make life better for our province's most vulnerable people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert to respond on behalf of the Official Opposition.

Ms Renaud: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm thankful for the opportunity to raise the issue of family violence prevention here in this Legislature. Family violence is an immense challenge in Alberta

and in Canada. Family violence has devastated many lives. According to the Canadian Women's Foundation 74 per cent of Albertans know of women who have experienced sexual and physical violence and abuse, an obscene number showing how far spread this problem is, particularly because it's still underreported. Elder abuse is a real and growing threat in all of our communities. Disabled Albertans have always faced incredibly high rates of domestic violence, often resulting in death: lest we forget, Betty Anne Gagnon.

Family Violence Prevention Month is important; however, an awareness month and lapel ribbons are meaningless if we as decision-makers do not do the essential work necessary to prevent family violence. That work includes poverty reduction, fair wages, family support, adequate funding for social services. This month we can all spread awareness of how the many tragedies can be prevented and make sure that everyone knows about the supports for survivors of family violence. I hope that all Albertans can have an open conversation about what the root causes are and what we can do to prevent family violence and to support survivors. You don't support survivors by kicking them off supports, like this government is doing, in order to save money.

1:40

The statistics are staggering. In 2016 1,984 children and youth were victims of police-reported family violence; 13,896 Albertans were victims of police-reported intimate partner violence. The current supports and prevention programs in our province are not sufficient. In 2017-18 16,722 women, children, and seniors were turned away from shelters due to lack of capacity. We must continue to invest in prevention of family violence and support survivors.

I was very proud that our government invested significant resources in community-based safety programs, prevention services, and supports for people fleeing family violence and in action to address poverty through minimum wage increases and indexing of AISH benefits.

I hope this awareness month will shine a light on the crisis of family violence in Alberta. I want to give the province the promise on behalf of this NDP caucus: we will always stand with survivors, always; we will do everything in our capacity to make life better for all Albertans.

Thank you.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie-East would like to make a statement.

Women Parliamentarians' She Should Run Initiative

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues and I have a few core beliefs that we all agree on. We believe in helping a neighbour when they need it. We know the importance of teamwork, but we also know the importance of individuality and staying true to oneself. What's common in these beliefs is the belief that nobody should be restricted in the pursuit of their own goals. I know I believe that no one should be held back from opportunities because of who they are or where they came from. When someone decides to run for public office, who they are should be a strength rather than a hesitation when deciding if they should put their name on the ballot.

I am proud today to introduce the She Should Run campaign schools initiative to every member in this House. This publication is an initiative of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians,

which I serve as Alberta's chair. CWP works as part of the larger Commonwealth Parliamentary Association towards better representation of women in Legislatures across Canada and throughout the Commonwealth. The publication outlines a framework for regional, provincial, and national nonpartisan campaign schools for women. CWP shares a vision of women as equal partners in the Canadian Parliament and in provincial and territorial Legislatures while aiming to increase women's representation in government at every level.

While serving in this House, I have met so many women who should run, but they hesitate or doubt themselves when it comes time to run in a nomination or get involved in the political process. These women are capable and have experiences that would benefit this House and every level of government across the country. Mr. Speaker, she should run, not in spite of who she is but because of it. She should run because she is capable, qualified, and ready to lead.

I urge every member of this House to consider this initiative and share this publication with your constituents.

The Speaker: I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Budget 2019

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The following are from the UCP platform; they are promises they ran on, categorized into three pillars: getting Albertans back to work, standing up for Alberta, and making life better for Albertans. Sadly, so far we've lost 27,000 jobs. Not sure which Albertans are getting back to work.

Even before the budget was released, the UCP demonstrated who they were standing up for. Profitable corporations received a \$4.7 billion handout. Yes, Mr. Speaker, every government has choices, and this government is clearly making ones that support an elite group.

Now, how about making life better for Albertans? We know Albertans are still hurting. Due to the price shock and continued challenges in the oil and gas sector, many Albertans are still out of work. This is precisely the time when they need support. Significant cuts to affordable housing, education, and infrastructure mean Albertans of today and tomorrow will not have the services they need, quality education for their children, or jobs created through the government's investment in infrastructure. Seniors, members of the disability community, older children in care, and university students will suffer the most under this budget.

This austerity budget, like others around the world, hurts regular people and helps the elite few. When citizens are supported through public programs, they're able to live with dignity, support their families, and contribute to the larger society. Taking away these supports at a time when they are needed the most only makes things worse, Mr. Speaker. Far from making life better, the UCP government is making things worse.

Lynn Davies

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Lynn Davies, who was a community leader in Strathcona county. Community leaders are critical to ensuring Albertan communities are vibrant, lively, and thriving. Lynn Davies' enormous contributions to Strathcona county had such a positive influence.

Lynn had a love for rugby, a passion he brought with him from his home nation of Wales when he arrived in Canada at the age of 22. He made a major impact on the sport in Strathcona county. He was an original team member of the Druids rugby club of Edmonton, founded in 1960, and a founder of the Sherwood Park

Outlaws rugby club, founded in 1990. Due to the leadership of Lynn and fellow Sherwood Park resident Larry Wall, these two teams would merge in 1996, permanently basing the Strathcona Druids Rugby Football Club in Sherwood Park.

Lynn was a tireless advocate for rugby and was instrumental in 1993 in securing rugby facilities in Sherwood Park, which are the Strathcona Druids' facilities today. In 2010 the clubhouse was renamed Lynn Davies rugby park.

Mr. Speaker, over five decades of community service through sport Lynn created a rugby park, established rugby teams, mentored countless players, and founded major Alberta-based rugby tournaments. Most importantly, Lynn left an indelible, warm imprint in the hearts and minds of Strathcona county residents and the Alberta rugby community at large.

Mr. Speaker, Lynn Davies exemplified community leadership. My thoughts and prayers go out to his immediate family: his wife, Lorna, and three children, Jason, Caroline, and Rhys. We will forever miss and always fondly remember Lynn.

Thank you.

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

Postsecondary Education Budget 2019-2020

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If you wanted to design a plan to sabotage Alberta's long-term prosperity, it would be tough to do any better than this UCP budget. Its centerpiece is a \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway, and we know that money has already been handed over to shareholders and banks and has not created a single job. In fact, more than 27,000 jobs have been lost under this Premier's watch.

That handout was paid in part by cutting funding to our postsecondary institutions and jacking up the tuition that students have to pay to go to school. Our universities are already openly discussing the possibility of staff layoffs and not fixing decaying buildings. For some students a 21 per cent tuition hike means they'll have to leave school carrying a far greater debt load. For others it will mean even dropping out before their degree is completed. For some Albertans, tragically, this wrong-headed move will mean that they'll never be able to go to postsecondary education. That is a loss for all of us because they are innovators, inventors, and talented workers that would have led to our prosperity in decades to come. In the memorable words of Professor Sale of the University of Alberta, this is the kneecapping of a generation.

On top of it all, the Minister of Advanced Education has been telling this House that kneecapping was something that some students even asked for. This is not true, Mr. Speaker. What Alberta's young adults want is an opportunity to reach their full potential and a government that is focused on helping them do that. This government, unfortunately, is throwing those opportunities away and endangering our long-term economic prosperity simply to hand out a failed \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout.

The Speaker: Hon. members, prior to proceeding to Oral Question Period, I just might like to note that, as you may have noticed, your Speaker is fully engaged in November this year. Any fines that are levied during the next month will be submittable to a men's mental health charity of your choice.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

Support for Youth Transitioning out of Care

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, this Premier's \$4.7 billion corporate handout is hurting the most vulnerable. Last week we learned that the Premier will claw back financial support for former children in care from the age of 24 to 22. No explanation, a complete reversal of his caucus's position, an absolute betrayal. To the Premier. These young people have suffered more than we can imagine. We promised to care for them. Why is a corporate handout more important to you than the young adults for whom we are all responsible?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Children's Services is rising.

Ms Schulz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is prioritizing funding for children and families who are most vulnerable, which is why Children's Services saw an increase of 8.5 per cent in this budget year. Often the most important supports for these young people transitioning out of care are social and emotional. That's why we've maintained the mentorship program, increased the advancing futures program by \$1 million. I have to say that it's unfortunate that this is coming from the members opposite, who seriously underfunded basic supports for children and families in care.

Ms Notley: What this government is prioritizing is \$4.7 billion to wealthy corporations. We are talking about 500 young people, many living with trauma, addiction, and mental health issues. The Child and Youth Advocate says that this change will hurt young people who need more support, not less. Premier, these traumatized youth live most of their lives in the foster system, taken from their parents, separated from their siblings, and growing up in a revolving door of homes. At the same time that you are giving billions of dollars to corporations, you are putting these kids on the street. What is wrong with you?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Schulz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last few months were provided to us as a ministry to look at how we deliver services across the province. What we saw in this particular program was a natural drop-off in support and financial assistance agreements once recipients turn 22. That's for a number of reasons. As the member opposite referenced, these cases are often extremely complex. It's also clear that many of these young adults should be transitioned to begin lifelong support services and mentoring relationships rather than continuing in the child intervention space. My ministry will continue to support young adults as they transition from children in protection into adulthood.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, this cruel and heartless decision is traumatizing an already traumatized group of people, and you should be ashamed. This weekend I heard directly from tearful and scared child support workers and the young adults for whom they care. They say that this is going to lead to homelessness and even suicide. This is an emergency. Will the Premier support our call for an emergency debate so that he can explain to this House why we can afford \$4.7 billion in a corporate handout but not \$10 million to protect these young people?

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services has the call.

Ms Schulz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said time and time again, we will continue to support the most vulnerable children and families in our province. Given the importance of transitioning young adults out of care and into the adult system, the plan was for

caseworkers who have strong relationships with these vulnerable young people to work through the changes over the next number of months as they move from child intervention into adulthood. However, once again the members opposite chose to take to Twitter to play politics and increase fear and uncertainty amongst Albertans while sharing only a small portion of the facts. We will continue to focus on supporting the most . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Police Funding

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government has also been in full, cold, heartless spin mode when it comes to police funding, but a reality check is in order: \$5 million to \$9 million cut from Edmonton police; \$13 million cut from Calgary police. This Premier is making police foot the bill for forensic testing, the very tests that solve murders and solve rapes. To the Premier: will he admit here and now that his corporate handout comes at a cost of the very safety of Albertans, that this means fewer officers in our community? Can he be honest just once?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the budget that we put forward. Albertans elected us to get our fiscal house in order, and that is what we are doing right now. In addition to that, we made police funding a priority. Not only are we increasing funding, but we're increasing funding to police to combat organized crime. We said last week that municipalities need to get their fiscal house in order and stop playing games with policing. Albertans want them to fund policing. We'd encourage municipalities to do the same.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, they are cutting more than \$80 million from police over four years in the two big cities alone. The folks over there are intentionally, in a calculated way misleading Albertans. The Premier needs to listen to the Calgary police chief. He says that this budget means, quote, a collective diminishment of capacity. He says that there's nothing left to cut but boots on the ground. Is the Premier calling Calgary's police chief a liar? If not, will he start telling the truth and reverse this minister's devastating cuts to police?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, I've talked to Chief Neufeld, and I also made sure, when I talked to him, that I said clearly that he should talk to his mayor, ask his mayor to fund policing. The municipalities are the ones that set the funding levels for policing. In this budget we made tough decisions, but one of those decisions that we made was to make sure that we continued funding the two police grants that we have. They are fully funded. In addition to that, we found additional money to go after organized crime with additional funding for ALERT. It's time for municipalities to tighten their belts but to fund policing and end the pet projects.

Ms Notley: Well, the people over there are generating fake news. When faced with the truth of his cuts to police in Calgary, the Premier's spokesperson said that it was, quote, LOLZ, and denied the funding relationship between the government and the city of Calgary, one that appears in the budget in black and white. LOLZ, Mr. Speaker. Are the Premier and his staff literally laughing out loud as they cut police funding to Calgary during a spike in gun violence?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, to go after illegal guns: that's why we found additional money for ALERT, to make sure we crack down on organized crime.

Mr. Speaker, we've invited all the members opposite to come hear about their legacy on crime. This week we're going to be in Rocky Mountain House to hear about the NDP legacy on rural crime. Will they or will they not come to hear about their record on rural crime? I think that the answer is going to be no, but I want to invite them one last time to come and hear about their record on rural crime.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Education Budget 2019-2020

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, this Premier promised to, quote, maintain or increase education funding, yet every single school board is grappling with deep cuts. No funding for 60,000 kids but \$4.7 billion for big corporations. Boards are forced to choose between firing teachers or jacking up fees on parents or both. Rocky View school district said that they got \$10 million less than what this Premier promised and now, quote, service levels will decrease, and class sizes will be impacted. To the Premier: why did he break yet another promise to Albertans?

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

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. As promised during the election, we said that we were going to maintain education funding, and we are maintaining education funding. Every single student that crosses through our doors will be funded, as we said we would do. Promise made, promise kept. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have no problem hearing the question; however, I'm having significant difficulty hearing the answer.

Ms Notley: Well, you know what, Mr. Speaker? The member opposite should look up the term "shell game" because she is the queen of it. Elk Island public school district says that the cuts total more than \$9 million. Elk Island Catholic schools say that their cut is \$2.4 million. With increased enrolment and evolving student needs, Elk Island public says that it will have to make, quote, difficult choices, which means that they may have to fire teachers. This is the exact opposite of what this Premier promised in the last election. Premier, tell the truth. Why are you cutting funding to kids in school just so you can pay for a \$4.7 billion corporate handout?

2:00

Member LaGrange: Well, Mr. Speaker, over 98 per cent of the Education budget flows directly to the school authorities, who deliver the services to our students. By reallocating restrictive grant funding and eliminating reporting requirements, we have reduced red tape and provided school boards with the additional flexibility to meet their local priorities. Education remains a top priority. It will always remain a top priority for this government.

Ms Notley: I urge the minister to speak to school boards. St. Albert public says that they will have \$4.6 million less next year alone, all while more kids walk through the door. How can the minister not understand it? They say, quote: a funding cut of this size cannot be managed without adjusting staffing levels and classroom sizes. They will have to fire teachers and EAs. There is no choice. Mr. Speaker, the Premier can't pretend he wasn't briefed on this. Come clean: how many Alberta teachers are going to be fired because of this government's broken-promise budget?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education has risen.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. We continue to invest \$8.223 billion in education every year. We invested that much last year. We're investing this much this year as well. Budget 2019 clearly highlights that. The NDP continue to smear and fear when, in fact, they were wrong on the nutrition program funding, they were wrong on enrolment growth funding, and they were wrong on the overall budget. We are maintaining . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. The hon. Minister of Education was nearly finished her answer. I'm not sure if she has anything to respond with, but I certainly couldn't hear the end of it. Go ahead if you would like.

Member LaGrange: Sure. I would just continue along to say that we are continuing to invest in education. It is a huge priority for us. Our boards have said continually that they want sustainable, predictable funding, and that's . . .

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

Support for Youth Transitioning out of Care (continued)

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I had the pleasure of meeting an incredible young woman named Shyannah Sinclair. Shyannah grew up in government care and has overcome many, many obstacles. She has a four-year-old daughter and a plan she made years ago to finish school and pursue her career passions by the time she's 24. Now her future is in jeopardy because of this government's heartless cuts to the support and financial assistance agreement program. To the Premier: explain to Shyannah and 500 other young adults about to lose this critical support why you don't seem to care about their future.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Children's Services has risen.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my previous response, we are committed to supporting those most vulnerable in our province instead of creating fear and uncertainty on social media, on Twitter, allowing these young people to work with their caseworkers to transition. Examples like this are exactly why we increased funding to the advancing futures program, which provides supports not only for postsecondary but also for living expenses while former children in care are accessing postsecondary education. We will continue to support these young people transitioning into adulthood.

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

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, you need to listen to the young people who are talking to you. Their lives are at stake. This government willingly gave over \$4.7 billion to big corporations and boasted about it. I'm not sure why given that it hasn't created a single job. Then they snuck in the cuts to SFAA, and it was only after being grilled in estimates this week that the minister admitted she'd made this terrible, cruel cut. To the Premier: did you hide this cut because you knew just how awful it was?

Ms Schulz: In typical fashion of the member opposite, the over-the-top rhetoric is completely false. Mr. Speaker, this plan is certainly under way in advance of the next budget year. That's why caseworkers will be reaching out to these young adults who are transitioning out of the child intervention system and into adult programs. We also know that many of these young people in this

group will better receive supports in the adult programs that best meet their unique needs.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, again. We're hearing from outreach workers and young people themselves that their lives are at stake. That is not fearmongering. That is fact. Thank you. Joining Shyannah and me this morning was long-time outreach worker Wallis Kendal. Wallis knows what he's talking about. He's a long-time outreach worker and said that one of his clients is putting off addictions treatment while figuring out how to deal with these cuts. Wallis said, and this is a quote: the only thing that changes a youth's future is knowing that they have a future. To the Premier: last chance; will you give these young adults a future and reverse these cruel cuts immediately?

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to empower our front-line caseworkers to work to support young adults who are transitioning out of child intervention . . .

Ms Notley: There's no money for that. You gave it to Husky.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order.

Ms Schulz: . . . and into adult services that better meet their needs.

Mr. Speaker, we're also working with community partners to identify how we can better support these young adults as they transition out of the system. I won't take lessons from the members opposite, who didn't even fully fund child intervention services. But I can tell you that we're doing the right thing. We are funding the encumbrance from last year to support vulnerable kids and families, and funding increases will remain for Children's Services over the next four years.

Rural Health Care

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of West Yellowhead we have several communities with fully functional hospitals, but due to the distance between communities these hospitals need to be able to service a population often much larger than the town itself. In 1966 the Whitecourt health centre opened, with the ability to service the then population of 2,200. Since that time the health centre is serving more than 10 times that initial population. To the Minister of Health: why has the town of Whitecourt not received an upgrade to the health centre or additional facilities since 1966?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the capacity challenges in Whitecourt and across the province as well. We're dealing with those challenges as best we can as a government given the fiscal mess we were left with after four years of the NDP. We've had to make some tough decisions on capital projects to slow the growth of debt which we leave to the next generation. There has been some investment and some upgrades to the Whitecourt health centre, including a new renal dialysis unit. Alberta Infrastructure's facility condition assessment report does rate the facility as being in good condition.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Given that the current lab system in the Whitecourt hospital is only on an

interim accreditation status and given the incredible lack of storage, meeting, and work space and given that we are all aware that our government must show fiscal restraint after 12 of the past 13 years of government not balancing the budget, how is the minister going to ensure that rural communities and their health needs are a priority for this government?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health is rising.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. AHS has identified the lab as a priority in Whitecourt, and planning is under way for upgrades. As the member points out, there are unique challenges in delivering rural health care. We're increasing access to primary care by funding 30 new nurse practitioners, almost all of them outside of Edmonton and Calgary. We're also working with AHS to increase telehealth and other solutions for remote areas, including the most advanced model in Canada for on-scene treatment of heart attacks by paramedics.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Whitecourt was promised a new health centre as early as 1993 and again in 2012 and given that as I talk to many rural MLAs, I'm hearing similar stories of inadequate health service delivery and given that rural communities do contribute immensely to our provincial GDP and just want to have the services they require, what is the Minister of Health doing to ensure that rural communities receive comparable quality and access to health care as Albertans in Edmonton and Calgary?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The basic challenges in health care are the same across the province, primary care and system capacity. We're going to keep investing in primary care through the nurse practitioners, that I mentioned, and other initiatives as well like increasing access to midwifery, and we're going to increase system capacity by adding new continuing care beds through the successful ASLI partnership with our continuing care providers. The AHS review as well is going to help find savings to reinvest in increasing capacity. A great example of the kind of change we need is our recent decision to expand the scope of practice for LPNs.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Buffalo has a question.

2:10

Municipal Funding

Member Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A little over an hour ago the mayors of Calgary and Edmonton and the presidents of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta issued a statement expressing deep concern with changes to their funding under the UCP government's budget. I'll table that statement shortly. They state that their "funding will grow at only half the rate of provincial revenue each year." Bluntly, they say that municipalities will be left behind. To the minister: why are you leaving municipalities in the dust while racing ahead with your – wait for it – \$4.7 billion giveaway to big corporations?

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

Mr. Madu: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Let me be clear. We have been working very closely with our municipal partners to come forward with a framework that they have been asking for

years. We will not at any point in time take instruction from these members opposite. They left us – I think the question they should be asking themselves is: why is it that after four years we are now dealing with more than \$60 billion in debt? I know that the members opposite have no idea how to make money, but they know how to spend money.

Member Ceci: Given that we'll get to the framework in a second and given that we already know that this government snuck a clause into their omnibus legislation, Bill 20, that could very well kill the green line LRT in Calgary and the valley line LRT in Edmonton and given that the Premier had previously committed to both of these projects but now seems to be backing away from that commitment, to the Premier or the minister: commit here and now that both LRT lines will be built and opened on time. If you won't commit, what are you hiding?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, part of our election campaign was to commit to the funding committed for the Calgary and Edmonton LRTs. That's \$1.53 billion for Calgary, \$1.47 billion for Edmonton. If the hon. member simply checks a clause of the legislation that's before the House right now, he will realize that that's a promise made and a promise kept.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo will know he has another question, so I'm sure he's happy to ask it now.

Member Ceci: Thank you kindly, Mr. Speaker. Given that Barry Morishita, the AUMA president, said that his organization is "extremely disappointed" that a UCP election promise was broken with the repeal of the City Charters Fiscal Framework Act and given that Edmonton's mayor, Don Iveson, says that the role of municipalities has been lessened by this government as a result of the fiscal framework changes, to the minister. You continue to disrespect our municipal leaders and countless other Alberta organizations. Is it true that you have to be a really big, profitable organization to get any time with this government?

Mr. Madu: Mr. Speaker, I am going to read a quote from the AUMA president: our members have already been doing a lot to help the province meet its goals, and this budget is the impetus for the next stage of that particular work. A second quote from the AUMA president: the government of Alberta's announcement of a new local government fiscal framework represents continued support and collaboration between the province and the municipalities. I think what is hard for the members opposite to understand is that we are not going to continue to fund the infrastructure of tomorrow if we embark on the multibillion-dollar . . .

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

Postsecondary Education Budget 2019-2020

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The president of MacEwan University said last week about this UCP's terrible postsecondary budget, and I quote: it's certainly the largest in-year reduction to the budget I've ever seen; with these levels of reduction to our funding, we will have to reduce our staff levels. Some reports indicate that a hundred or more positions will be lost at MacEwan alone. Can the Minister of Advanced Education please explain to students at MacEwan why there's no money for professors but there are billions available for big corporations?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're just in the beginning of working with our students and postsecondary leaders to fundamentally transform postsecondary funding in the province of Alberta. The current model that we have is, quite frankly, quite antiquated and outdated. Our institutions deserve much more clarity and predictability in terms of funding from government. It's something that I know our institutions have been asking for and that our students have been asking for as well, and I believe we have the opportunity now to correct that problem.

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

Mr. Eggen: Thank you. Well, you know, given that funding postsecondary education is neither antiquated nor inappropriate and given that in addition to hiking tuition and slashing funding, this minister is also removing 100 per cent of MacEwan's infrastructure maintenance, can the minister please explain to students at MacEwan why there's no money to replace aging buildings on campus but billions available for big corporations?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, as I already stated in this House, the capital maintenance and renewal budget is suspended for this year and this year alone. That budget will come back online in subsequent years so that our institutions have the funding that they need in order to continue on with capital maintenance and renewal programs, that are important for their individual institutions.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite just wants to gloss over the problem. Over the last 15 years we have had a 106 per cent increase in funding to our institutions while enrolment has only increased at 21 per cent. It's not sustainable. We need a better way.

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, I mean, given that funding postsecondary education is not glossing over postsecondary education and given that the minister sat in cabinet while it was agreed to dole out billions for a no-jobs corporate handout but couldn't even bother to speak up for something as petty as adding interest to student loans or fixing buildings in our universities, to the minister: why did you not speak up for our postsecondary students? Or did the Premier simply not listen to you?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is mistaken. I didn't say that funding is glossing over; I said that he and the members opposite were glossing over the problems. They avoided dealing with the problem. They didn't want to address it at all, which is why we have to address the problem now. Under their leadership we saw a postsecondary system that is rudderless, that is driving costs through the roof. It costs us \$36,000 per student compared to B.C., which is \$31,000, and \$21,000 in Ontario. He wants to quote the president of Grant MacEwan. I'll quote the former president of Grant MacEwan, who said that the ongoing tuition freeze is like being stoned to death with popcorn.

Public Safety and Justice Administration

Mr. Toor: Mr. Speaker, my constituents have been concerned about the increase in violence in northeast Calgary for some time. At the same time, we have seen the city of Calgary cut back on funding to the police, and residents of my community are concerned there will be fewer police officers on the street. Can the Justice minister tell this House what steps are being taken to address any budgetary constraints while ensuring that my constituents have a justice system that protects victims and prosecutes criminals?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we were shocked at the neglect in the justice system when we came to office. Programs like MS-DOS are being used in the justice system, a program developed in 1981, when I was two years old. We still use fax machines as one of the most efficient ways – let me say that again; one of the most efficient ways – to file documents in the justice system. It is simply shocking. We're making a historic investment to update our courts. Also, the 25 prosecutors that the NDP promised weren't there. We have to hire that backlog and then hire 50 more prosecutors.

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

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that I have heard from my responsible and legal firearms owners that they are worried about comments made by a member of city council, who has expressed his desire to ban handguns in the city of Calgary, and given that the vast majority of crimes are committed with illegal guns, many of which are smuggled from the United States, can the minister tell the Assembly what steps our government is taking to protect legal firearms owners while prosecuting criminals?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we need to crack down on illegal guns in Alberta. That's why we've increased funding to the Alberta law enforcement response teams. They've done amazing work getting guns and drugs off the street and cracking down on crime. They work in collaboration with our local law enforcement officials. I'm proud of the work the Alberta law enforcement response teams do. That's why even in these tough times we found additional money for policing, to go after organized crime, and to get those illegal guns off our streets.

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Calgary has seen property crime increase, especially around the new drug consumption sites, and given that these kinds of crimes erode people's trust in society and in the government, can the Justice minister tell the Assembly what this government is doing to ensure that every Albertan feels safe and secure?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, public safety is the foundation of our democracy. While I have the honour to serve in this role, I will not relent in speaking up for law-abiding Albertans. Also, we continue to go out and talk to Albertans across this province about their frustrations with the justice system. I will continue to be their voice to make sure that we bring reasonable steps forward. Their voice is resulting in new policies here that will keep Albertans safe.

Film and Television Industry Support

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's film industry is speaking out against this UCP government's budget. Local producers are warning that cuts to the screen-based production grants will force productions to leave our province. Last week HGTV productions announced that they will be moving to British Columbia, after operating in Alberta for over 37 years, because this UCP government misled Albertans about diversifying the economy. Can the minister of economic development and trade clarify why she's turning her back on the film industry just to pursue a no-jobs corporate handout?

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

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government committed to implementing a filming tax credit in our election platform. We committed to that. A tax credit provides long-term stability and will help to attract large-scale productions. Converting the screen production grant into a tax credit brings us more in line with the incentives offered by other provinces.

Mr. Bilous: You're screwing up both.

Given that one film producer recently went as far as to say that this UCP budget will kill the film industry in Alberta and given that, unlike here in Alberta, the provincial governments of Manitoba and B.C. are actually working to grow and support their film industries, can the minister please tell this House when she will start working to grow Alberta's film industry and stop handing Alberta jobs to Manitoba and B.C.?

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

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are maintaining \$45 million in funding while transitioning from the screen production grant to the film and television tax credit. The proposed film and television tax credit will be part of our commitment to grow Alberta's cultural industries by 25 per cent over the next decade.

Mr. Bilous: Given that the Alberta film industry generates returns of \$4.50 for every dollar invested and given that in 2017 film and TV productions created 5,350 direct and spinoff full-time jobs, Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: I would have thought supporting a diversified economy would be your job, but if you won't do that, would you please stop destroying the industries that we already have here in Alberta?

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

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The previous \$45 million screen-based production grant program was severely mismanaged by the NDP. In fact, former NDP MLA Craig Coolahan said that the NDP screwed it up. After evaluating the program, we learned that \$92 million had already been committed in screen-based grants by the NDP, \$21 million of which was committed to mere days before the election call.

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

Public Service Pension Fund Administration

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of Finance confirm whether he is abolishing joint governance for the special forces pension plan that covers police officers?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, we are working to strengthen our pension plans in this province. We are taking concrete moves to eliminate redundancies and improve efficiencies. This move will strengthen pensions. It will strengthen and reduce risk for pension holders, and it will return value for both pension holders and Albertans.

Ms Phillips: Sounds like a yes.

Given that the Alberta teachers' retirement fund has been jointly governed since 1939 and given that this minister gave his word in estimates that he would produce the business case prepared by Treasury Board and the business case prepared by AIMCo that support his decision to move the ATRF into AIMCo, will the minister confirm that he will provide these documents to this House and to the boards of ATRF, LAPP, special forces plan, and PSPP?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, we will provide the business case that we've used to make these decisions, but what's really important here is that we are taking, again, concrete moves that will improve and strengthen pensions, that will reduce risk for pension holders, that will reduce costs for Albertans. The previous government did not pay attention to finding efficiencies, reducing risk. They were a government that brought additional risk onto Albertans with virtually every move they made. We will not make that mistake.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that the minister just now didn't commit to sharing a Treasury Board and Finance business case, only from AIMCo, and given that this government has made a number of partisan and ideological moves under the guise of professional public service, will the Minister of Finance also produce to this House the written professional advice he has received from Treasury Board and Finance officials regarding repealing joint governance for the various pension funds paid into by teachers, firefighters, police, nurses, municipal workers, corrections officers, and many, many more; in all, a quarter of a million Albertans?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, again, we are making moves that will improve the returns for pension holders in this province. We are making moves that will reduce the risk for Albertans and pension holders. We are making moves that will bring fiscal responsibility to this province. Albertans elected this government to bring this province to balance, to manage its resources responsibly. That is what we're doing. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek has the call.

Community Grant Programs

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. School parent councils, community groups, and other local nonprofits benefit greatly from access to various grants under the community facility enhancement program and community initiatives program. These programs, funded primarily from lottery and gaming proceeds, ensure that these all-important organizations can complement community grassroots fundraising to ensure their ability to undertake meaningful and impactful projects in their communities. To the minister: will CFEP and CIP continue to be funded by lottery funds, and will such funds continue to be segregated from general revenues?

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

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The lottery fund is being moved into the general revenue, and lottery dollars will actually continue to flow through CIP and CFEP funds. We're continuing to invest as always into the arts and culture and into communities, and the process that you actually apply with will continue to be the same. Organizations that are conducting charitable casino events will still receive 15 per cent of the proceeds generated from slot machines in charitable casinos.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Albertans rejected the overspending ways of a one-term NDP government and given that Albertans embraced this government's compassionate but responsible leadership and given that this government recognizes that the entrepreneurial and volunteer spirit of Albertans flows

freely into the nonprofit sector, can the minister inform Albertans on how this government will continue to strengthen and expand those partnerships with lean, mean, and passionate community and nonprofit groups in building community capacity and an enviable civil society? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Hon. members, I know that I usually have a hard time hearing the answer, but in this case I actually had a hard time hearing the question, if you can believe it.

The hon. minister for culture has the call.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Me too.

I was going to say that the ministry continues. What we want to do is be able to elevate nonprofits by strengthening their management and operational capacities. We have this amazing department. They support facilitation and training and leadership and skill development. In fact, we were really honoured this last week to be able to put some dollars towards a really, really great group of people. It's called Free Footie. You might know who they are. This funding actually goes towards helping especially new Canadians and refugee children.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the community facility enhancement program and community initiative program are effective, impactful, and generally well leveraged against private donor funding, which the members opposite tried to send out of this province, and given that the recent budget focuses on balancing fiscal prudence with compassionate investment and given that funding stability and predictability are essential in building community capacity, expertise, and impact, can the minister further share her long-range vision for these partnerships and the future of these granting programs so that I may share this with my constituents in Calgary-Fish Creek?

2:30

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

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, and thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to be able to dispel some of the fear and the concerns that are going on. As per usual, people will be able to apply for these funds as they have been before. A lot of the not-for-profits were caught up in a lot of bureaucratic red tape, so we've been really, really fortunate to be able to change that to e-transfer. It's a difference of sometimes six months in getting dollars into particular funds and making sure that we're building capacity right away.

Again, in the summer we were able to work with Ken Goosen – he's the producer of GlobalFest – who works with vulnerable children. Our community is really happy and honoured to work with these folks.

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

Indigenous Relations Budget 2019-2020

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This budget is deeply unfair to the indigenous people of Alberta. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations will oversee a 36 per cent cut to supports and services, and this government has undertaken this cut while touting a \$4.5 billion corporate giveaway that hasn't created a single job. Can the Minister of Indigenous Relations please explain why Alberta's indigenous people are being asked to do more with less and to pay for a jobless corporate giveaway?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government who's working so hard to build a relationship with

indigenous communities all across this province. I was proud to sit with the Premier when he brought leaders from every indigenous community across the province to Government House at the beginning of his mandate to have what was really a historical meeting, that unfortunately the NDP had stopped. I assure you that our government will continue to work hard to build our partnerships with indigenous communities all across this province to make sure that they can share in our joint prosperity.

Mr. Feehan: Given that in black and white on page 144 the fiscal plan shows the \$4.7 billion giveaway and given that this government eliminated the indigenous climate leadership program, which has been accessed by all 48 First Nations and all eight Métis settlements, can the Minister of Indigenous Relations explain why he's eliminating this program, which provided a clear reflection of indigenous values on the environment? Is it just so that you can pay for the jobless corporate tax giveaway that you're championing?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, we heard clearly from indigenous communities all across the province that they want to be partners with us in prosperity. That's why we started the indigenous opportunities corporation. We're proud of that. In fact, what I've heard from indigenous leadership is that they're happy that the NDP government is gone now and that there is a government currently in power inside Alberta that is working toward shared prosperity, standing up for our energy industry. One thing I heard clearly from many chiefs is how disappointed they were in the former government, who did not stand up for our energy industry and did not stand up for joint prosperity, in fact even voted against pipelines.

Mr. Feehan: Mr. Speaker, given that we also know that the indigenous housing capital program has been eliminated and given that, as my colleagues have pointed out, supports for indigenous children in care are also being cut off earlier and given that while the minister continues to offer buzzwords and platitudes with no real action, funding cuts have eliminated programs and reduced supports in areas where we need the most support, can you please explain why it seems that indigenous people are among those paying for your failed corporate giveaway experiment?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government that has an indigenous affairs minister like we do, one who is completely dedicated to working with indigenous communities across the province. He's done an excellent job. Our government is proud of him. He's travelled north to south, east to west to meet with indigenous communities from all across this province, working towards joint prosperity.

I see the hon. member has not bothered to answer for why he stopped having those joint meetings with the indigenous communities across the province, and our government had to restart them. The reality is this. We're proud of our indigenous affairs minister. We'll continue to work towards building our relationship with indigenous communities all across this province.

Marshall House Emergency Shelter in Fort McMurray

Ms Renaud: The Marshall House emergency shelter in Fort McMurray has been closed by the Minister of Community and Social Services. This comes on top of the government's cancellation of rent supplements, which will mean a cold winter for many Wood Buffalo residents. Marshall House is the only shelter in the area that will take people who are intoxicated, and now those struggling individuals have nowhere to go. To the minister: why would a government claiming to care about the opioid epidemic push addicts into the streets while giving corporations a \$4.7 billion gift?

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

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government takes helping Albertans seriously, and we are rolling out a comprehensive mental health and addiction strategy that includes people who are suffering from homelessness. As of this morning we announced that we're appointing a new advisory committee. We're rolling out our \$140 million commitment. That will include helping people who are struggling in homeless shelters and other places. We are taking a comprehensive approach in attacking this issue.

Ms Renaud: The gymnastics to not answer a question are unreal.

Given that there was not enough capacity at the Salvation Army facility in Fort McMurray to house all those in need and given that the Salvation Army will only accept residents after they sober up, to the Minister of Community and Social Services: why are you pushing addicts onto the street in Fort McMurray at the coldest point in the winter? Is your solution to the opioid crisis to simply hope that addicts freeze to death?

The Speaker: The Member for St. Albert will know that we are well past question 4, so preambles are not allowed.

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I just want to say that this government is committed to helping and serving the most vulnerable in our province, and that includes those who are experiencing homelessness. In regard to the Marshall House, it had been operating significantly under capacity, and the savings that we're going to achieve from closing that down are going to be consolidated with the Salvation Army. We are going to be increasing funding for the Salvation Army.

Ms Renaud: Given that the government doesn't seem to hear the question – Marshall House has capacity for a hundred beds; the Salvation Army does not accept people until they're sober; the two are different – why are you closing capacity in Fort McMurray and tossing people out in the winter?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear in my answer. We are expanding capacity with the Salvation Army. The Marshall House was operating quite a bit, significantly, under capacity, which is why we made the fiscally responsible decision to shut that down, consolidate services, and expand capacity with the Salvation Army.

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

Infrastructure Project Management

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We owe it to the hard-working people of this province to ensure that their tax dollars are spent in an effective and transparent way, especially when it comes to investing in infrastructure projects that better our province for everyone. To the Minister of Infrastructure: what is your ministry doing to ensure that dollars are invested and projects are completed in the most effective way possible?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, having worked on major projects in my previous life, I know that projects can easily slip sideways unless they are properly planned and executed. That's why I'm proactively monitoring the construction of various projects across the province to ensure that contractors deliver on their contractual commitments to complete projects on time, on budget, safely, and with a high degree of quality. For new projects, I will ensure that the scope is sufficiently completed before we invite bids.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Minister. Given that finding the right people for the right project is a critical part of the procurement process and further given that infrastructural investment must be built to last and that these projects should employ Alberta businesses first and help get Albertans back to work, how is this ministry balancing quality and cost-efficiency throughout the procurement process for publicly funded projects?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, we will take the ideological lens out of the decision-making process and focus on what is best and how best we can deliver value for Albertans. As promised in our campaign platform, we are looking at alternative procurement and alternative financing for various projects, and we will carefully review each project on its own merit. We will look at public-private partnerships to deliver high-quality projects built fast, on time, and on budget and also include innovation in the upfront design.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Minister. Given that we know public projects can cost the taxpayer more than initially invested when they are poorly planned and poorly executed and given that we must find ways to cut red tape in order to invest public funds directly into projects rather than into feeding bureaucracy, how is this same ministry cutting red tape and ensuring proper stewardship of public investment in these projects?

2:40

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, during the spring election Albertans elected our government to restore fiscal balance and get Albertans back to work, so red tape reduction is very important for our government and my department. Recently, for example, we updated the policy to remove a requirement for a new appraisal on properties to be sold that are within 15 per cent of the last external appraisal. That itself will save thousands of dollars for Albertans. A lot more work is being done in the background, and I hope to share that in the near future.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will move to the rest of the daily Routine.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Calgary-North would like to make a statement.

Junior Achievement

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November is Financial Literacy Month. Throughout November organizations and individuals from across the country are encouraged to host and participate in events and share resources aimed at helping Canadians learn how to manage their personal finances successfully. Junior Achievement is an essential program which supports entrepreneur education and promotes skills and business leadership in our young people. We are lucky enough to have a delegation from Junior Achievement here today to assist MLAs in expanding their programs to their respective ridings.

Entrepreneurship and business acumen are difficult to teach in the classroom setting, and this program has amazing success. Generally speaking, these are skills that are best developed through mentorship arrangements. Junior Achievement is committed to inspire and prepare youth to succeed in a global economy. Financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship give students the skills and the confidence they need to become the leaders of tomorrow. Junior Achievement programs produce more financially

literate young people who grow up to save more and borrow less than the average Canadian.

I used to be a volunteer with Junior Achievement during my time at Imperial Oil. As a volunteer I saw students learning the value of self-confidence and of self-investment in building a successful future. Junior Achievement does a great job of utilizing the particular skill set of their volunteers to teach youth about real-world business opportunities.

Junior Achievement contributes to all Albertans when it inspires young people to become future business leaders. Mr. Speaker, our province prides itself on being a hot spot for innovation and entrepreneurship, and Junior Achievement exemplifies these values.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows has a statement.

New High School in Southeast Edmonton

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, through this House, I would like to mention that during the Education committee estimates held on October 29, 2019, there was not much hope when I asked the Education minister a question about a much-needed high school in my constituency of Edmonton-Meadows. Three days later an announcement was made, on November 1, 2019, by the current UCP government to fund 15 new schools across the province, out of which there are four new future schools in Edmonton.

First of all, I would like to thank the Minister of Education and the government for this announcement and for considering the urgent need for a high school in the Edmonton-Meadows riding, which has more than the average population in any other riding across the city and is growing at a very fast pace.

Currently the design funding has been allocated for the development of this high school. But the need for a high school in the Meadows area was identified as a top priority by EPSB in its three-year capital plan 2020-2023 and with legitimate concerns that the public division will be out of high school space if the new school is not built by 2022. The cost of building was estimated at \$79 million by EPSB and would allow 1,800 students to attend high school near their homes.

As every school board struggles to deal with provincial cuts to pay for this government's \$4.7 billion handout, my constituents need to know the detailed plan of how and when this school will be built and how they plan to fill this school with teachers and guarantee that every student has the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I recognize the Member for Airdrie-Cochrane.

Federal Policies and East-west Relations

Mr. Guthrie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 21 the people of Canada spoke in a result that had Liberals winning a minority government while losing the popular vote. In Alberta and Saskatchewan the Liberals were completely shut out, not winning a single riding, with Conservatives obtaining a huge majority of those votes.

But in order to win this election, Justin Trudeau pitted east against west. He created an inaccurate narrative to cloud opinions on Canada's resource sectors, becoming the first Prime Minister to run on a platform to purposely divide the country. Since the election, Mr. Trudeau has made comments about mending fences with the west and has indicated that TMX will be a priority for his government, but he still holds to bills C-69 and C-48, that restrict

Alberta's access to global markets and severely limit our ability to attract investment.

In the midst of a smokescreen that was created by the Liberals during the election, many tax changes were being contemplated such as increasing the carbon tax, increasing capital gains taxes, introducing inheritance taxes, and taxing homeowners with the sale of their primary residences. These proposed changes will punish Canadians and harm the economy at a time when some economists are warning of recessionary pressures. As Alberta's economy suffers, so does our ability to contribute to Confederation.

If this federal government is serious about repairing the fragile relationship with the west, they should start by slowing down and listening to the west. There is no need to appoint a liaison to advise the Prime Minister on our issue. Alberta already has a very capable person who spent hundreds of hours in a blue pickup truck criss-crossing the province listening to everyday Albertans. I suggest the Prime Minister listen to him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Budget 2019 and Government Accountability

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There used to be a time when prairie conservatives believed in personal responsibility. It is a sad spectacle to see this government abandon that philosophy. Every day we are seeing people's lives made worse by this government's \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout. But for every problem this government has caused, they've got someone else to blame.

This government is lying about education funding. Now classrooms are getting crowded, bus rides getting longer, and kids with complex needs are losing their EAs. The Education minister says: blame your school district.

This government is lying about police funding even as rural and urban communities struggle with crime. The chiefs of police in Edmonton and Calgary both say that the province raided their budgets. The Justice minister: well, he says to blame your mayor.

Then there's this Premier. He recently gathered up his entire communications team to help him go take credit for the opening of a new McDonald's that was being built even before the election. That's got to be a first for an Alberta Premier. Earlier this year the Premier was standing in EnCana place in Calgary when he unveiled his \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout. How's that for irony, Mr. Speaker? EnCana was happy to take hundreds of millions of dollars from Alberta taxpayers before moving their operations to another country. Husky was just as happy to receive tens of millions from our province before laying off their workers. Once again, this Premier is trying to shift the blame. Earlier in his career this Premier used to denounce bracket creep as an insidious tax grab. Now, well, he writes them into his own budgets.

It's a pitiful sight, Mr. Speaker, to see a Premier and his cabinet so quick to blame others and so unwilling to take responsibility for their own actions, and it's a sad time for Alberta to see our province led by a cabinet who is unmoved by the cries of the most vulnerable in our society.

Speaker's Ruling Parliamentary Language

The Speaker: Hon. member, while I appreciate that you are speaking about the government and not an individual, last week this Speaker provided caution with respect to the use of the word "lying." We've had significant discussion about using the word

around “misled,” but I provided very, very clear caution with respect to “lying.” You can rise, apologize, and withdraw your comments.

Mr. Carson: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw my comments.

2:50 Family Violence Prevention Month

Mr. Sigurdson: November 1 was the beginning of Family Violence Prevention Month, and on Friday, to start the month, I attended the second annual Breakfast with the Guys fundraiser put on by the Rowan House Society. The Rowan House is a family shelter located in the foothills that works to provide families leading-edge care in domestic violence services. Currently there are over 350,000 cases of domestic violence in Canada per year. Breakfast with the Guys started last year as an educational seminar to help recognize the things we can do to bring awareness and help change the tide on domestic violence.

During the breakfast we heard from Mike Cameron, a Canadian writer, speaker, and philanthropist. Mike shared with a sold-out room the story of how his girlfriend was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 2015. It was a courageous glimpse into a journey none of us would choose yet, in a sense, we're all on. It provided an opportunity to reflect on a subject we desperately need to talk about, a reflection that we need to close the gap between who we wish to be and how we actually are behaving.

We need to constantly be aware that we all have a part to play when it comes to preventing domestic violence and abuse. Violence, bullying, and abuse are issues that should not stay behind closed doors. They are the responsibility of the whole community. The victims are people you know in your workplace, on your daughter's sports team, around you when you are out with your friends. Together, through education and awareness, we can create a safer future for those who live with violence every day.

Today as a symbol of this important month of reflection I wear a purple ribbon and wear purple shoelaces in support of Rowan House's shoelace initiative, a small symbol to help raise awareness. I hope we can all come together and show our support in their stand against bullying and abuse. We need to continue to raise the volume on this critical issue that affects so many families across all of our communities.

Notices of Motions

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

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the appropriate time I intend to move the following motion:

Pursuant to Standing Order 30 be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to immediately halt the policy decision to lower the age of eligibility for support and financial assistance agreements from 24 to 22 as this decision hurts young people transitioning out of care.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of a piece of correspondence I received from a rural educational assistant who tells me that she makes \$40,000 a year, and while she isn't advocating for her pay to go up, she is advocating for significant increases to education funding to ensure that the kids who are doing without the educational support that they deserve get to have educational assistants in her rural riding.

Member Ceci: Mr. Speaker, I have a news release from today from the mayors of Calgary and Edmonton, AUMA president, and RMA president with regard to: Municipalities Need to Be Full Partners – A Statement on Bill 20. I have the requisite number of copies.

The Speaker: I noticed the Member for St. Albert trying to get my attention.

Ms Renaud: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C, Summary for Policymakers.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of hon. Minister LaGrange, Minister of Education, document undated, entitled Student Demographic Factors.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at points of order. The point of order raised by the Government House Leader at 2:06 has been withdrawn.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning on her notice of motion.

Ms Sweet: We withdrew both. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Sorry. There was just one point of order, at 2:06, which has now been withdrawn.

Request for Emergency Debate

The Speaker: We are at the notice of motion under SO 30 for those following along at home.

Support for Youth Transitioning out of Care

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today under Standing Order 30 on this urgent matter, being that this is the first opportunity for the Assembly to address the budget and policy decisions by this government. Members of this Assembly first became aware of the decision on Thursday, when during estimates the minister revealed that the age of eligibility for support and financial assistance agreements will be lowered from 24 to 22. In the days that followed, we heard from the community about the negative impacts that this would have on youth transitioning from care. We heard from youth, caseworkers, the office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Mr. Speaker, this decision will remove access to these supports to the tune of approximately 25 per cent of the youth currently eligible; 500 young adults will be cut off, 500 of our most vulnerable. This is urgent for many of them. This will put them into crisis mode, a mode that they spent their whole young lives in and out of, working to overcome. This is urgent because on Friday caseworkers, who had not been told in advance of this decision, began the heart-wrenching work of notifying their clients of this change. Also on Friday we heard from the office of the Child and Youth Advocate about their concerns with this plan, stating, “This will have long-term impacts.”

This is an urgent matter because once we start this ball rolling down the hill, we will not be able to stop it. It will simply be too late. Earlier we heard from the Minister of Community and Social Services about the importance of preventing family violence. Well, Mr. Speaker, these supports are part of that prevention. These youth have no natural supports, which is why they are in care. These

supports help them to break that cycle that leads to family violence, to make better choices, and to make life better for their children.

This government has a responsibility to these children, who they were the legal guardians for until they were 18, and this Assembly has a responsibility to hold this government to account. This decision was made without consultation with the very individuals who use this program and the population: these are youth themselves, their caseworkers, the office of the Child and Youth Advocate. Where is the accountability? How can the people of this province trust this government? This government needs to immediately halt this decision before it's too late.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I implore you to rule that this is an urgent matter and is worthy of debate in this Assembly today. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I just want to be clear that this is an important issue to the government. I have a couple of brief points to make on the general topic which, I believe, speak to why there isn't an urgency to the debate.

First, Children's Services is prioritizing funding for vulnerable children and families. Second, what they saw was a natural drop-off in support and financial assistance agreements once recipients turned 22 as they progressed to adulthood and entered postsecondary and the workforce. As of April 1 around 480 adults with existing support and financial assistance agreements will be transitioned off payments and onto other government services as required. The program will continue to provide four years of assistance after adulthood is reached.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would refer you to the sixth edition of *Beauchesne's*, page 113, point 387, which says:

The Standing Order is clear that the question [must] be specific and must require urgent consideration. It must deal with a matter within the administrative competence of the Government, and there must be no . . . reasonable opportunity for debate.

Page 113 of *Beauchesne's*, point 390, also states:

"Urgency" within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means "urgency of debate", when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on [an earlier] enough [timeline] and the public interest demands that discussion take place immediately.

In fact, our own standing order refers to this when it states, in Standing Order 30(7)(a), "The matter proposed for discussion must relate to a genuine emergency, calling for immediate and urgent consideration."

In a ruling on November 6, 2018, Speaker Wanner noted the importance of this when he stated, "Furthermore, I must consider whether there are other avenues for debate in the Assembly on this subject matter." I note for you, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Children's Services appeared before the Standing Committee on Families and Communities for three hours Thursday last week, and the members opposite only asked two questions on this very topic in three hours. Perhaps they might be regretting now all their fruitless points of order, but that's not relevant to the moment.

In conclusion, at this time I fail to see how the opposition has met the requirement as set out in the parliamentary authorities.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the chair is prepared to rule on whether the request for leave for this motion to proceed on Standing Order 30(2) is merited. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning has met the requirement of providing at least two hours' notice to the Speaker's office by providing the required notice, just barely, at 11:28 this morning.

The proposed motion reads as follows:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to immediately halt the policy decision to lower the age of eligibility for support and financial assistance agreements from 24 to 22 as this decision hurts young people transitioning out of care.

The relevant parliamentary authorities on the subject have been stated but are page 695 to 704 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, and *Beauchesne's* paragraphs 387 and 390.

3:00

I would like to start by noting that the request made by the member under Standing Order 30 should be in the form of a request to leave to adjourn the ordinary business of the Assembly to discuss a matter of urgent importance. It should be in the form of a substantive motion since emergency debate does not entail a decision of the Assembly as set out in Standing Order 30(6). While I am often a stickler for the rules, this does not preclude our ability to continue in an emergency debate.

As stated by many Speakers in the past, including myself, the question of urgency under Standing Order 30 refers to whether there is urgency of debate, not whether an issue itself is important or urgent. My ruling referencing this point can be found on page 60 of *Alberta Hansard* from May 27, 2019. I would like to state that I, too, believe this matter is an important matter. Whether or not it is urgent for debate is still yet to be determined.

I would also refer members' attention to pages 698 and 699 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which states that one of the criteria for determining whether a matter is truly an emergency is if it can be raised before the Assembly "within a reasonable time by other means." I think that today's question period was a perfect example, where this very issue was raised at question 1 and question 4 by the Official Opposition.

While there is no question that the issue raised by the Member for Edmonton-Manning is important, I also understand that it has been discussed as recently as last week at estimates for the Ministry of Children's Services on October 31. The issue could also be raised during the consideration of estimates that are forthcoming throughout the rest of this week or, additionally, at the upcoming debate on the appropriation bill that will in fact take place in the Legislative Assembly. I would also note that members have other opportunities to raise important issues such as during Oral Question Period or during Members' Statements.

I want to emphasize that the issue of funding for young people in care is certainly important, but I cannot find it to be a genuine emergency requiring immediate consideration as required by Standing Order 30(7). For this reason, leave is not granted, and the question shall not be put.

Hon. members, prior to proceeding to Orders of the Day, I did hear two electronic devices go off earlier during question period, certainly one in the neighbourhood of Calgary-East. Perhaps he would like to pay a fine to the Movember fund of the Speaker. Perhaps it wasn't him, but certainly it was in that general direction.

With that said, we are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Motions Other than Government Motions

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

Oil Sands and Fossil Fuels

508. Mr. Loewen moved on behalf of Ms Goodridge:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to immediately demand the federal government

recognize the benefits Alberta's oil sands and other fossil fuels provide to the people of Canada in terms of economic growth, prosperity, and support for communities across Canada.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring forward Motion 508, a private member's motion, on behalf of the Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Motion 508. I think this is an important motion because while we've seen a lot more advocacy from our province, from grassroots campaigns to CEOs of the biggest integrated oil companies around, we still face a huge problem in this province.

Now, very recently Canada's 20th Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, visited Calgary and had a discussion at the U of C with Canada's 22nd Prime Minister, Stephen Harper. Mr. Chrétien referred to, quote, so-called western alienation and a so-called crisis on energy. End quote. How tone deaf, Madam Speaker. There are profound feelings of western alienation. There is an enormous crisis in our energy sector. But the former Prime Minister went on to say that Alberta is in its current predicament because of the, quote, tar sands.

Now, when the member was drafting this motion, Madam Speaker, there was some question about what the wording should be. They discussed changing the words "oil sands" for "energy sector" or "oil and gas" and a couple other iterations. I wanted to speak to the oil sands specifically because they represent not only 64 per cent of Canada's oil production, but they also seem to garner about a hundred per cent of the environmentalist scorn. For decades now incredibly aggressive campaigns from Greenpeace and other environmentalist organizations have slandered the oil sands. They have aggressively pursued an agenda of shutting down this employer of thousands that has created so much prosperity from coast to coast. They have unfairly maligned the great people of this province and the Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche and her constituents in particular for developing the resources God blessed us with.

There's some truth to it when Chrétien says that the tar sands are the problem. The current opposition to getting a single pipeline built does stem from the ridiculous propaganda that the oil sands have been relentlessly subjected to over many years. That's why we need all the measures we've introduced, why we need our fight-back strategy and our energy war room, why we need our Energy minister to show up in Ottawa and testify against legislation they have brought in that has already de facto begun phasing out our oil sands, as our current Prime Minister put it, and why I think this motion is important. Ottawa needs to hear us loud and clear. We aren't going away quietly. We aren't going to let the Liberals from eastern Canada take away our livelihoods.

The other aspect that this motion addresses is the wealth and prosperity that the oil sands and fossil fuels generate for the country at large. We all know the stories of people across Canada who had lost their jobs and found hope and work in the oil patch. One of my favourite writers, Rex Murphy, tells it this way:

You will never read about it and you will never see it on the television set because it is a benign outcome of the fiendish oil industry. It was one of the great moments of Confederation that all people from all over Canada were summoned to the western provinces. People from provinces who had never intermingled before were working on the same project or allied projects. A renovation of Confederation at the citizen level takes place when a major project invites the brains and muscle of Canadians together at a common task and brings them in contact with each

other from people from all parts of the country. They learn by contact and common effort that this is what we share and that is what we have in common. Despite what you've heard, it is unity first and it is shared experience and it is common endeavour that constitutes the actual cement of a national feeling.

That's what the oil sands represent, Madam Speaker: the collaboration and the ingenuity of Canadians from all parts of the country building something great and developing the energy that the entire world relies on.

There are also tremendous revenues generated through taxation and royalties that flow into every region of this country from the oil sands. I think Mr. Murphy is correct to point out the dignity of work and the countless families that have been saved by finding work in the patch. Many Canadians know this to be true already, but sadly our federal government and our Prime Minister do not. We've seen the decline of our oil and gas sector hastened along by the terrible policy of the Trudeau Liberals. The Premier has pointed out that during the campaign Justin Trudeau went to Quebec and talked about fighting les grands pétroliers Albertains, the big oil companies in Alberta. Well, be it Syncrude, Suncor, CNRL, Husky, Imperial, or Nexen, I can tell you that they put food on the tables of thousands of Alberta families. They employ some of the brightest engineers, geologists, traders, and IT professionals around. They also employ pipefitters, welders, power engineers, and electricians. They live up to the highest labour and environmental standards anywhere on the planet.

3:10

This issue has come up many times in this House for debate, and we have seen other motions passed in support of our oil industry. But for the Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche this is important to her, not only because it's personal for her and her constituents but because it is important that we do not relent in this fight against Ottawa. We must continue to stand up and speak strongly about the oil sands and what they actually represent to this country.

Cleaner energy sources cannot replace fossil fuels today, and they cannot replace fossil fuels tomorrow. It's a fact that there will be a demand for oil and gas products for decades to come. That's something environmentalists and Liberal politicians might want to ignore, but it doesn't make it any less true. So let's be clear. Inexpensive, abundant energy is what gives us the quality of life we take for granted, and the oil sands play an important role in ensuring the world has the energy it needs.

There's a sentiment that rings true to so many Albertans: why is Canada importing oil when we have the third-largest oil reserves on the planet, but we have no political will to get them to the market? Our oil trades at heavy discounts because of a political class in Ottawa that can't see past their short-term electoral interests. It's unthinkable that we continue to have to curtail our oil production because the infrastructure to get these products to market simply can't be built in the current political climate. Thousands of miles of pipelines safely criss-cross North America, transporting millions of barrels of oil, but as a result of a zealous campaign by environmental radicals, bad policy from government, and judicial activism, the capacity to move product from Alberta falls far short of what's needed.

Instead, companies are forced to ship oil much more dangerously by rail. The current situation is untenable for oil companies, who are pulling out in droves, for thousands of laid-off workers, and for everyday Albertans, who are sick and tired of transferring tremendous sums of money to Ottawa only to have Liberal politicians spit in their faces.

Let me be clear. This motion is about calling on Ottawa to recognize a simple fact and one on which I think every member of this House can agree: Canada is better off for having the oil sands.

I hope all hon. members will join me in supporting this motion. Let's send a strong message to Ottawa. Let's send a strong message to the Prime Minister. Let's send a strong message to Quebec and British Columbia. It is not just Alberta who is hurt by an absence of pipeline infrastructure. It is not by killing oil sands development that you will leave a greener planet for future generations. It is not by condemning Alberta's big oil companies that you will foster national unity. It's by acknowledging that this great achievement, some say a miracle, of extracting oil from what First Nations people once used to waterproof their canoes, has benefited every Canadian and must continue doing so.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to Motion 508? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak to Motion 508. Let me begin by saying that we do recognize, we do know that Alberta's resource sector has been key to economic growth in this province, has been a key to economic growth in this country, has been a key for prosperity, for jobs right across this province and right across this country.

We can understand why the Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche might need to bring this motion forward because I think she represents the constituency which is home to this industry, the biggest industry of our province. As the representative of that constituency I think she will need some assurance at times when we have lost almost 27,000 full-time jobs, that include 14,900 jobs from the resource sector, and we have not seen so far any progress on pipelines or on anything else that would get our industry back to work. We have not seen any supports from this government to this industry. So that's why, I guess, as the member from that constituency she will be concerned, and rightfully so. We are all concerned that since this government took power, we haven't seen any progress. We haven't seen any policies that will help our industry. If I talk about their rhetoric and political gamesmanship, they're really good at it, but they haven't done anything else.

We all hear about C-48, C-69. They talk about them here, they talk about them on Twitter, but the fact remains that on those two bills, it was our government, it was the then Premier and now Leader of the Opposition who made submissions, and those submissions were adopted by this government. They didn't make their own submission. They may have done it on Twitter, somewhere else, but actual submissions were put forward by the previous government and adopted by this government, which is a good thing because those submissions were well thought out and were submitted in consultation with the public service, industry, stakeholders. They were submitted with a view to making sure that our industry gets what they need. But they didn't do any submissions on those bills.

Similarly, when we were in government, the then Premier went coast to coast to coast to build a case for our resource sector, for our Trans Mountain pipeline. When she started, it was only 4 in 10 Canadians who were supportive of TMX. With that campaign and with her leadership, with her advocacy, there were 7 in 10 Canadians who were supportive of that project. We have not seen anything from this government that they have done so far that would move support for that project. Instead, what they are doing: they are starting an energy war room with \$30 million of public money given to a failed UCP candidate to essentially troll people, to have a Twitter account and whatnot, which has not landed us access to new markets, which has not landed us any jobs, which has

not created capacity in pipelines. It's just a complete waste of public money.

The second thing. I think what this resource sector needs to acknowledge and what we need to acknowledge here is that we do have production capacity in our resource sector. We can produce more with even existing investments. I think the proof for that is that we had to curtail our production so that whatever we produce, we have the takeaway capacity to take that to the market. That clearly shows that we still have room to produce more with existing investment. The issue our industry is facing is takeaway capacity. We don't have access to new markets. We don't have capacity in our existing pipelines.

Seeing that as an issue, we worked with industry, we worked with the public service, and we came up with oil-by-rail contracts that would have moved 120,000 barrels per day more and would have kept economic activity going, kept production going. But they cancelled that. And not only didn't we get any benefit out of those contracts, but now Albertans are on the hook to pay \$1.5 billion as a penalty to cancel those oil-by-rail contracts, which was completely an ideological decision on the part of this government, because we entered into those contracts after a thorough consultation with industry.

3:20

Now they're saying that if some producer can arrange for their own oil by rail, they can produce more. They have left industry on their own. Instead of providing leadership, instead of providing some solutions, instead of taking steps to create more capacity, what we are seeing is the same bottleneck, and that's why we're losing jobs and we're losing investment in our resource sector.

Certainly, we need to acknowledge that this sector is important for jobs, for the well-being of all Albertans and Canadians, and we need to do things that will help us address the issues that are facing this sector. I think that earlier we heard about how the federal government needs to recognize that. We certainly believe that the federal government should recognize it's important and should retain the authority to build nation-building projects and be free of any provincial vetoes in doing so and for the supplies to pipelines running across provinces.

But I think the focus of the discussion this afternoon should be on the crisis that this province is facing. It concerns getting people back to work, and I think we haven't heard much from this government about that. Instead, with their policies, for instance, they said – and they told Albertans – that they will hand out a \$4.7 billion corporate gift to corporations and that somehow that will address the issues facing our resource sector. I think a couple of examples should be enough to make the case that this corporate handout is a complete failure. It's a complete disaster. It has not created the outcomes, it has not yielded the outcomes that Albertans were promised. Albertans were promised that by handing out this gift, there will be jobs and there will be new investments.

Let's talk about the resource sector. Two weeks ago we heard that Husky was laying off Albertans from its offices in Calgary, from its fields at a time when they have received \$233 million as a share of that \$4.7 billion handout. That's not fear and smear. It was reported all over. These are the facts. These numbers were included in their financials, that they got \$233 million from that handout, but we didn't see jobs coming back because of that.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to Motion 508? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is an honour to rise and speak to this motion and support Alberta's essential oil and gas

industry, that has led this province in economic growth and prosperity for decades and made us the envy of the world for our environmental standards, our human rights, our ethics and technology as well as our economy. Our UCP government has taken steps to restore investor confidence and bring back oil and gas jobs to Alberta. The oil and gas sector still provides jobs numbering in the tens of thousands when healthy and contributes millions of dollars to research and development as well as to diversify the economy through cutting-edge technology.

That is why this caucus, under the mandate of over a million Albertans, stood with our Premier to repeal the carbon tax as Bill 1. The carbon tax did nothing to reduce emissions and damaged Alberta's hydrocarbon job market. Increases to corporate taxes, burdensome regulations, and a failure to stand up for Alberta saw the level of uncertainty in the market reach such high levels that capital fled this province at an unprecedented rate, to the tune of billions of dollars. Today's activists fail to realize that the very bridges they stand on, the vehicles they drive, the houses they live in, and the very food they eat are only possible because of contributions from the oil and gas industry and the technology they provide, technology that provides energy in support of resource production, heating, and food.

Alberta is part of the global solution, not part of the problem. Where we succeed, we lead, and where we lead, others will follow. Not only do we produce our products to the highest environmental standards; we also reclaim lands through reforestation, carbon emission reduction, and technological advancement.

Wealthy climate activists utilize the benefits of our oil and gas ever more and every day as they use their private jets and yachts, eat and drink sumptuous meals fed, grown, irrigated, produced, and prepared with vehicles, tools, implements, and utensils made possible by this sector. They do this to an even greater degree than us average people, who drive to work and heat our homes just to earn a living and provide a home and opportunities for our children. Madam Speaker, how loud would their outcry be if these luxuries were taken away from them, or are these restrictions only meant for the rest of us? The hypocrisy of these activists is plain to see when they partake in the extreme usefulness of petroleum products as they drive gasoline-consuming vehicles or any vehicle with rubber tires to their protests, use cellphones, plastic and ink for their signs, their sunglasses, fabrics for their clothing, and on and on.

Alberta's oil and gas industry and its workers should be proud of our environmental standards. This province produces less than 1 per cent of global CO₂ emissions, with more reductions being invested in every day. Other countries have no such standards, plans, or limits. China is building coal power plants at an alarming rate, with huge environmental impact. Alberta could help them and truly make a global difference by leading them to the highest levels of environmental technology and providing them with liquid natural gas and the technology for its power generation. Alberta can and should lead the world in its ethical generation of power through its oil and gas sector. This UCP government will not stand idly by while it is threatened by lies and exaggerations that slander one of the key economic engines in Canada. I will support this motion as we need to stand up and stand proud and tall for our oil and gas sector.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to Motion 508? The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I grew up with a deep respect for our oil and gas workers. My dad has built and maintained pipelines all across western Canada, including in

Alberta and Saskatchewan. He would go away for trips for weeks on end working on these projects. These projects are the veins that keep the lifeblood of the Canadian economy flowing. My dad has never complained. He has never asked for much. He understands and values the importance of hard work, and he passed those values on to my sister and I. These are values that I promised my constituents I would uphold and endeavour to demonstrate in my time as the MLA for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Madam Speaker, politics is becoming increasingly more polarized, and part of that is because of the inflammatory language used on social media that is then distributed to the masses in grand fashion. Now, I know we're not supposed to take what is said on Twitter seriously – and I try not to myself – but the fact of the matter is that social media and politics as we know it are inextricably linked. There is just so much misinformation out there. A few weeks ago I stumbled upon this tweet, and it, quite frankly, made my blood boil. Understanding my family's deep connection to the oil and gas sector, I think you and the members of this Assembly will probably understand why. The person who wrote this tweet is a vocal Alberta blogger and a supporter of the members opposite. She decided to weigh in on the federal election and tweeted out: "The reason Alberta is so Conservative is because it's full of a lot of dumb money. From a demographic perspective, this is largely a province of overpaid undereducated white guys. They vote accordingly."

Madam Speaker, political differences aside, this has to be one of the most disrespectful, offensive things that I've seen on Twitter, and given just how ugly Twitter can get, that's really saying something. This type of attitude, this slander of Alberta workers, particularly those in the energy sector: it's personal for me because I have a family who has worked hard to build the infrastructure and move the oil and gas that this blogger takes for granted. Those people are not "overpaid undereducated white guys." In fact, many of them are women. They're smart. They're hard-working. They do jobs that are demanding of their time, energy, and bodies in order to put food on the table. They spend weeks and months away from their families. They miss hockey games and dance recitals and spend birthdays in work camps, all to make our country's economy stronger and their families' lives a little easier.

With that said, Alberta is not "full of . . . dumb money." As a province, many Albertans have most certainly enjoyed sufficient prosperity over the years because of our bountiful natural resources, resources that are produced at the highest environmental standards, prosperity that we have willingly shared with the rest of Canada. Communities that rely on these resources and the activity created have benefited as well. The money that workers do take home to support their families absolutely is not frivolous. It's earned by hard work and intense labour, labour that most people don't even consider when they fill up their cars or turn on the heat.

3:30

The same blogger also struck a nerve with me when they made the outrageous assertion that women are disadvantaged by our energy sector because, quote, there are not a lot of young fathers that would stay home with their kids, especially in the conservative oil industry. Madam Speaker, I know many young fathers who make this incredibly hard decision to leave their families for weeks and months at a time to work to support their families. My uncle makes this choice, my dad has made this choice, and many young men will make this choice every day to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table and even give their kids the best shot at life that they know how.

That's the true story of our energy workers, Madam Speaker, not this vilification that I see splattered all over social media and in op-

eds written by those who live multiple provinces away who think, I'm assuming, that their cars run on fairy dust, who, we can reasonably assume, have never seen the hardship of a recession or waved goodbye to a loved one as they leave for weeks on end.

For heaven's sake, I saw an article in the *Star* today that referred to the oil sands as the tar sands. It's amazing to me that this still happens. The version of reality, I guess, that these people spout, the version that leftist political parties have painted of our energy workers: that's not the version I know. I grew up understanding just how vital our energy sector was not only to my family but to our province as a whole. The most frightening thing about this attitude is its incessant and relentless focus on undermining Albertans and our contributions to Confederation due largely, in part, to our energy sector. It fuels the efforts being made by those not only within this country but around the world to land-lock our natural resources and to put an end to Alberta's industry as we know it.

I was sad to realize that not a single candidate outside of the Conservative Party of Canada had made an effort in the federal election to stand with our energy workers, people like those who are in my family. They had no plans for our economy or the Albertans that were struggling to hold down a steady job. Some of them expressed some sympathy for those experiencing hardship, but this fleeting, tone-deaf, lackadaisical response was the extent of their concern. In fact, many of these party leaders endorsed the idea of shutting down the oil sands entirely. That's a move that will leave hundreds of thousands of Albertans as well as workers across Canada jobless.

Madam Speaker, these contentious platitudes are discouraging. They frustrate me in ways that I cannot even begin to tell you in 10 minutes, but they also motivate me to keep fighting for what I know and what my government colleagues know is the right thing to do, to stand up for our energy sector, which is the most environmentally responsible and ethical energy sector of all major oil-producing countries. The world has been blessed with Canadian energy, and I am proud of it. I'm proud of our government for standing up for Canadian energy, and I'm proud of our government for standing with those workers. I'm proud of the hundreds of thousands of workers like members of my own family for being the driving force that gets our resources out of the ground and into pipelines so they can power the homes and cars of people around the nation.

I am proud of Canadian energy, and we should all be proud, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to Motion 508? The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure today to rise and speak in support of Motion 508:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to immediately demand the federal government recognize the benefits Alberta's oil sands and other fossil fuels provide to the people of Canada in terms of economic growth, prosperity, and support for communities across Canada.

Madam Speaker, oil and gas, working together with our two other pillars, ag and forestry, have built this province for over 100 years. Currently our vital industry of oil and gas needs support more than ever given the leadership in Ottawa. The continual, endless undermining by our own Prime Minister needs to stop. It's illogical. It's foolish at a time the world demand for oil is growing, I understand, somewhere between 90 and 100 million barrels per day and growing. In the last few years we've seen America become self-sufficient, a leading exporter. We've seen many, many oil jurisdictions prosper, further human rights, further social programs, further their society. At the same time, the best producers in the world, Alberta oil and gas, have a federal government in their way.

Madam Speaker, you see, those of us on this side of the aisle understand the importance of a healthy economy and all the long-term benefits – economic, family, community, and social – that come when a province can compete on an equal footing in the international market. We understand the important role that our oil sands and other natural resources play in our economy, and we are going to ensure that those who depend on resource production and extraction continue to be able to feed their families.

Madam Speaker, it's only about six months ago since our campaign. I'm fortunate that it was my third one, but there are some parts of it I'll never forget: the two grown men who answered their doors in tears because of foreclosure and that kind of thing; the tens and tens of young men and women with the same story, who used to make \$100,000, \$120,000 working hard in an oil and gas or a construction business or a related business and now barely making ends meet at \$30,000 or \$40,000, just wanting to work hard and care for their families; 20 to 30 people on their way to North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas – even Argentina made that list; how sad, not working in Alberta – strong, trained, capable, important young Albertans that we may lose.

Madam Speaker, that's what's important to me. That's what's important to Cypress-Medicine Hat, way more than what we've seen over the last several years, when we've borne the burden of international celebrities who fly around the world, fly home for supper, and who seek to further their own careers by taking a dramatic, ill-informed stance against our industry while refusing to see the hypocrisy and the errors of their ways. We've endured social media campaigns aimed to demonize and demoralize our hard-working energy sector, that have stood by our provincial government and refused to defend our best interests at the federal level. As fair questions for all have clearly highlighted, a clear and American environmental oil and gas initiative spending tens and tens of millions of dollars to deliberately – deliberately – land-lock our oil and gas while they further their exports and their production: our federal leaders have fallen for it.

Madam Speaker, despite declining standards of living in our province and increased job losses, we watched as the previous government made no move to secure fleeing investment or secure pipeline proposals. It goes on and on, the companies that have pulled out of the oil sands: the Tridents; the Canadian company called Houston Oil & Gas, that just walked away from countless wells; the other companies in hardship; and of course, as a historian, as a Canadian, EnCana, a company that came from the roots of when the Canadian Pacific railroad was built across Canada. To take this huge risk, to do this huge thing in the nation building of Canada, they were given mineral rights, oil and gas rights. To see that legacy company move to Colorado at a time when world demand for oil and gas is growing is unfathomable. It's incomprehensible, and it shows how far offline our federal government is: fleeing investment, no pipelines built, money wasted and thrown away, and ensuring that shovels would never hit soil to provide that safe pipeline, efficient capacity that we need.

Madam Speaker, Albertans need to know that their voices are valued, yet we've continued to see legislation aimed at restricting and limiting our province's capacity to produce and market resources. Yeah, we can put it in a pipe and get it to the Lower Mainland; we just can't get it in a tanker. Maybe that pipeline will never be built.

Other provinces and our federal government worked against us at a time that we've been so willing to share prosperity, paying over \$600 billion in transfer and equalization payments, providing so many jobs and wealth to make Canada strong: unfathomable, Madam Speaker, incomprehensible, again when you consider how environmentally friendly we are, how safe we are, and the fact that

we all know that we're the best jurisdiction. We're scratching our heads, wondering why our leaders in Ottawa would seek to limit our ability to produce wealth and make the world a better place for all people and Canadians especially.

3:40

How can Albertans not feel excluded from our country's federation when we are governed by a group of individuals who would seek to physically block pipeline access for Alberta while continuing to allow foreign industry competitors to sail right up the St. Lawrence River, oil from Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, from our competitors, Russia as well, countries well known for human rights violations, antiwomen sentiment, histories of violence and severe discrimination towards minority groups? Madam Speaker, I think I saw today that the Saudi Arabia oil company is going to go public and become the most valuable company ever – ever – at a time young men and young women in Cypress-Medicine Hat can't get out the door to work. It's stupid.

It's hypocritical – hypocritical – of the federal government to attempt to stand on a moral platform of equality while allowing dictators to supply us with our basic resources. It's astounding and naive. There is literally human cost when you purchase products from totalitarian regimes throughout the globe. How can you champion freedom and humanity while financing and endorsing the persecution of minorities and women in these countries? You cannot have it both ways, Madam Speaker, and I think that that will become truly apparent in the next little while.

The development and growth of natural resource extraction in Alberta has brought new levels of prosperity to northern communities, who would otherwise have limited employment options. Madam Speaker, I'm not sure why I put "northern communities" in here because that is very, very true for Medicine Hat. We owe so much to the oil and gas industry.

Also, the indigenous people of this province have been left out of land and resource negotiations for decades, but it's through the development of infrastructure and pipelines that First Nations people will truly be able to profit, and so many of our good partners, fellow Albertans, and Canadians are showing their ability and their willingness to do exactly that. We have a moral obligation to work together as a province and empower First Nation communities and allow them to become equal partners in this potential success story.

Many organizations and resource extraction critics have long held the belief that indigenous peoples are inherently against industrial mining or oil sands projects, but of course we have seen time and time again First Nation people themselves and their leaders come forward to say that this is clearly not the case. They see our natural resources as gifts to be used for the care, for the growth of their communities and their people, for financial benefits of investment and jobs.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the motion? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate your recognizing me and allowing me to express some thoughts here today on Motion 508. I've been listening very intently to all of the different speakers, and I've managed to make a few notes here and there, so hopefully I can get my thoughts in here in a brief amount of time. As you know, sometimes I can be a bit long-winded. Thankfully, I guess, there's only 10 minutes to speak here, and you can get me back down in my chair, right?

The overarching thing that I've been hearing here today is about how we can support our oil and gas workers. Of course, as you know, my background is in labour, and I'm all for good, high-

paying jobs with benefits, being treated with dignity and respect, making sure that work sites are as safe as they can possibly be. You know, as somebody who has spent some time on various different health and safety committees, I know that sometimes health and safety cannot be convenient and sometimes it's even not cheap, but it's necessary to make sure that we all get to come home to our loved ones each and every day. Again, just kind of keying in on some of the things we were talking about in supporting our workers.

I wholeheartedly agree with the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat about how our workers are not overpaid. You're absolutely correct; they're not overpaid. I don't believe they're overpaid. As a matter of fact, I think they're underpaid. So when I happen to see things like messing around with their overtime pay, I kind of struggle with that a little bit, how we're potentially setting up a possibility where these workers can then not get paid what they deserve. I do agree with you there.

I also heard the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, who was talking about some workers that, you know, were trying to make it in around the \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year, and I do think that they should be paid more, so why did we do things like take away a statutory holiday? I don't think it's these kinds of things that help our case when we're trying to talk to the federal government about how they need to step up and back our industry.

I also did cue in on one other comment you made about hearing that word, "tar sands." You know, in my time that I spent on the Council of State Governments at the national level on behalf of the former economic development and trade minister, that was one of the biggest things I spent time on, trying to change that narrative. I would hear legislators down in the U.S. comment: oh, yeah, Alberta, yeah, that's where the tar sands are. It's like: whoa, whoa, whoa. We need to change that. I spent a considerable amount of time. I was actually starting to gain some ground there. There's certainly a lot more work. I know that just because something kind of looks like tar, it doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad thing.

I did notice a couple of comments from the Member for Central Peace-Notley around, you know: why are we importing oil? I agree. Why are we? Why aren't we refining our product right here in the province of Alberta, giving Alberta jobs and high-paying jobs, good benefits, and things like that? But then when I look back – I think the last refinery was built sometime in the late '80s. Why weren't decisions made from back then to be building refineries? We know those things aren't built in a couple of years. Our Redwater plant was a decade or more in the making. We're trying to drive this narrative, yet we've seen decisions in the past that are working against us in terms of how serious we are to support our workers.

I noticed that the Member for Lethbridge-East talked about how the government is very serious about trying to create jobs, yet we've seen almost 15,000 jobs lost within our energy sector. I start, again, talking about decisions that we've already made of giving a \$4.7 billion handout that hasn't created a job. We've changed labour laws. That is not creating jobs. I mean, we're down more than 27,000 in this province, so it makes it very, very difficult for us, Madam Speaker, to try to drive home this narrative about how important our industry is when we're kind of, you know, weakening our case, I guess, with some of these other decisions that we're making.

3:50

You know, it's not enough. I mean, we have to look at refineries, absolutely, but we can do other things. We can drive diversification like petrochemicals, things like that, which will create very, very good jobs here in the province. I've got a lot of friends that have spent a lot of time up in the mover of the motion's riding building those infrastructures, from scaffolders to electricians. I want to see

them working, but I want them, again, to be well paid, benefits, treated with dignity and respect, working on safe worksites so that we can get this infrastructure built.

You know, I guess I have to be very, very clear about one thing because I think there have been some sentiments that have been pointed in this direction that perhaps members in the opposition caucus support certain lines of thinking, I guess, shall we say, around provincial vetoes. Madam Speaker, that is quite frankly – I'll be honest – one of the silliest ideas I've ever heard. When we're talking about national infrastructure, that is left up to the federal government to decide. That's what they're there for. If we're not going to let them make those decisions, what's the point of having a federal government? I think it's very obvious that a decision like that is not supported at all by the Official Opposition, so hopefully we can maybe put that one to bed a little bit.

I guess, in the end, you know, we have to do what we can here in this province to support this industry. We need to get the product moving. We're certainly constrained by pipelines. We seem to have lots going south. We don't have any going in the other direction. But until then, we should be doing everything we can to get the product moving, and I think we had an opportunity to move some extra volume through rail, but, again, decisions that we've made in the past have been counterproductive in terms of trying to support that industry.

I'm maybe hoping that, going forward, if we're really true to where we're trying to go with this motion, advocating to the federal government about how important this industry is not only to Alberta but to Canada as a driver, we can't be making decisions which are counterproductive to driving that narrative. Hopefully, as we move forward, we might see some of those things change so that we absolutely come at it with a solid case, not only to the federal government but to the world. We have the best product here in Alberta. I think it should be desired by all, but that includes things like building refineries here, making sure that we're supporting our workers, not taking away their benefits, not taking away their pay, and certainly not – as we know, with a lot of workers in the energy sector, spouses tend to work in the public sector, so we don't want to be rolling wages back like that.

I'm happy to move forward in supporting this motion. I hope my other colleagues in the House will also support this moving forward.

The Deputy Speaker: I will invite the Member for Central Peace-Notley to close debate.

Mr. Loewen: Okay. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. In closing on this debate, I guess, obviously, this motion, Motion 508, is an important motion to really send a message to Ottawa and to our Prime Minister about how important the . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I apologize for interrupting you. There's been some confusion. There are three minutes left in debate before we close debate, so the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will try to keep it short. I had a lot to say about the importance of Alberta's oil and gas and the benefit that it brings to this country and to this nation and to this province and to the world, but it's been drawn to my attention that not everybody in this province, not everybody in this Legislature necessarily agrees that this oil and gas industry is an important oil and gas industry. It's been drawn to my attention that there is at least one member in this Legislative Assembly, from St. Albert, that seems to be able to tweet, and I quote, "So, who is responsible for putting up special interest group advertising in the [legislative]

windows?" Since when is defending Alberta oil and gas a special-interest group? Since when is defending the jobs of my constituents a special-interest group?

Madam Speaker, my constituents are hurting. Businesses are going bankrupt. My next-door neighbours moved this past weekend back to the east because they no longer had jobs in what was once a thriving community. It's not up to special-interest groups to defend; it's the people of Alberta that are rising to defend this province and its oil and its gas industry. It would be a great thing if the members of this Legislature all understood that it is part of our responsibility in this Legislature to defend the interests of all Albertans, especially in the oil and gas industry.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, there are two minutes left in this debate. Are there any members wishing to speak? The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you. I'm very proud to stand up in support of this motion from the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche, moved by the hon. Member for Grande Prairie, to support our key industry. You know what? Every other part of Canada has a key industry that they support. I think of the auto industry in Ontario. I think of the dairy industry or aerospace in Quebec. I think of forestry in B.C. although Alberta is strong in that area, too. I think they're pretty unanimous in supporting their industries, and Alberta ought to be unanimous in supporting our key industry. Not only that; we should support other provinces' key industry, and frankly, they should support ours because we are in it together, Madam Speaker.

This motion actually speaks to the heart of what makes Alberta great and, by extension, what makes Canada great. It is working together, making the most out of the gifts that we were given in this land. Nobody from Alberta put the oil and gas, other minerals, and resources here, but our job is to responsibly extract them, making the world a better place. In fact, we've come to the place where we actually lower emissions when the world uses more Alberta natural gas and oil as compared to other nations. We actually raise the world's average rate of responsibility, of human rights as compared to other oil-producing nations. We should be proud of this. We should be working together on it.

This motion really speaks to showing some pride in how it's responsibly extracting our resources by having high levels of human rights, high levels of safety and worker rights, that in Alberta we're showing the world how to do it properly. We invite everyone from across Canada and, really, around the world to support us on this because our responsible energy industry truly is raising the bar. I hope in this Legislature we all support that.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 8(3) the mover of the motion has five minutes to close debate. The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Again, I think this is such an important motion to send a message to Ottawa and to our Prime Minister on the importance of the oil and gas sector and the oil sands not only just to Alberta but to all of Canada and all of Canadians. We know how much of an economic driver it is to our country, and obviously the importance is – one thing, I think, that struck me. Maybe I mentioned it before in the House. When Fort McMurray had suffered that horrible fire, they shut down the oil sands for, I think, two and a half weeks because of the fire. It actually made a noticeable difference in our GDP, the Canadian GDP. To think that two and a half weeks made a noticeable difference to the Canadian GDP, and we have people

running around suggesting we shut this down, that it should be phased out or something.

I think that, obviously, you know, it's insulting to our intelligence to think that somebody could think that that's good for Canada, to shut down this and to cause our oil and gas industry harm by slowing down pipelines and causing all Canadians to suffer from a lack of revenue by selling our products at reduced prices, a product that benefits all Canadians.

4:00

Now, we heard the members opposite talk about some things that were I guess I'll just say bizarre. I mean, we had the Member for Calgary-McCall spreading all sorts of misinformation and suggesting that we haven't done anything on this side of the House on bills C-48 and C-69. We know what happened during that time period when those ones were hitting Ottawa and Parliament. The NDP waited till it was too late to react, and they only reacted after pressure from us when we were in opposition. Now they're suggesting that we didn't do anything.

Just before the last election they came up with this oil-by-rail scheme that they had that was going to cost Albertans billions of dollars, billions of dollars to do something that was obviously a last-minute ploy to try to win an election.

We also know that many of the members on the other side of the House, the NDP members, have actively protested the oil and gas sector and pipelines in the past. We know what happened when Northern Gateway was cancelled; they did nothing. They celebrated, if they did anything. We know what happened when Energy East was cancelled; they did nothing. We know that when Obama vetoed Keystone XL, they did nothing. Now, of course, they're sitting there trying to talk like they're champions of the oil and gas sector and pipelines, and we know that we lost three pipelines during their tenure in government.

The Member for Edmonton-Decore talked about: why aren't we refining products here? Well, we still need pipelines once we refine the products to get them anywhere, and we need industry to come in and invest in Alberta. But based on their policies of higher taxes and crazy amounts of regulations and protesting pipelines, these industries haven't come into Alberta to do more refining here because they created a business environment that was unfriendly.

We know that we see the NDP in British Columbia trying to block a pipeline. We see the NDP all across Canada, in fact, their leader in this last federal election, actively campaigning against our oil and gas sector, and that's the same party. So, Madam Speaker, that's the problem we have in this House, these anti oil and gas activists, some of which sit across the aisle from us here right now. That's what's causing the trouble in our oil and gas sector.

We need to realize and we need to stand together and we need to respect each other's, I guess, opinions as we go forward. We need to go forward together and go to Ottawa and make sure that we support our oil and gas sector, not just for the benefit of Alberta but for all Canadians. We celebrate when other parts of the country do well with their products, right from coast to coast, and they need to celebrate with us, too. We need to stand together in this Legislature. We need to support our oil and gas industry. We need to support the oil sands.

We know that there's a world-wide need for our oil and gas products, which are produced under the most environmentally friendly conditions, labour friendly. We know it's the best oil and gas in the world, and we need to be producing more of it here if we want to do something for the environment and for the world. Of course, we need to stand together. We need to push back on Ottawa on this situation, where they're trying to restrict our rights to move our product to market.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, on the motion as moved by the Member for Central Peace-Notley on behalf of the Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 508 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:04 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Hunter	Reid
Allard	Loewen	Rosin
Amery	Lovely	Rowswell
Barnes	Luan	Rutherford
Carson	Madu	Schulz
Deol	McIver	Sigurdson, R.J.
Dreeschen	Neudorf	Singh
Ellis	Nielsen	Smith
Fir	Orr	Stephan
Glasgo	Pancholi	Sweet
Gray	Panda	Walker
Horner	Rehn	Yao
Totals:	For – 36	Against – 0

[Motion Other than Government Motion 508 carried unanimously]

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 8(1.1) the Assembly shall now proceed to government business.

4:20

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 19

Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019

[Adjourned debate October 31: Mr. Schow]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak?
The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to respond to Bill 19, the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019, TIER legislation, introduced in this House to deal with the very serious and pressing issues of climate change in our environment and here in the province. I'm going to give my initial responses to Bill 19 here at second reading, and I look forward to having the opportunity to speak in more depth through the process that this bill will undertake in Committee of the Whole and so forth. For initial reactions to Bill 19, it's my view that this bill makes it clear that the UCP is not taking climate change seriously and that there are a number of areas within Bill 19 where we are taking serious steps backwards when it comes to efficiency, when it comes to making sure we're taking seriously the very real challenge that climate change presents to us and to our Earth.

We do want to be the most environmentally friendly producer of natural resources, and to do that, we need to do better. What the UCP has presented within Bill 19 is a plan that reduces emissions less than the plan put forward under our government. As I respond to Bill 19, Madam Speaker, I will be speaking at points about the

climate leadership plan that this plan replaces because with the climate leadership plan, Alberta was on track to cut more than 50 megatonnes of emissions over the next 10 years and reduce methane emissions from industry by 45 per cent by 2025. This new plan, although in places there are similar pieces – and I will speak to that – does not reduce emissions to the same level that the climate leadership plan would have.

My first critique of this plan is that it is taking a step backwards and not moving as far as we would like to see because this plan is entirely focused on innovation. Innovation is a very important piece. A point I would like to make, Madam Speaker, is that under our climate leadership plan funds were being reinvested into innovation to the same extent that we see here in the TIER plan. Support for innovation, we agree, is very important. But as well as that support for innovation, we also had so many other initiatives and spending in other areas on top of just innovation. Instead, what we're seeing is an environment that is less friendly to innovation through the implementation of Bill 19 and then through Budget 2019 and some of the many, many cuts that we've seen.

From the beginning, Madam Speaker, when we were in government and even now in opposition, we have been incredibly clear that we do not believe as an Official Opposition that the environment and the economy should be pitted against one another. We need to work to support both the economy and the environment, and there are very clear ways that we can do that through engaging with stakeholders and working with them. I was very proud to be part of the climate leadership plan process, where we moved the industrial carbon emission policy that was in place already when we first came to government, a carbon tax, I might mention to you, Madam Speaker, and the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation, where a great deal of very detailed work went into place to make sure that we could really move the dial and reduce emissions in our province and do so in partnership with industry.

As I mentioned, Alberta has had that price on carbon since 2007, and since that time all the revenues collected have been dedicated to innovation and green initiatives. I think that has been incredibly positive for this province, both in 2007 under the industrial carbon emission policies and after we made the changes in 2015 and created the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation.

What happens with Bill 19, though, Madam Speaker, is that the funds collected are no longer going to be dedicated to innovation and green initiatives. Instead, they will become part of general revenue: a plan that does not invest more in innovation and, instead, reduces the spending in some of those green initiatives, reduces supports for jobs in our renewable sectors. One of the things I was incredibly proud of with our climate leadership plan was that it supported more than 7,300 jobs in just the first two years with thousands of jobs still to come on the construction for various CLP projects and innovation initiatives. That is a big part of what this plan in Bill 19 is missing.

Now, within Bill 19 there are essentially two different implementations. For the electricity sector, which is the largest source of emissions in our province, Bill 19 will move forward the management of the electricity sector in a very similar way to how our government implemented it through the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation. For that I'm very supportive, because I think we got things right when it came to electricity and greenhouse gas emissions and how we can make sure that we are appropriately pricing while not driving business out of the province and appropriately accounting for the cost of greenhouse gas emissions and incenting good behaviour.

Again, I will repeat that the TIER plan is a carbon tax, a continuation of that price on carbon that Alberta has had since 2007,

and in the case of the electricity sector it continues the implementation of the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation that was put into place under our government.

On the other side, though, Madam Speaker, oil sands and other sources, the environmental standards have been significantly weakened compared to the climate leadership plan. Wanting to make sure that we are putting our best foot forward, making sure that we are reducing emissions wherever possible, I have to compare and contrast that under the climate leadership plan there were going to be 50 megatonnes of CO₂ reductions over 10 years. Under this Bill 19 plan, I understand through the technical briefings and what I've read in the media so far, there's a suggestion that it'll be 32 megatonnes. There's a big difference, a lot of space between those two numbers, and that's one of the concerns that I have for Bill 19 and this implementation.

Again, on the electricity side things are looking positive. It kept a lot of the important work that was done under the preceding CCIR system. But on the oil sands and other sources, the large emissions, we're seeing a real change in direction here and the assumption that perhaps this government does not take climate change as seriously as it should be taken.

Those are some of my initial thoughts of the Bill 19 implementation. But I do want to really remark again on the fact that money raised through the work in Bill 19 will be placed into general revenue rather than used to support green initiatives, used to support other items that can be used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the province. We're still charging this new carbon tax. TIER is what we're calling it now. We're undoing a lot of the good work that was done under the climate leadership plan, that really led to the jobs and the greenhouse gas reductions. The new, replacement carbon tax is going to put the money into general revenue, where it will be absorbed to pay for the \$4.7 billion handout to large, profitable corporations and spent on items like the energy war room, to plan attacks on Twitter perhaps but not as a dedicated pool of resources to help green the economy, to help support jobs in renewable industries, to help support the amazing programming that was done with indigenous communities.

4:30

As my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has mentioned, all 48 First Nations and all Métis settlements were able to take advantage, through the climate leadership plan, of supports for their communities to do local projects to help not only their financial viability but to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions of these different communities. We're missing that from this plan, that sharing of the benefits, sharing of that opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout Alberta.

Making sure that we continue to make progress on climate change and to implement good policies is so important. Whereas there are some positive aspects to Bill 19, on the whole I believe it misses the mark because although there's innovation funding within the bill, roughly the same amount that there would have been through the climate leadership plan, we've also just seen a number of cuts to innovation, to science, to universities, to support for innovative businesses with the cuts, that we will be discussing when we discuss Bill 20, to the innovation tax credits that had been set up. We really do need to look at Bill 19 in the context of all of the larger changes as well.

Now, during the federal election the federal Conservative Party did put forward a very TIER-like plan, and it received a great deal of criticism for not being strong enough on the measures that we need to take forward. I think that's certainly an interesting comment going forward.

I appreciate, in the electricity sector, the work that was done with the climate leadership plan, very, very detailed work, working with individual companies, working with the entire industry and a lot of very complicated data and modelling. I can assure you, Madam Speaker, as a member who was involved in that process, that the work that the public servants did supporting the changes was phenomenal, and I want to say thank you to everyone who worked on that file and helped to move that forward. Going forward, making sure that electricity facilities still have to meet that good-as-best-gas benchmark is a really key piece, so I certainly support that aspect of Bill 19.

However, again I will say that on the oil sands and other large sectors side we've seen a real step backwards, and that's where that difference between the climate leadership plan, at 50 megatonnes of reduction, and this current plan, which is estimated to be more at 32 megatonnes, comes in, because the electricity side has been left essentially the same. According to the fiscal plan 2019, TIER will cover about 48 per cent of all emissions in Alberta. Implementing TIER will be that positive step forward: that is kind of how the press release went. But it's a reduction in emissions removal, from the 50 that was in the climate leadership plan to this new plan that we see in front of us.

I think we need to continue to hold the government to account when they say that they are serious in taking climate change as a challenge that they're willing to tackle. This plan does not go far enough, and although there are some positives, overall my concerns around how this plan will be implemented, my concerns around how the funds will be spent and absorbed into the general revenue of this government – the removal of so many of the climate leadership plan initiatives, that led to the creation of over 7,000 jobs, has me quite concerned. As I've said – but I will emphasize – the reduction in emissions does not go far enough, in my opinion, in this TIER plan.

Making sure that all Albertans are aware of what's happening when it comes to this plan, I think, is really important because these decisions, this policy framework that's set out are incredibly complicated. During the course of this debate, from second reading into Committee of the Whole, I certainly am looking forward to being able to talk about some of the more nuanced differences within this plan and frame the debate around what we are trying to achieve and the measures that we are taking to achieve that. In reading the coverage initially from reporters, it's clear that this complicated policy, when it is boiled down, when I talk to people . . .

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise under 29(2)(a) on Bill 19. I was interested in the hon. member's comments, but I think the hon. member and, unfortunately, the whole NDP need to think bigger. They are talking about a perceived or real difference between the number of megatonnes locally reduced – and I'm not saying that that doesn't matter, because it's an important issue. But you know what? I think the hon. members across there might even agree that when you're talking about emissions, the air that we're protecting is world-wide; it's not just Alberta air.

Innovation is actually the key to success. For example, using the climate change leadership plan which the NDP had in place, their goal was to drive Alberta emissions to zero. Let's even say that they were going to drive Canadian emissions to zero. Well, statistically that would reduce the world-wide emissions by 1.6 per cent. The wildest, greatest thing that they could possibly accomplish with the

NDP's plan is to reduce the world-wide emissions by 1.6 per cent. We're focused on innovation. It's not going to take much innovation on a world-wide basis to reduce emissions by more than 1.6 per cent world-wide. Unfortunately, the NDP are too insular. They're thinking too small. They're thinking in their province instead of world-wide.

You know, people didn't switch from horses because horses don't work anymore. They moved from horses to cars because the innovation that created cars, that could go farther, go faster, and meet people's needs, was better. If somebody had focused on, "Well, how can we make horses faster?" and all the effort went into making horses faster, no one would have invented the car. Beyond that, it's through the innovation after that that cars went from five miles per gallon to 10 miles per gallon to 20 miles per gallon to 40 miles per gallon. You see, Madam Speaker, how innovation, if you think bigger and if you actually plant the seeds to create the better future of the world – a plan that is about innovation does that.

Even the former plan, the SGER, which was really focused on innovation, too, created things like carbon capture and storage, which a lot of people questioned, but today it actually helps the wells that are in the ground to produce more energy while using less water, to be more efficient and multiply those efforts over and over and over again.

But the NDP's drive to the bottom, to essentially sacrifice the Canadian economy so that we can virtue signal to the rest of the world that we're better people than them, wasn't really going to get us where we need to go. We actually need an innovation plan where Alberta can be part of leading the world, where we as part of the TIER program can innovate and create new technologies that will make the world more efficient and do the things that we need to do: keep people warm in the winter, motivate people from point A to point B in a car or whatever the next vehicle that people ride in is called. It might be a car for a long time; maybe somebody that's 15 years old now will invent something called something other than a car. The point is that innovation is the key. That's why this is an important step forward.

4:40

Again, I was a little amused by the hon. member talking about some of the money going into general revenue when the NDP's plan, when they went from \$30 to \$50, was to put 100 per cent of that into general revenue and nothing into innovation. Heck, they weren't even going to buy any more light bulbs, which will burn out, or any more shower heads. It was all going to go into general revenue while with our plan we will be focusing on making industry more innovative, creating technologies that could spread across the world. A very small percentage of emissions out of the United States, out of Europe, out of China, out of India using Alberta-made innovation in the future will make a much bigger, world-wide difference on emissions, potentially, than 1.6 per cent. We're actually giving a chance for that to happen. Buying light bulbs won't get that done. Buying shower heads won't get that done.

The previous government's plan actually punished Albertans for staying warm in the winter. They punished municipalities. They punished charities. They punished seniors. They punished schools. They punished families for buying groceries, for goodness' sake. This is something that actually looks wider in recognizing that the airshed and the emissions that we're trying to protect have to be thought of as bigger than Alberta and bigger than Canada if we're actually going to make a difference in the world. Consequently . . . [Mr. McIver's speaking time expired] Oh, I'm out of time.

The Deputy Speaker: Well, are there any other speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise and speak to Bill 19, the emissions management and climate resilience act, otherwise known as TIER legislation, as this UCP campaigned on in their platform. I appreciate that we're seeing the context of this legislation now and some of the information provided, and I'm very concerned. I mean, notwithstanding what we just heard from the Minister of Transportation, which I'm very concerned about – I mean, we heard things like, “Well, it doesn't make a difference if we don't do anything because it's more about the world context,” which is very concerning for me because it's essentially signalling that, one, he doesn't necessarily believe that we need to take strong action against climate change, which is very concerning, and two, that he doesn't believe that Alberta necessarily has a part in the world context, which is also very concerning.

I'm worried to hear this kind of virtue signalling from the government. I think that we owe it to the next generation of people in our province and across the world to take action, recognizing that, of course, climate change is going to affect us here in the province of Alberta, but it is going to have massive impacts on third-world countries, even more so. That's very concerning, that we stand here in this House and look at how it's going to affect our population but often not recognizing or not speaking to the fact that, you know, droughts are going to expand and flooding is going to expand. It's going to be harder to insure not only our province but other regions around the world, and what that is going to do to less fortunate populations than our own – I'm very concerned to hear that.

Once again, what we see in this TIER legislation is that the UCP is not taking climate change seriously. It is disappointing, really, to see that the UCP is presenting a plan that reduces emissions less than the previous plan under the NDP government. There were signals from the environment minister that somehow this would reduce as much as or more even than what we proposed, which is, as we can see from these details, not true at all.

It really is unfortunate that the government will use TIER to finance the \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout. The minister once again spoke about the fact that they think it's okay to put this into general revenue with no strings attached, but the fact is, you know, that the minister wants to point out that we took that money, but we invested it. We have cold, hard numbers and facts to show where that money was going. Unfortunately, under this UCP government we are not going to see that.

The minister spoke at length about innovations. Once again, not through this legislation, not through the TIER legislation, nor throughout the entirety of the platform or the platform that this government has brought forward are we seeing any dollars – or very few, if any – attached to innovation.

For one, we're seeing cuts to advanced education, which is very concerning. We want to talk about innovation for the next generation. Well, if you start making it harder for students to go to school and start increasing their taxes on the loans that they're taking out, well, there's not going to be as much innovation and not as many people going to postsecondary, getting postsecondary education. That's very concerning.

Also very concerning is the fact that this government has not provided any dollars to local communities, whether it's community leagues or municipalities, to actually reduce emissions through government buildings or through community league buildings, which is something that we took great pride in being able to move forward. The fact is that communities want to be a part of the solution, and unfortunately this government is not letting that happen.

Now, as the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods pointed out, there are two pieces to this: the electric side, which largely mimics

what our NDP government put forward through our plan – and I can appreciate that once in a blue moon this government gets things right, so thank you for that – but unfortunately, on the other side of the conversation, the emissions reductions that are seen in this TIER legislation are not what they need to be. The fact is that this government is actually incentivizing bigger polluters or is actually going to give bigger polluters more money than the companies that are looking to actually reduce their emissions, which is very concerning to me.

The fact is that we need to incentivize new operations to reduce their emissions, and that is not what we are seeing under this TIER legislation. It's a concern that was brought forward by Andrew Leach, a respected environmental economist and professor at the U of A, which has not been addressed by this legislation. From U of A? U of C? Now I'm confusing myself. Either way, of course, Andrew Leach worked very hard to help us with our climate leadership plan, work that we greatly appreciated, alongside industry, nonprofit organizations. Unfortunately, his work is falling on deaf ears under this government, so that's very concerning.

Now, once again, Alberta has paid a price on carbon since 2007, and since that time all revenues collected have been dedicated to innovation and green initiatives, which, once again, we are seeing disappear under this UCP government. As we saw in the budget, the government does not actually support innovation, as I talked about with cuts to Advanced Education, in terms of cuts to tax credits that were spurring innovation, the capital investor tax credit being one of them. It is very concerning that there is little to no signal from this government that they believe in innovation at all.

Once again, \$20 million from the revenue that's coming from the TIER program is also going to the Canadian Energy Centre, \$80 million over four years. Now, that's money that could have been invested in reducing emissions, whether it be for these large emitters or whether it be for households. I mean, this government goes on at length about the fact that our NDP government took action to reduce household emissions. We provided incentives for people to reduce emissions, and it's quite frustrating that this government doesn't recognize the importance of programs like that. One of the most important ways to reduce emissions across our province is to promote personal opportunities or opportunities for individuals to reduce their emissions. We saw something like \$500 million, \$600 million in reduced costs to Albertans, so it was no small reduction in costs. It's frustrating that this government is not going to move forward with any kind of plan to reduce individual household emissions.

Now, once again, the government cut significantly from innovation in other parts of the budget. AI funding was cut by \$100 million to \$40 million: the AITC program, the digital media tax credit program, and funding to science in various departments. Once again this government is talking out of one side of their mouth and saying that they believe in the innovations and future innovations of this province, but on the other hand they're removing any incentive to actually be innovative as an organization or as a person. So that's very concerning.

Now, the minister also made the point that we were looking to reduce emissions to zero per cent and, once again, that we're only 1.9 per cent of the world emissions, which really just goes to show that the minister doesn't really believe that we need to take any action, which is very frustrating for myself and my constituents. I have people coming to me often very concerned about the implications of the future of climate change. We've heard discussions in this House and throughout the world that if we don't take action within the next decade, there are going to be catastrophic implications. That's very concerning for me, and it's concerning that we aren't having real conversations in this House about what

that means. So when we talk about not moving forward on innovation, that's very frustrating for me.

We do have great opportunities in places like automation to reduce our emissions, but unfortunately this government has not provided any signal that we are going to be moving forward in that direction.

4:50

Once again, I just want to say that I do not support what we're seeing here. I think that the legislation that came before this was overall just better legislation in terms of taking action against climate change, reducing emissions, providing incentives to our communities and large emitters to take action to reduce those emissions, so I will most definitely not be supporting this legislation. I think that this UCP government should really go back to the drawing board.

One of my other main concerns is the fact that there is no price on carbon for regular Albertans, which is fine in itself, of course. This government ran on a platform to get rid of the personal carbon tax for households. My concern is what signal this is going to send to the federal government. Whether you support a price on carbon for individuals or not, the fact is that the federal government is looking to take action on this. The fact that there is no plan provided by the UCP shows that, well, we will be going to court, more than likely in the very near future. My concern is what that is going to cost Albertans. Once again, that's fine. You know, this UCP government will stand up and say that they won their mandate on removing that, but the fact is that Albertans and Canadians are going to be pitted against each other at a cost of millions of dollars. At the end of the day, the federal government does, as far as I know, have the jurisdiction to impose a price on carbon on us. When that inevitably happens, the UCP is not going to have a plan for that, which is also very concerning to myself and to many of my constituents.

Once again, I don't think that the right balance has been struck here in Bill 19. There are small portions, like the electricity side, that largely mimic what we had put forward in our climate leadership action plan. Unfortunately, it just does not strike the right balance for environment and industry.

So, once again, I will not be supporting Bill 19. I appreciate the time to speak to that today.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Are there any members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm just very concerned about the member opposite totally misconstruing our Minister of Transportation's comments. The Minister of Transportation was pointing out that technology innovation is what is actually going to help the whole globe, not just what we're doing here in Alberta. This TIER fund and Bill 19 speak to reducing emissions by 10 per cent by the year 2020 and by 1 per cent for the years following that. If we could see that around the world, that 10 per cent target, if just the U.S.A. took some of the innovation and technology that we've developed here in Alberta and applied it to their emissions, that alone would be almost the same amount as all of Canada emits, just a 10 per cent reduction in American emissions. If we were to take the top five emitters around the world and reduce their emissions by 10 per cent, that would be three and a half times the entire output of Canada. Three and a half times.

I think they missed the point that the leadership that Alberta can show with our technology, with our innovations, by reducing our

emissions by 10 per cent, by being world leaders and applying that research and technology around the globe, will have multiple times the effect of what we would just do by punishing every household here in Alberta.

The other point that I would just like to raise, Madam Speaker, is that he raised a worry about the federal carbon tax that is going to be coming in in Alberta. At least we're fighting against that. But that federal carbon tax is not as onerous or as painful as the one that they themselves put in place. I find it very ironic that they speak to those worries and concerns as they're speaking against the very plan that they had put in place four years ago.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I simply was pointing out the fact that the Minister of Transportation was talking about moving forward on innovation, but unfortunately we have seen zero commitment to innovation through this provincial UCP government. That is a concern for me. I think it's a concern that I share with many Albertans. I'm sorry that the member did not necessarily agree with that.

Now, once again, this member went on to talk about the fact that other jurisdictions can do more than we can. He's trying to take away from the fact that we need to take action, which is very concerning for me. We're hearing this from many members of this government, and it's really the wrong direction to take. So it's unfortunate that he believes that.

Now, once again, the fact is that this member now sounds like he supports the federal Liberal price on carbon more than a made-in-Alberta one. That's something that he will have to take up with his own members. But the fact is that under our plan two-thirds of low-income Albertans actually received a rebate. It covered more than what they were paying into it. The fact is that we had a made-in-Alberta approach. It sounds like the UCP supports a made-in-Ottawa approach, which is very frustrating. Hopefully, he can clarify those comments in the future.

Once again, I will not be supporting Bill 19 as far as I can tell. I wish that there was more action taken on emissions reduction. I mean, it's in the title, but it's not in the details. Once again, I hope that this government will reconsider their commitment to technology innovation and emissions reduction, as in the title of this legislation, and go back to the drawing board.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members under 29(2)(a)?

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

Ms Renaud: Thanks, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 19, Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019. Before I begin just some of my comments on this piece of legislation, I just wanted to note that I think it's sort of sad that we've arrived at a place where it seems like we have to take a loyalty pledge about oil and gas.

Let me just be crystal clear about what I believe. I do believe that the oil and gas sector essentially built Alberta. I think we can't drive by a school or a hospital or any major infrastructure project and not understand that the benefits that we all received as Albertans are because of the oil and gas sector. That's really important. Our oil and gas sector workers are vitally important as they have essentially built this province. So let me just be clear on that. I do think it's possible to support this sector and to want to get the absolute best price for our product while recognizing that climate change is very real and

that, in fact, it's a crisis and that we can do both things: address the immediacy of the problem but also the opportunities that it presents while supporting this sector. I just wanted to put that out there.

Just on a personal note, I think that this building, steeped in tradition, is really the people's House. I think that advertising of any kind for any sector – and there are many valuable sectors in this province – is not a democratic thing to do. This is the people's House.

All that aside, I just want to speak to this legislation. You know, Alberta has had a price on carbon since 2007 – I think we all know that – and since that time all revenues collected have been dedicated to innovation and green initiatives until now. While we, the NDP government, used the Nobel prize winning strategy of carbon pricing, or putting a price on pollution, we also distributed rebates to up to 60 per cent of Alberta families while deliberately funding an energy transition, realizing that we were capable of doing a couple of different things at once.

I just would like to say something about the rebates. Now, I understand, you know, that in putting all of the revenues into general revenue and with less transparency about investment in rebates, it does have an impact on people. One of the things that the rebate did was to take the cost of energy and calculate sort of what people could afford in terms of their incomes and what they were using. It sort of redistributed, in a way, to lower income families. Let me give you an example of somebody on AISH, let's say. They don't live on a lot. They live on just over \$1,600 a month. For them, in getting that rebate – they were being rebated because they were using less and their incomes were low – they actually started to rely on that a little bit, the little bit of extra money that they received. So there is an impact to the changes that we made.

More than anything, a smart energy transition means that we have to address climate change, and when I say “address climate change,” I don't just mean we have to immediately address the realities of climate change but that we have to take advantage of the amazing opportunities that are presenting themselves, because they're everywhere. But, like I said earlier, while we do these things, we continue to push and advocate to ensure that we get the best price for our product while there is a demand.

5:00

It's important to remember the federal campaign – you all like to talk about the federal campaign in here a lot – where their TIER policy was also introduced. I think the general consensus was that that particular plan was taking climate change not seriously at all. I would agree with that comment. Government has said that this plan will reduce emissions by five megatonnes less in 2024 under their TIER plan than under the preceding plan, the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation. Well, we were on track to reduce 50 megatonnes over the next 10 years, and the UCP plans to reduce emissions by 32 megatonnes. That's almost a 50 per cent drop. Government department staff have suggested 32 additional megatonnes will be reduced without innovation, and our plan was 50. Government is betting on innovation being able to reduce emissions by 57 megatonnes, and using that same assumption, our plan was forecast to reduce by 76 megatonnes.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

This act gives the minister the power to change the price per tonne by ministerial order. Now, I mean, we can debate this, whether or not that's a good idea. Given the fact that you do have an enormous mandate – we hear that a lot – and that you have a majority, you can pass legislation. But I do think it's important to democratically talk about the decisions that we're making about our energy sector and about Albertans. You know, putting it away in a cabinet room and making decisions by ministerial order I would

suggest is not the best way to go. Previously it was through legislation that we made. You may not have agreed with us at the time, but we debated in the light of day for a very long time.

According to this government's fiscal plan their TIER plan will only cover 48 per cent of emissions. Implementing TIER will lead to \$0.7 billion in lost revenue to the government coffers by 2022-23, and \$20 million of TIER will go to the Premier's seemingly pet project, the Canadian Energy Centre, also affectionately known as the war room or snitch line.

As I said earlier, I don't believe that this can be all or nothing: climate change or supporting the oil and gas sector. I believe that we have to do both well at the same time. I think we hear it all the time. We hear it from scientists. We hear it from leaders in this sector as well. If we fail to do that and if we go along this path that seems to be carved for us, it's this partisan debate of us versus them when it's about all of us. It's about Albertans. It's about our future. It's our collective future. It's not about what kind of party membership you hold. The reality is that, like it or not, climate change and the opportunities it presents but also the dangers it presents will impact all of us and all of our families.

I actually think there's a problem with funds not being dedicated specifically to an energy transition. Again, when I talk about transition, these are long-term transitions with goals that extend likely well beyond the time that we will be in this House, but it's about taking advantage of it right now. It's investment in other sectors, and that means job creation. We know that we're shedding jobs. I'm not pointing fingers, but the reality is that there are enormous pressures on every sector right now, and we know that with clean energy, green energy, whatever you want to call it, different energy, there are so many opportunities in terms of job creation, and our failure to act on that, to act responsibly on that, will be our peril, all of our peril, all Albertans.

There is job security in these jobs. We know this. Who doesn't know an oil and gas sector worker? I certainly know many, and I've seen the toll that the incredibly long hours take, the stress of not knowing sometimes if they're going to go back or if there's going to be another bust cycle that is going to devastate the reality of their work. It's difficult. They're away from their families for long periods of time, and I'm incredibly grateful to these men and women for the work that they do, but it takes a toll, and there are other opportunities. Albertans have the skill and the desire to build a sustainable energy system.

I get that change is difficult. I get that. I see it every day. But the reality of climate change, which, I would suggest, is a crisis and which I believe is a crisis, is that it requires us to look at the facts and to look at the science. I am not a scientist, but I do believe in science, that emissions impact our well-being and our health. We know this. This is fact. Emissions impact our health, the health of our communities, the health of our children, and the health of our future.

Climate change doesn't start forest fires. It doesn't start floods. It doesn't create hurricanes or anything like that, but scientists have told us for decades that they make these very challenging weather events more difficult. They last longer. They're more severe. They're more frequent. This is based on science, actual science. Our failure to listen to these scientists: history will not look kindly on us. We should be investing in innovation. We should be investing in science and research.

You know, sadly I look at the government's budget and, again, climate change impacts every single sector, from agriculture to environment to postsecondary. This is the time of a lot of challenges and opportunities, when we need to be investing in research and in science, and sadly I think that these sweeping cuts in so many of these sectors, so many of these ministries are going to create long-term risk.

I spoke a little bit earlier about a just transition for workers and seizing the opportunities to create different jobs, additional jobs, but economic transitions are very difficult. They need to be guided by a government focused on the end goal and not the political, personal agenda. You know, I was reading an article, I think it was yesterday or today, about some of the coal workers in the United States. Some of the really poor communities in the southern part of the United States were completely reliant on the coal industry. In fact, the community was likely built up as a result of this initial investment in coal, and people started working and all of those things. What has happened – and it's happening all over the world – is that coal is being phased out slowly. Ultimately, it harms workers the most initially. It harms the workers, it harms their families, and it harms communities. It does. We see the devastation.

I was reading about this devastation, these hundreds of workers now left without employment in a community that was really solely relying on this industry. They don't have health care. They don't have pensions. They don't have work. They don't know where to go. It's happening in states all over. I mean, we will see it happen in more and more places. So I think it's incumbent on all of us to recognize this and to start investing in these workers because they deserve our support and investment. These are the workers, as I said earlier, that built this province. They have so many transferable skills that we can work with them to ensure that they are not left behind, because they're important.

Emissions in Alberta. I think I heard earlier somebody making fun of light bulbs, which – I get it – has been a long-standing UCP joke about: "Oh, my God. NDPs like paying for light bulbs." Sure, it sounds a little bit silly, but I think you have to look at the larger move to energy efficiency. That was something to stimulate something. But let's talk about the little LED light bulb, shall we? I mean, they're not that expensive, but it's a way of saying to people: you can do this one little thing, and look what happens. Actually, when you use an LED light, you are reducing the energy needed for that light by 85 per cent, and only 5 per cent of that light bulb is lost or wasted to heat. That seems pretty innovative to me.

I know that there were a number of nonprofit organizations – I know people like to talk about, "Oh, it devastated nonprofits." Certainly, did people feel cost pressures? Yes. That was a reality. Absolutely, it was a reality. I appreciate that. What it also did was allow people to look at their nonprofit to say: "What can I do to make this better? How can I reduce the energy that I use in order to save more money to invest in the front-line supports that I need to deliver?"

For example, a homeless shelter. Let's say a homeless shelter takes on this project to look at: what are the things we can do to invest in this structure, in this place, in the way that we do business so that we save more money so we can spend more money on the purpose, and that is housing people that don't have places to sleep. That's just an example. I do know of a number of nonprofits that took advantage of energy audits and actually did some work, some of the really simple things that they were able to do, and reported back that it was a cost saving. For me, a nonprofit saving money on energy bills is a great idea because those funds get put right back into the purpose of their organization.

5:10

Like the federal TIER plan, I don't believe that this legislation goes far enough. I think it needs to address all emission emitters. Certainly, large emitters are a focus, but residential emissions, emissions from our vehicles, our SUVs, all of those things need to be included, and that includes investment, energy efficiency, and taking real steps.

You know, I do talk about climate change a lot because I think it's important and I think that there are enormous opportunities in

front of us. One of the things that I've always been amazed by Albertans from every sector is their ingenuity, their ability to work hard, and their ability to get things done. I believe given the opportunity to do a few things at the same time is to look at: let's do everything we can to support this sector, get the best price for our product, and move forward.

The Acting Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I believe the individual who caught my attention is the hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate this opportunity to rise under 29(2)(a). I know how important it is that we support our oil and gas sector and also our environment at the same time. I'm an avid outdoorswoman, and my family, we spend a lot of time in the outdoors, so I definitely know how important it is to make sure that we're preserving our lands and everything else.

What really bothers me is that this conversation has been centred around balance. Well, this is exactly what balance is, Mr. Speaker. This is a targeted plan that will actually reduce emissions. We know that when the former Premier was on TV, she couldn't even point to how her carbon tax did that. At the end of the day, we all know that she actually didn't have a plan to reduce emissions at all. We have more needless grandstanding on this issue, when, really, I think the economy and the environment should be something that we are, you know, not really that too far different on at the end of the day. It does impact all Albertans.

You know, the carbon tax was a cash grab, whereas this is actually getting put toward something that will actually meaningfully reduce emissions, which is what I think people want. They want to know that the economy and the environment are not pitted against each other, that they're working hand in hand.

I heard a comment about this made-in-Alberta solution and how fantastic and fabulous it is that the NDP brought in their carbon tax, but at the end of the day we had a carbon plan in 2007. We were actually the first jurisdiction to have one, so Alberta has been leading for a long time. So for the NDP to get up and claim that their plan is sacrosanct, it's ridiculous and it's false. I just would encourage them to look back at previous legislation brought forward and how that actually supported that as well.

We need to reassure investors in this province. We've seen investment flee under the previous government, and I believe that we have an obligation to stand up for Alberta workers and Alberta jobs and the jobs in the oil and gas industry. We heard about this from the member before me, and it just is really interesting to me that she would get up and claim to stand for oil and gas workers and claim to know their pain or know what's going on when she considers them to be a special-interest group. I don't believe them to be a special-interest group. I know nobody on the United Conservative government believes them to be a special-interest group. I'm glad that she walked back her statement. I'm glad that she is repenting for that and that she recognizes that her comments were out of touch. I can only hope that her constituents will see that in the next election as well.

You know, when we're talking about this, it's important that we look at this through a larger lens and we look at this through something that is going to be affecting the next generation, which, I mean, many of us have a vested interest in. I want my kids and grandkids to have the beautiful Alberta that I grew up in as well, but I also want them to be able to have economic activity and jobs and a future, and they're not going to have that if we continue to tax people to death. It's ridiculous.

Putting in something like TIER, having something that helps us to be able to lower emissions, to be able to provide a better future

for the next generation, that's what's important, Mr. Speaker, certainly not getting up and grandstanding on whose job or whose plan is better. That's not going to get us any further ahead. The NDP have an opportunity right now to actually stand up for the environment and do something meaningful to address climate change. Instead of that, they're choosing to engage in partisan bantering. I guess we just have to get up and respond to that because that's our job.

You know, I'm really interested in hearing more about – I'm sure that we'll continue to hear different sides of this debate and more comments from the NDP, and I'm sure that they'll follow the same talking points of, "The UCP does nothing for the environment," that we're climate change deniers, that we're blah, blah, blah. But, at the end of the day, there is a plan here put forward, and they can choose to support that, or they can choose to sit on that side of the House and ultimately go against the will of Albertans, who voted for this in the general election.

We're taking meaningful action on climate change, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud of that because I think that we need to preserve, like I said, the land for the next generation. We need to preserve our lands and everything else. Once again, I just can't believe that we are hearing this and that we're being lectured by a member of the opposition caucus who actually stood outside on the steps of the Legislature and accused our fantastic workers of being special-interest groups.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore has risen.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate you recognizing me here. Well, maybe I'll just say that when we mention things like "grandstanding" – anyway, let's talk about Bill 19, the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019, or what is often being referred to now as TIER legislation. I'm looking at this plan, and, you know, I think that one of the things that we haven't kind of had the opportunity to bring into the conversation is around some of the financial implications of climate change. We've heard the insurance industry say very, very clearly that this is a very serious and major concern for them.

Some of the events that we're seeing take place: these events seem to be getting bigger in size. They're getting more intense in size. We're seeing things like hurricanes reaching some very, very devastating proportions. As we know, this past summer the Bahamas took a very, very major hit in such a way that nobody has ever really seen before. The flooding that occurred, not to mention the wind damage, in that area was absolutely significant. I don't know if we've actually seen a dollar value yet that's been placed on that, but it's something that has now come front and centre for the insurance industry around the implications of that and the costs that they're going to have to start paying out in terms of damages and whatnot.

When you look at Alberta and across Canada, I mean, the reality is that it's not anybody's fault or pointing fingers. It's just the way it is. Out of all of Canada's emissions, Alberta makes up approximately 40 to 45 per cent of those emissions across Canada, so I think that it's incumbent upon Alberta to lead the way and to be able to show everyone, basically, how it's done.

I think that when we were talking earlier around the motion and that whole description – you know, again, I don't understand why Alberta got this, Mr. Speaker, but they just kept calling it the tar sands, and it was so frustrating every time I heard that. What I noticed, again, over the course of time when I was visiting through the different Council of State Governments – Midwest, West,

national – we were starting to change the dial, the channel on that narrative and getting them to realize that it's not the tar sands; it's our oil sands. It's our energy sector.

5:20

As a matter of fact, I remember being down in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and I actually had a chance to speak with some representatives out of Oregon. By the end of that lunch meeting they were very, very keen to somehow meet with a delegation from here in Alberta. They didn't care whether the delegation went down to Oregon or if they came up. They said: "We've heard about your climate leadership plan, the steps that you have taken. How do we go about duplicating that in our jurisdiction?" It started to lead the conversation about how we can take very meaningful steps towards climate change.

We are seeing events now that are starting to cost us a lot of money as taxpayers. If we're going to be true to that narrative that we're respecting taxpayers' money, we can't be throwing it away simply because, as I think some of the other members have said before, we're almost pitting two things against each other. It's either that we have to work on the economy at the expense of the environment or – you know what? – we've got to work on the environment but at the expense of the economy. Nothing is more inaccurate than that. We can actually do both, but we have to make those meaningful moves. We have to change the channel, change that narrative so it becomes absolutely undeniable that Alberta is the place to get energy needs met.

When I start delving into Bill 19 and I'm seeing some of the, shall we say, less ambitious language around emissions, this is clearly – again, I guess I have to refer back to when we were talking earlier around that motion. We're saying one thing, but then some of our actions over here are kind of counterproductive to that. We're saying, you know, "Absolutely, we are onboard with climate change; we are going to do something about it," yet when we had a plan that, as I said in my own travels, was starting to become the envy of other jurisdictions wanting to duplicate it, now we're coming in underneath it? What kind of message does that send? It sounds like conflicting signals to me, Mr. Speaker. If we want to be taken seriously, if we want to be that destination for our energy products, we have to take a position that is above absolutely all, making it completely undeniable.

I think some of the targets that we have around here, reducing emissions by 57 megatonnes when we could have been reducing them by 76 megatonnes under the language that we currently have – why we would choose to be counterproductive and bring in language that is less sends a signal to other areas that maybe we're just not that serious about it. Then, of course, if we're hoping that they're going to change their habits and their tune, they're going to look back and say: well, Alberta is not, so why should we? I know we don't like to hear that, but that is what tends to happen. It's almost kind of a bit of human nature. We look around us and we go: well, that person over there is not doing that, so maybe we don't need to. We just lead the way, and we will set the conditions for everyone else to follow. It was happening. Others were starting to follow. That simple example of Oregon was that example. Again, with my own eyes and ears, I was surprised.

I am happy, of course, that the government side has chosen to incorporate around some of the electricity that the previous NDP government had put in, but again, you know, instead of taking that high standard, we're choosing to be almost counterproductive to ourselves and going: well, we'll just go under it. Again, it's sending mixed messages.

I know that in communities across Edmonton-Decore there's a lot of – I'll use the example of my community halls. In the

community that I live in, Evansdale, the Evansdale Community League, their community hall, now is net zero. It was achieved through the program that the previous government put in. They were able to access funds to be able to go install solar panels on their facility. They changed out their light bulbs. Of course, the Member for St. Albert talked about: yeah, you know, we can make all fun and games about light bulbs. But this made a significant difference in this community hall, and now the league is net zero. They had other leagues now starting to look at them. Here they set the bar, and everybody else started coming around: how can we duplicate what you're doing? They even wanted to try and duplicate it now as a group, maybe even get a better discount on things. It was things like the carbon levy that allowed those groups to be able to access funds, that made it possible for those projects to happen, and it would have made those projects possible for other groups as well. You know, I have yet to hear from the executive of Evansdale Community League regretting the decision, especially when their monthly electricity bill comes in. They were the ones to be able to set the standard.

I did want to quickly talk about the price on carbon Alberta has had since 2007. It's been mentioned by members on both sides, so this is not something new. When the NDP government came in, in 2015, we had a pretty good sneaking suspicion that something higher was going to be coming in at the federal level. What happened is that we chose to make decisions that would work for Alberta, a plan made here in Alberta and that we'd get to manage in Alberta. As a matter of fact, that plan worked so well that when that price on carbon was going to be going up higher at the levels of the federal government, we had complete control of that money.

From a business point of view – and I talked to some of my businessowners within Edmonton-Decore. I asked: does it make smart business sense to give up control of the money; in other words, to let Ottawa make the decisions for us? Yeah, they were going to give us the money back. Absolutely, they were. But they were probably going to be pointing fingers, saying: “This is where the money is going to get spent here, and this is where the money is going to get spent here and over here as well. Oh, what was that? It doesn't quite work for you? I'm sorry to hear that.” We had the ability to make those decisions one hundred per cent, so we started to invest right here, back in Alberta, on things like innovation, something that I certainly heard the Transportation minister talk about going forward, how important innovation is. This is what will drive things. But with decisions we've made now, it seems a little bit counterproductive in terms of the budget, where we don't seem to be going gung-ho on this innovation that's going to change the game, that's going to change the dial on what people are saying and thinking about the jurisdiction of Alberta. Right or wrong, okay? And, yes, they're wrong.

Alberta is the place to come to get your energy needs met, but for some reason they still don't think that's the case. By taking control of that money, we were able to invest, including in our energy sector, to be able to help our biggest emitters bring down their emissions, making them more efficient, bringing down our emissions as Alberta, again, generating anywhere between 40 and 45 per cent of all of Canada's emissions, and making it absolutely undeniable the place that Alberta holds, should hold, and will hold as we move forward.

5:30

Some of the things that I think I have mentioned have me concerned enough, Mr. Speaker, that I'm just not able to support this plan. I think that we are choosing language that is inferior to what we have. I think that we're sending mixed signals to potential

customers around the world, to jurisdictions that, you know, may be thinking of partnering with us. We're sending mixed signals there. We're saying one thing, but some of the decisions that we're making are saying something else. I don't think that helps to move Alberta's cause forward.

Unfortunately, I'm not in a position to be able to support Bill 19 right now, in its current form. Again, you know, kudos to where it is due. They did manage to take some language around electricity that was currently there. I kind of wish that you had taken all of it. Again, one minute we're saying that it's working for us, and then the next minute we're doing something else.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I believe I saw the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise under 29(2)(a) to really lend my voice and support to this bill, the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019. You know, I have sat here in this Chamber and listened to members opposite on a wide range of reasons why they will not support this bill.

I'm going to address my remarks based on two themes. One, innovation is something that you would think would be a bipartisan aim of any bill that aims at seriously tackling the question of climate change. On that particular front I am a little bit disappointed that members opposite would not see it as fit, given their claim to really be climate change agents. Two, Mr. Speaker, is from the perspective of world emissions, in particular how we can put forward something that actually helps third-world countries, something that you often hear from the members opposite. In listening to some of their members today, they have referenced, you know, the impact of climate change on third-world countries. Again, I'm disappointed on that particular front.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that it is obvious, in listening to the members opposite, that nothing would satisfy them unless it's something – a proposal, a policy – like they had before, that nearly destroyed our economy. I think that it's obvious that unless you tax ordinary people and families and businesses and not-for-profit organizations with that, they will not be pleased. The type of bill they would want to see is a bill that targets families and businesses and ordinary people, like we saw, whereby they had no regard for moms and hockey moms and dads and families driving their children to school, to hockey games, to soccer games, or ordinary folks driving to work. Unless you impose a multibillion-dollar carbon tax on ordinary folks, the NDP will never be satisfied.

Mr. Speaker, that is why they have pursued with their federal allies policies that have devastated our oil and gas sector. You would think when you listen to them in this Chamber – you can easily fall into the temptation that these are folks who support our oil and gas sector. But carefully reading between the lines of their submissions in this particular House, you know, it's obvious that that informs their support for bills like C-48 and C-69. Otherwise, opposition to those two pieces of legislation should be something that is bipartisan, not just in this particular Chamber but outside. What we have seen is that you see them at virtually every rally that is protesting against our oil and gas sector. You have previous NDP cabinet ministers carrying placards protesting against the building of future pipelines. That's what we see.

They think that amnesia has suddenly set in to the people of this province, that they will not remember, that they will forget that it was one thing for you to talk about support for the oil and gas sector but then go out there and protest with people who seek the destruction of the same sector you're claiming in this particular Chamber to support. It doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker. I hope that

if they are serious about the need to combat climate change, they would work with us in making sure that we repeal C-48 and C-69.

Mr. Speaker, as someone that was born and raised in a third-world country where it is so hard to find electricity . . .

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows has risen to speak on this matter.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege, and it really is an honour to rise in the House to speak to Bill 19, Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019, also known as TIER legislation. I just wanted to clearly say from the beginning that, you know, listening to members on both sides of the House, I'm definitely not going to support this bill. There are a number of reasons that have been outlined by my colleagues as the reasons that we are not supporting this bill. At the same time, every time the members of the government side rise on 29(2)(a), there's nothing new that could impress me so that I will have something to support in this bill. The biggest debate, argument that is coming from the government side is innovation, other than the election-style rhetoric that the government is the biggest supporter of the energy sector, but the opposition doesn't care about it much.

Looking at this bill, it does nothing more on innovation than the previous NDP government's Alberta climate leadership plan would have invested in innovations. Looking at both the bills, I don't see the biggest difference in how this is going to promote more than what the Alberta climate leadership plan was doing. On the contrary, I am seeing that this is probably just the government's philosophical, ideological approach. They just wanted to move that and wanted to give everything to private hands to take care of something that's very, very seriously related to the people of Alberta. It was not even long ago that we saw in the fields, on the grounds of the Alberta Legislature our next generation and other Albertans and how concerned they are about climate change, that climate change is here.

5:40

The plan we had, that basically the government took leadership of, was one where we would not have to, you know, work under the federal government's climate leadership plan. So the money goes to Ottawa, and then we wait for their, you know, conditions, limitations, terms to get all that funding back to us. In that way Alberta will be controlled. They wanted to invest the revenue that was coming from the Alberta climate leadership plan and spend it in the way that we think is more important, to support our local economy in Alberta. This is how the Alberta government was able to support thousands of jobs in the energy sector, and there were more jobs actually coming if this, you know, Alberta climate leadership plan was still in place. More projects would have started with the Alberta climate leadership plan. There were to be more jobs created until now. It's sad to see that has gone.

The biggest thing that I was part of that I really want to stress is this. It was not only something that economically the government was moving forward on to support Albertans in diversifying the economy, supporting future generations, investing into the economy. Also, to me, at a few events that I was personally involved in, I saw this, you know, as a culture-changing move. When I say culture-changing move, there have been a few of the community events where our Alberta energy efficiency plan was launched, where government members made fun of us many times, spending money on those light bulbs and stuff. [interjection] Yeah. That's your point of view. I respect that, but I wanted to share my experience on this.

As a community member I was not part of this government, you know, at those community events. I personally saw thousands and thousands of people coming to know what this Alberta energy efficiency program was and signing up on their cellphones to Alberta energy efficiency programs that they wanted to participate in, not only people discussing what it was. Many of those people did not qualify. They did not get in. They could not register on the spot. They did not even eventually get into the program, but that was something to learn about, what exactly it was, how this was helping our environment, how this was helping our future generations. I saw that for many, many of those people that I met, they could not get into the program, but they went to the stores. They decided to change their light bulbs and the way they were spending money, knowing how this would save future generations. This is something that on that day had a big impact on me. The government of any jurisdiction can make changes in the life of the province or the country.

Some of the other achievements I would really like to actually highlight that the previous government had focused on through our Alberta climate leadership plan: one of those was the first \$100 million plus 50 per cent – I'm trying to get exactly where this information is coming from, actually.

The other climate leadership plan supported more than 7,300 jobs in just two years, and thousands of jobs were still to come with the construction starting on climate leadership plan projects and innovation initiatives as soon as they were to get off the ground. By moving to this plan, definitely the government is going to put those jobs in danger.

The previous government was also able to, you know, fund approximately \$220 million to small businesses by introducing an almost 33 per cent small-business tax cut, and this reduction would save business owners more than half a billion dollars. You know that the small-scale industry is the backbone of any economy, not only our economy. I owned a small-scale business for the last good 15 years, and when I look around my very small plaza, I see, like, that small area within even a few blocks would have been employing thousands and thousands of people. The small-scale industry is actually the biggest engine of the economy. This is how our previous government – part of our Alberta climate leadership plan was able to boost and support small-scale industry and provide the benefit of approximately half a billion dollars over three years.

That plan also invested almost \$3 billion that it was going to invest into transit over the next 10 years. That has supported Calgary and Edmonton: nearly \$1.53 billion for the Calgary green line and approximately \$4.7 billion to support Edmonton Transit, including the west valley. On top of this, it supported hospitals, universities, colleges, and \$40 million has been invested in schools.

The biggest part is this. When government was controlling it, you know, government identified all those people for whom it was hard to afford the cost, would have been too much to afford the carbon pricing. The government in a way provided almost \$700 million to the majority of Albertans to make their lives more affordable, to offset the carbon levy. They probably got more than what they have paid in the cost. More than 60 per cent of Albertans actually qualified for the rebate programs under the climate leadership plan that the previous government had.

Indigenous climate leadership. Actually, more than 65 indigenous communities in Alberta benefited from our climate leadership plan and 225 indigenous initiative projects since 2017.

5:50

Another big boom was to the solar industry. The solar industry has grown under the climate leadership plan approximately 500 per cent. That's where it says that there was almost a cultural change in

some of the areas. Installed solar capacity has increased actually from six megawatts – that was in 2015 – to 35 megawatts in 2018. About 3,100 solar installations have been completed and more than 335 companies have installed. They were actually working in Alberta to install all those solar projects.

The biggest thing and something that I really wanted to highlight: Albertans have conserved enough energy to power a city the size of Leduc under that climate leadership plan. The climate leadership plan, especially the 100-megatonne oil sands emissions cap, was the biggest thing that government House members discussed many times. That was something integral, very important to the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline by the federal government on top of the efforts the provincial government made to awareness or to the pro-pipeline campaign across Canada, I would say, in Ontario, in B.C.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The individual who caught my eye was the hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for speaking to this bill. Actually, I just wanted to take your last point first. When we talk about the 100-megatonne cap on emissions, this was actually one of the largest pieces of legislation that impacted our industry at the biggest level. I was here when we debated those pieces of legislation. The impact that it had on the industry, along with the capacity market changes that were made at around the same time to our electricity market – many members on the other side have been talking about market signals. Market signals, especially in energy, are imperative in terms of how it is that investors are going to come to this province and look at those numbers to see whether or not they're going to stay here. Those policies, especially to the point of the 100-megatonne emissions cap on our oil sands, were absolutely devastating to the industry and especially to smaller companies – by smaller I mean billion-dollar companies versus multibillion-dollar companies – that were absolutely not able to fulfill their commitments in the oil sands based on purchases that they had made to actually be able to create products.

I mean, I think it has to be said, especially from all of us in here, that we are the most responsible, and Canadian oil and gas is the answer completely and unapologetically. I would suggest, too, that if you look at the TIER program, you're looking at – one of the other members mentioned this earlier. We have a 20-year record on the incredible work that has been done in this province. My dad is a chemical engineer. I remember when I was little and he was working, the particulates in the air in Alberta were significantly different. Now, just between I believe it's 2012 and 2017, there's been a change of 29 per cent in terms of efficiency and the ability to remove particulates and actually to have a cleaner product. This is something to be so proud of.

In fact, if the previous government had looked at it from that perspective instead of going to Paris and cheering on the tar sands campaigns and allowing that language to actually resonate with the world, they could have actually used the information that Canadian oil and gas is by far the best in the world, the most responsible. That language would have changed the way that we look at this beautiful country and what we produce here and the responsibility that a government has to uphold what we do in this country. What a lost opportunity. Right now we're talking about schools and roads and how we build infrastructure across this country. It is the responsibility of governments in this country to work together to make sure that that happens.

The previous government poked holes in this by creating just the capacity market alone, Mr. Speaker. The capacity market sent

market signals to the industry to not invest here. The other thing I might like to add is that every single piece of solar or wind that comes online has to be double built with natural gas for the days that the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine in order to make sure that every family in this province stays warm in the winter. That is not ever spoken about. It is not just about wind and about the windmills or the fact that windmills – the environmental return on investment when you build a windmill is not even close to what you pay out at the end. There's no way to recycle them. There's absolutely no place.

I have 40 solar panels on my house, thermal and photovoltaics. There is no place to recycle them. They came from China. They were made with carbon in order to create the silicon that is on my house that gives me a very good return on my investment. By the way, when I pay into the grid, I get a very tiny return on my investment in terms of capital back, but I feel very, very good about being able to do that. I'll tell you that the 40 solar panels on my house: there's no place to recycle them. They're 10 years old already, so in 15 years when they're at their end of life, there will be no place to recycle those. They are going to be another addition into the dumps of Alberta, into some landfill somewhere. If we're going to talk about environmental returns on investment, let's talk about what we're really talking about here.

There are so many things that we can do, but let's talk about the realities of that. This TIER program takes into consideration the realities of that. I very much appreciate what the member brought forward. It's a very legitimate discussion, but let's talk about what's real here. Alberta responsibly produces resources better than anywhere else in the world. Fundamentally, that has to be the first thing that comes out of every single one of our mouths, and I will very happily every single day wear my T-shirts and put my signs up on my windows.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, are there any other members wishing to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has risen to speak.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm cognizant of the time and aware that I probably won't get a chance to speak to too much today with respect to Bill 19, so I'll just make a couple of comments with respect to some of the things that we've been hearing today in the House. In particular, you know, we heard a number of government members speak to the issue of innovation and talk about how much they believe in innovation and that they believe that what is put forward today in Bill 19 supports innovation.

However, I do note that the investment that is set out in Bill 19 under the TIER program with respect to innovation is actually very comparable if not exactly the same as the investment in innovation that was put in under the climate leadership plan. So when they're speaking about their adherence to the value of innovation, they've really just matched exactly what the former NDP government did with respect to innovation except for the very big glaring error, which is that despite that they have a commitment under Bill 19 to innovation, they have cut supports for innovation in every way possible with respect to this budget that's been put forward by the government recently. For example, cutting supports for post-secondary institutions: we're going to see tuition increases across the board; we're going to see fewer people, young people, being able to access postsecondary education, to pay for that. They've cut away tuition credits, education tax credits. They've increased the cost of taking out loans.

So when they're talking about innovation, they certainly are not supporting the postsecondary institutions that are going to be

promoting innovation, nor are they supporting the innovative businesses considering that they have done significant cuts to those tax credits and those investor tax credits that were critical to innovation. I just think it's really important that when we're talking about innovation, it's not just talk. It actually has to be committing to the institutions and the businesses that are innovating. What we're seeing from this government is a clear lack of commitment.

I also just want to make one more quick comment because it was interesting on my part to hear the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat speak about this bill. I thought it was very interesting to hear her comments considering she doesn't actually have particularly a ton of credibility when it comes to speaking about the carbon tax, considering that she herself, well, was spreading quite a bit of misinformation about the carbon tax during the election, to the point that she actually had to issue a retraction of that.

I think we should be talking about facts, and when we're talking about facts, we should keep in mind that innovation under the TIER program is actually no better than what was under the climate leadership plan and, in fact, is worse because there is no commitment to the innovative technologies and the institutions that support that.

Overall – I think I'm going to run out of time – I just want to say that I think I'm not going to support a bill that is weaker than what was proposed . . .

The Acting Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. I think we're all on the same page. Seeing the time, the Assembly stands adjourned until 7:30 p.m. today.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]

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