



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday morning, November 27, 2019

Day 48

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 30th Legislature**

First Session

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Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)  
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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)  
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)  
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)  
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Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)  
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, Edmonton-South West (UCP)  
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),  
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Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)  
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Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)  
Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre  
(UCP), Government House Leader  
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Leader of the Official Opposition  
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Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UCP)  
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)  
Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UCP)  
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UCP)  
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Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)  
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Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)  
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Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)  
Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP),  
Deputy Government Whip  
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, Calgary-Shaw (UCP)  
Schweitzer, Hon. Doug, Calgary-Elbow (UCP),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
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Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)  
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP)  
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UCP)  
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)  
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)  
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP),  
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Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)  
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)  
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)  
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)  
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)  
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)  
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)  
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

**Party standings:**

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Teri Cherkewich, Law Clerk	Nancy Robert, Research Officer	Tom Bell, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Stephanie LeBlanc, Clerk Assistant and Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Paul Link, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
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Tanya Fir	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism
Nate Glubish	Minister of Service Alberta
Grant Hunter	Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction
Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Education
Jason Luan	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Kaycee Madu	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Ric McIver	Minister of Transportation
Dale Nally	Associate Minister of Natural Gas
Demetrios Nicolaides	Minister of Advanced Education
Jason Nixon	Minister of Environment and Parks
Prasad Panda	Minister of Infrastructure
Josephine Pon	Minister of Seniors and Housing
Sonya Savage	Minister of Energy
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Community and Social Services
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Children's Services
Doug Schweitzer	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Tyler Shandro	Minister of Health
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

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Laila Goodridge	Parliamentary Secretary Responsible for Alberta's Francophonie
Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary of Immigration

## STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

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Chair: Mr. Orr  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Getson

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Eggen  
Glasgo  
Jones  
Loyola  
Nielsen  
Singh

### **Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

Chair: Mr. van Dijken  
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

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Barnes  
Bilous  
Dang  
Gray  
Horner  
Irwin  
Issik  
Jones  
Reid  
Rowswell  
Stephan  
Toor

### **Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Goodridge  
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

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

### **Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

Chair: Mr. Ellis  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

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

### **Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. Cooper  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Ellis

Dang  
Deol  
Goehring  
Goodridge  
Gotfried  
Long  
Neudorf  
Sweet  
Williams

### **Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills**

Chair: Mr. Ellis  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

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

### **Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing**

Chair: Mr. Smith  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

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

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Ms Phillips  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Gotfried

Barnes  
Dach  
Feehan  
Guthrie  
Hoffman  
Nixon, Jeremy  
Renaud  
Rosin  
Rowswell  
Stephan  
Toor  
Turton  
Walker

### **Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Mr. Hanson  
Deputy Chair: Member Ceci

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Feehan  
Getson  
Loewen  
Rehn  
Rosin  
Sabir  
Schmidt  
Sigurdson, R.J.  
Singh  
Smith  
Turton  
Yaseen

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m.

Wednesday, November 27, 2019

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Deputy Speaker:** Good morning, hon. members.

Let us pray. 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 ideals but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. So may Your kingdom come and Your name be hallowed. Amen.

Please be seated.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Motions

##### Adjournment of Fall Session

39. Mr. Schweitzer moved on behalf of Mr. Jason Nixon: Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 3(9) the 2019 fall sitting of the Assembly shall stand adjourned upon the Government House Leader advising the Assembly that the business for the sitting is concluded.

[Government Motion 39 carried]

##### Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

40. Mr. Schweitzer moved on behalf of Mr. Jason Nixon: Be it resolved that:
1. The 2018-2019 annual report of the office of the Child and Youth Advocate be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices for review;
  2. The committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned or prorogued;
  3. In accordance with section 21(4) of the Child and Youth Advocate Act the committee shall report back to the Assembly within 90 days of the report being referred to it if the Assembly is then sitting or, if it is not then sitting, within 15 days after the commencement of the next sitting.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, are there any members wishing to speak to the motion?

[Government Motion 40 carried]

### Government Bills and Orders

#### Third Reading

##### Bill 25

#### Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2019

**Mr. Schweitzer:** I'm standing up a lot here this morning, Madam Speaker. You know, I have to rise and give a speech on behalf of the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction. I'm going to read this speech for the first time as we go through it together, so hopefully this isn't a painful exercise for everyone. I'm going to do my best to read the notes.

I rise on behalf of the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction to move third reading of Bill 25, the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2019.

Bill 25 represents our next steps for making Alberta's economy freer and faster and upholds our commitment to cut red tape that impacts the lives of everyday Albertans. Bill 25 proposes changes to several pieces of legislation and repeals some legislation that is no longer in use. It reduces regulatory burdens for municipalities and other government partners and streamlines, eliminates, and modernizes outdated or redundant rules that impact all Albertans.

Some examples of this include speeding up processes for forest management agreements and regulatory approvals for small-scale hydroelectric projects, saving time for these businesses and encouraging future investment. Brock Mulligan from the Alberta Forest Products Association spoke about how this is going to affect the forestry industry. He noted how red tape around granting forestry management agreements created immense uncertainty for sawmills and that an FMA renewal takes years of planning and that any delay on top of that can be a huge setback. Allowing an approval that can now be made via ministerial order adds certainty to the process, speeds up approvals, and ensures stability for these job creators. I think we all agree that that's a positive step forward.

It also makes changes to modernize our building codes and brings them in line with upcoming federal standards. It removes legislation that is no longer needed – the Small Power Research and Development Act, the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Foundation Act – and repeals the out-of-date reference to chiropractic services from the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act.

As recommended by the review of agencies, boards, and commissions, Bill 25 dissolves the Health Professions Advisory Board, which has not been in use since 2012. It also updates the very outdated board appointment process of the M.S.I. Foundation and streamlines recruitment. It gives the Glenbow institute greater flexibility in the management and display of their collection.

A change that will potentially save lives: Bill 25 will make it easier for Albertans to provide online consent for organ donation. This is a new, one-step process that eliminates the paperwork to become an organ donor.

Ultimately, Bill 25 is about creating efficiencies and making it easier to deal with government processes and procedures. The savings earned from these changes aren't specifically monetary, but they do save Albertans, industry, and government something just as important, time. As we all know, time is money. If passed, these 11 changes will join the more than 80 red tape reduction-related initiatives already implemented or approved by government. I'm proud of the progress the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction has made in cutting red tape over the last six months, and I'm proud of how Bill 25 contributes to it. We know that there's more to do, and we're going to continue to cut red tape across government.

I'd like to thank the House for the thoughtful discussion and support for this bill. I look forward to the associate minister bringing forward more red tape reduction matters in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate your recognizing me this morning to talk about an item that, of course, being the critic, is near and dear to my heart, red tape reduction. I guess the only problem I have is that we are looking at some changes within Bill 25 that really aren't red tape reduction. It's

more like statute amendments that could have been done in other pieces of legislation.

We are looking at a bill right now that is omnibus in nature, something that the associate minister himself, during the 29th Legislature, was opposed to. The opposition that I had mentioned in earlier debates was around the labour legislation changes of Bill 17 in the 29th Legislature, which proposed, of course, many different labour changes within one single ministry, whereas here we have approximately 13 different changes across six different ministries. I can't help but wonder what the associate minister would have said had the previous government introduced a piece of legislation like that. I bet that he would have been very much opposed to that or maybe tried to break it up into a bunch of different parts, things like that.

Nonetheless, here we are looking at a ministry that was tasked to create an atmosphere that will create jobs and will grow the economy. Yet, you know, allowing a museum to better manage its assets and its displays: I'm struggling to see how that is creating jobs and how that is growing the economy.

You know, as we go through this bill, we see changes to the Forests Act, and I would probably agree that speeding up the process for those types of things would definitely move things along. Of course, I have heard the associate minister in the past being a little bit critical of a minister receiving greater powers to be able to move things along. It's kind of like what I've said before on different pieces of legislation, how we've said things in the past, but then we're doing something now, and they're contradictory. It sends a bit of a signal, I think, to outside investors that Alberta is confused about what it's trying to accomplish. We shall see how this one moves forward. My hope is that this will allow the Agriculture and Forestry minister to move some projects along a little bit quicker.

When we look at the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Foundation Act, this of course has not existed since 2002, so this will remove it from the legislation. Again, Madam Speaker, how is something like this creating jobs? How is something like this growing the economy? I realize that sometimes a government will look for low-hanging fruit to deal with here, but it looks like there wasn't even really an effort on behalf of the minister to just reach up to grab that low-hanging fruit, preferring to maybe find what was just already laying on the ground. This could have probably been dealt with through a statutes act and not red tape, but I guess, you know, that when you're looking at your ministry costing Alberta taxpayers \$10 million over the next three and a half years, you'd better make some kind of a work project in order to justify your ministry. Clearly, right now the only job that's been created has been the minister's job. That has been it.

9:10

**Mr. Schmidt:** He has staff, too.

**Mr. Nielsen:** I guess he does have staff, too. That's correct. I guess we shouldn't forget about them.

We also see some changes within small-power research and development. Although repealing this may be a good idea, again, I see little interest on behalf of this government with regard to renewable and alternative energy sources. We do have a climate crisis facing us here, and if we don't start taking action on it now, it's going to be our future generations that are literally going to pay the price. We've seen weather events, you know, the 1-in-100-years events that have taken place. We've seen three or four of them just within the last decade alone. The costs for those kinds of events are climbing more and more with each one. I think it would be incumbent upon the government to maybe embrace renewable and

alternative energy sources with a little bit more vigour. Hopefully, this change will inspire them to take that on and help reduce our emissions here within the province of Alberta.

We also see some changes around the Alberta Health Act. Specifically, one of the things I wanted to point out is with regard to the removal of chiropractic services. Upon speaking with the Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors, they were not consulted on this change. I have unfortunately not been able to hear back from them on their review of this. The only way they found out about it was, of course, through a media report, a bit of a pattern which I've seen with this government around different consultations.

One of the ones at the forefront in our minds right now is the hijacking of pensions. For instance, the teachers were not consulted on this. We've heard from literally tens of thousands of teachers that are upset with this. If it was such a good plan, Madam Speaker, then they could have brought it to them. When we're looking at things like Bill 25, again I wonder just how much consultation was done.

That would then lead me around to the one item that I want to highlight first, the Safety Codes Act and the changes that are being proposed there. If we can give our forestry industry the opportunity to promote their products and their businesses right here within the province of Alberta, that's certainly not a bad thing, but I think that one of the voices that has been absent throughout all the discussions around building codes has been fire. They have some concerns around that in terms of getting into those structures to be able to put them out. What I've heard consistently from fire is: when we're looking at the building codes, we're focused, as we should be, on getting people out of the building should a fire occur, but we also have to keep in mind that someone has to go in to try to put that fire out. Their concern around floor collapse, building collapse has been absent from those types of discussions around building codes in the act.

I am hoping, should this go forward, Madam Speaker, that those voices will be added to the conversation. I'm going to advocate very, very strongly for that. Even at the federal level we've seen an absence of that when we're dealing with building codes. Again, I hope the government will take this very, very seriously, will bring them to the table, and will allow the changes that will come from the safety codes to create a safer environment for all with regard to that.

We've also seen some changes around the Municipal Government Act, and one thing that I wanted to specifically highlight was around the ICFs. Unfortunately, the amendment I brought forward earlier to Bill 25 was not accepted by the government. This was something that RMA was hoping to have changed. They felt quite strongly. As a matter of fact, out of 46 of their 69 members that were polled around this subject, 41 per cent of them were not so confident or not confident at all with regard to being able to complete their ICFs prior to the deadline of April 1, 2020. I had proposed that we extend that by one year to give them enough time to complete those. Some municipalities have as many as 12 to 15 of those on the go right now.

But, of course, what will happen now is that should they not be able to complete those ICFs, it will then proceed to the arbitration process, which could take up to another year, which means that we should have probably just extended that date by one year and allowed those municipalities to get that work done. Really, it kind of feels like we are creating some red tape when Bill 25 is supposed to be reducing the red tape, Madam Speaker.

You know, again we're seeing a pattern where pieces of legislation that are being brought forward were not consulted on. The RMA would have really appreciated having their voice heard

around that. Not that they have any problems with most of the changes that are proposed within Bill 25, Madam Speaker, but this will create some problems for them.

So, unfortunately, I'm not really in a position at this time to be able to support this type of legislation. I think decisions around red tape are very clearly being made within the ministries themselves. That was made very, very clear during estimates. Treasury Board, Municipal Affairs, Labour: we've seen other ministries that are very clearly making their own red tape decisions. I think the \$10 million that Albertans are being asked to pay for this ministry could be better served in other directions. Maybe we could look at giving AISH recipients that money and being able to raise up their lifestyle.

With that, I shall take my seat. My hope is that all members will seriously consider voting against this bill, and maybe we can find more efficient ways with which to bring legislation like this forward.

Again I would like to highlight that I do hope that around the safety codes – the reality is that the government does have the majority – they do bring fire to the table when they're looking forward and creating the regulations around the Safety Codes Act, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. I rise this morning to speak in favour of the third reading of Bill 25. You know, I have listened to some of the arguments that have been put forward by the members opposite against this bill. It is very important to note my disappointment with the members opposite. On one hand, they seem to have their cake and, at the same time, eat it. They have spoken in favour of some of the things they like about this bill. Ordinarily speaking, you would think that they would vote for them. It is important that we listen carefully to what they are saying. This is not about them not liking the content of this bill. Again I go back to their view on government. We have dedicated the time and resources to make sure that we eliminate all of the burdens that we as a government have imposed on businesses, on municipalities. They do not philosophically support stuff like that. To the contrary, they want to heap on more red tape, big government. That is their idea of how governments should run, which we fundamentally disagree with.

9:20

Madam Speaker, I am going to speak specifically about some of the aspects of Bill 25 that pertain to my ministry. I am glad the member opposite, the Member for Edmonton-Decore, did indicate one of them, which is the Safety Codes Act's amendment, the repeal of a particular section that at this point in time only allows for the construction of six-storey buildings. When in a time of serious economic challenges, especially with respect to our oil and gas and our agricultural sector, and we have put forward an amendment that would help that particular struggling industry, you would think, again, that that in itself should be a consideration while members opposite vote for this bill. We're now allowing the construction of 12-storey buildings with wood, something that has been welcomed so much by that particular industry and something that they have lobbied for for years while the members opposite were in government. They didn't get it done, and finally we are getting it done. Despite their, you know, good talk and agreement that that's something that we ought to do, they are voting against it.

But, Madam Speaker, the other aspects of municipal affairs that impact this particular bill: I'm going to just give you a few examples. I heard them talk yesterday. They were saying: why would you extend the requirement for a by-election to be held from 90 days to 120 days? They took issue with that. You know, I can't tell you how many ministerial orders I have had to sign seeking an extension from 90 days to 120 days. I am having to spend so much of my time dealing with the request for an extension. Again, you would think that that would be a welcome development, that rather than municipalities having to send out this request any time they needed a by-election, in my experience – and I'm sure members opposite, those of them who have been part of cabinet, would know. They would not disagree with this. This is a constant request for extension. Finally, we are removing that particular red tape that requires our municipalities to come to us every single time they need an extension to extend the time period required for a by-election to occur. That's number one.

Number two. First, I heard the Member for Edmonton-Decore talk about intermunicipal collaboration frameworks, otherwise known as ICFs. Madam Speaker, let's be clear. The intermunicipal collaboration frameworks are a valuable tool to get municipalities working. They're meant to get them to work together, but what we have seen is that, again, these are – you know, I also heard the member opposite talk about the need for an extension from the deadline of April 2020. Again, this is something that they put in place, not us, so we inherited this problem from them. Our job is the difficulties that we have heard from our municipalities with the ICFs: how do we fix them?

That is exactly what the changes that we have proposed in Bill 25 with respect to ICFs seek to accomplish. Let's be clear. We now made it easier for municipalities to work together to build these agreements while still keeping the intent of having municipalities work together to find efficiencies. In particular, Madam Speaker, these changes will make it easier for municipalities to adopt ICFs, allowing them to do it by resolution instead of by bylaw. Think about that. Think about the amount of resources, staff costs that they would require when municipalities begin to formulate bylaws, the process in itself that goes into all of that. Now, as a consequence of Bill 25 they will be able to accomplish that by a simple resolution. That will save council time and money.

Madam Speaker, we also allow individual municipalities to notify us of when the ICF is complete instead of providing us with a full copy of that agreement. Again, this will save them time, and it will save them money. Most importantly, we have significantly simplified the contents of an ICF, giving municipalities more flexibility about what matters will be addressed within the agreement.

Madam Speaker, I also heard about arbitration: you know, how do we resolve disputes that come up as a consequence of ICFs? Let's be clear. The current legislation has created a burdensome and unnecessary dispute resolution process that doesn't make sense for Alberta's municipalities. The proposed changes not only limit what an arbitrator can provide rulings on; they also ensure that this process aligns with the Arbitration Act, the standard legislation all arbitrators use to help them resolve disputes. This will make it easier both for municipalities and arbitrators.

Madam Speaker, the other change that we are proposing has to do with the rightsizing of intermunicipal planning, and we will find that in sections 631 and 631.1. The current legislation creates a significant and unnecessary regulatory burden by requiring our municipalities to develop intermunicipal development plans, which then identify the kinds of development that occur on their shared border. These changes that we have proposed will make it easier for municipalities who share a border that don't have any significant

growth to not have to complete these plans, an often onerous and complex process.

Again, this will save them time and money, and if that is not red tape reduction, I don't know what that is. Maybe the members opposite again need to, you know, think it through, when we bring substantive changes that will improve the lives of businesses and communities, rather than to always have to run to their ideological beliefs. That also eliminates the need for ICFs to have IDPs as part of their framework, ensuring that even if there isn't growth in the region, municipalities still have the opportunity to discuss shared services.

You know, Madam Speaker, the other proposed change that we are making is streamlining assessment processes, otherwise something we've called incorrect, when there is incorrect assessment information. You'll find that in sections 291, 295, 467(1), and 665(4). Currently the MGA creates a number of unnecessary and unclear rules around assessment and assessment processes, and we are making amendments to make this more straightforward. For example, we are clarifying that assessors and the assessment review boards don't need to use incorrect information.

We are also making it clear that assessment review boards can both increase and decrease assessments. We're also making a clarification about what improvements are assessable if they are being used as part of a manufacturing or processing facility. These changes will clarify and streamline the assessment process both for municipalities but also for individual businesses.

You know, Madam Speaker, I have heard the argument from members opposite about: why don't we use a different legislative tool to address the changes that we're making here? What we heard them talk about: they do not understand that what they are proposing is – in those cases only where there are no disagreements, there are no contentious issues, that's when you use the statutes amendment as a tool. Oftentimes this is always what I find with the members opposite. You know, they try to frame arguments in a way that doesn't really make sense. There is a defined process. There are defined changes and amendments that you could use the statutes amendment tool to accomplish. Those are really in matters where you are just cleaning things up. But you can tell, looking at some of the changes that we have, reports from the municipal government side, that that would be highly unsuitable, to use the statutes amendment act as a tool to accomplish this.

9:30

Madam Speaker, one of the changes that we have also proposed has to do with meeting minutes, section 208(1)(a)(i). The current legislation prevents municipalities from recording now something as simple as this, minutes with notes or comments. However, we heard from many municipalities that they would prefer to do so because it provides important context for residents. These changes would remove that requirement and make it so municipalities can provide more information to their residents.

Madam Speaker, we are also making changes with respect to the assessment review board and subdivision appeal board clerks. Right now the legislation requires that both assessment review board clerks and subdivision appeal board clerks must be designated officers. There is no additional authority provided by naming them as designated officers. We are removing this as an unnecessary requirement. Again, that will speed up the process of the work done by the assessment review board.

Madam Speaker, we are also allowing electronic notices. You will find that in section 608.1. Right now municipalities must send a number of notices in the mail. These changes will allow municipalities to send this information electronically should their

citizens choose to opt in, again, a typical red tape reduction, something that we don't need given this day and age.

Madam Speaker, we're also removing the annual bylaw requirement in section 369.1. Right now there are a number of tax bylaws that don't change but have to be passed every single year. These changes, again, will remove that requirement provided the bylaws remain the same. This will save valuable time in council meetings throughout this province. Now, we see this all the time, bylaws that don't change. Nothing has happened that will require council to change them, but every single year council is required to revisit those particular bylaws and repass them. If that is not red tape, I don't know what that is.

Madam Speaker, we are also requiring tax rate bylaw changes. When a municipality, for example, makes an administrative error, they are required to obtain a ministerial order. This is something that – if I haven't dealt with this particular issue, you know, I've dealt . . . [Mr. Madu's speaking time expired]

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to take an opportunity to address some of the issues that the hon. Member for Edmonton-South West had brought up in regard to this bill. I think that his comments demonstrate his profound ignorance of what goes on here in the Legislature and how legislation is put forward and, indeed, ignorance of what his government is trying to do with this whole red tape ministry. Indeed, we can see many, many examples of why this ministry categorically is both irrelevant and redundant and is a way to try to mislead the public that this UCP government is trying to address certain issues around roadblocks that take place in the government.

You know, I couldn't help but notice just this morning, for example, that the Ministry of Service Alberta has a release saying that they're cutting red tape for Alberta condos. I haven't had a chance to read it yet. It just came up on the feed from the provincial government. But there you go. It could very well be a good bill, the Minister of Service Alberta looking for ways to perhaps amend something that's happening in regard to condominiums. Certainly, there are a lot of problems associated with leaky condos and the administration of condos and so forth, so the ministry moved forward and made some changes, and perhaps they did a good change. Is this anything to do with the ministry of red tape? No. Is it another layer by which this government can spend millions of dollars, tens of millions of dollars for a publicity stunt to say that they are reducing red tape for the people of Alberta?

You know, quite frankly, many if not all of the sections of this bill, Bill 25, which is hardly worth the paper that it's printed on, are things that you can do within your ministry. In fact, the Minister of Municipal Affairs should do well to take advice from his own department. They will tell him very clearly that he was fully capable of doing all of these changes to municipal affairs within his department and, quite frankly, probably without even having to use the time here in the Legislature to administer those changes to municipal affairs.

Many of these other sections: same thing, right? I heard the Minister of Energy speaking yesterday about changes that she was going to make around an issue, again with tacit knowledge that, in fact, there's no need to call the minister of red tape to do this. She did it herself and, you know, probably did it much more quickly and more efficiently and with great use of time and value of time,

without having to move through this whole dog-and-pony show that they call the ministry of red tape.

I mean, let's just call things for what they are, Madam Speaker. This is an exercise in propaganda, right? Of course, the government needs to deal with these issues in energy and health and municipal affairs and so forth, but all this really ends up being, quite frankly, is another omnibus bill that has things in it that, you know, you could probably accomplish through regulatory means or by using the departments or miscellaneous statutes. Those are all tools that are available to this government.

I mean, I don't know. How much is the red tape ministry costing?

**Mr. Nielsen:** Ten million.

**Mr. Eggen:** Ten million dollars – there you go, right? – just exactly at the time when we're looking for ways to save money; \$10 million dollars, I know, could certainly be of some assistance in regard to postsecondary education, in regard to health, in regard to core areas where we actually need to make investments during precarious economic times.

It's just really important for all of us to take two steps back and realize what you can actually do and the tools that you use and use them in an authentic, honest way here on the floor of this Legislature. Don't make up some bogus ministries and, you know, call bills something that they're not. Quite frankly, do your job.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise to speak to Bill 25, the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2019. As many of my colleagues have brought up, I also have some concerns with this legislation, mainly that it does at the end of the day seem to be a make-work project for the ministry of red tape reduction. That's a concern for me at a time when we are talking about reducing the cost of government while also adding an entirely new ministry for something that, as has been stated often by this side of the House, could be done within the ministries themselves.

I think that through the process of estimates we got a clear picture of that as our critic for red tape reduction asked every single minister or nearly all of the ministers about their capacity to eliminate red tape within their own ministry. They all seemed quite capable to do that on their own with the civil servants that they have within their own ministries. They seemed like they were moving forward on changes that would have reduced red tape without the need for an entirely new ministry at the cost of \$10 million over the next three to four years. It's been stated that this could have been done through a miscellaneous statutes amendment act – I would tend to agree with that – some of it even done through regulations, without having to take the time of members in this House, where we could be debating important things like the fact that this government is cutting funding to classrooms and to municipalities.

9:40

I will get more to it here shortly, but when we hear from the Minister of Municipal Affairs that changes like changes to the framework for municipalities and growth management boards and his unwillingness to change the date that's in the legislation here, an opportunity to work with our municipalities and work with the RMA, who raised concerns with the date of April 1, 2020, I mean, that is – what? – four or five months away from now: with the cuts that they've been given by this Minister of Municipal Affairs and with the changes that have happened, they are expected to come up with these frameworks.

The consequences of not doing so, well, push through to arbitration. That's going to be a concern for these municipalities, and they've raised their concerns with this minister. I'm not sure why there isn't a willingness to amend such a small piece – well, it's quite a big piece of this legislation. I'm not sure why the minister is unwilling to budge on that date and the date for that framework. That's very concerning.

Just looking at the changes that we've seen to advocates, the advocates that are offered by the provincial government, and the cuts that we've seen there, I mean, we're supposed to take Bill 25 at its face value. You know, we've only seen this legislation within the last week, week and a half, and we're supposed to take it at face value, that it's doing what the government is telling us it's doing. On the other hand, we see this government amalgamating, for lack of better terms, advocates in our province and saying that that's a reduction of red tape. That's very concerning to me, Madam Speaker, as we see cuts to seniors' benefits and as we see the unwillingness of this government to move forward on supporting people on AISH. Now we're actually putting these advocates into one area instead of having several advocates for the different areas. That's very concerning.

The other fact is that this UCP government has brought in a party insider to advocate on behalf of Albertans against changes that might be coming forward from this UCP government. That really seems like a conflict of interest. Once again, we're supposed to take Bill 25 at face value, but in other instances what we've been told is not how things are going to play out. That's very concerning to me.

Once again, the changes in here, some more drastic than others, to Agriculture and Forestry minister, Community and Social Services, culture, Energy, Health, Municipal Affairs, and Education, changes to many different departments in this omnibus bill, which are very concerning with the amount of time that we've had to spend with this legislation – well, really, there still are questions that are unanswered by this government. That's concerning as well.

When we talk about red tape reduction, it really should be about getting people back to work: how do we do that? Unfortunately, nothing within this legislation is going to get people back to work. Maybe some small pieces, but I don't think I've seen any of that, getting people back to work, in this legislation.

Once again, as we went through the estimates process, as we asked the ministries, "What is your ministry doing to get people back to work? How are you speeding up approvals within environment?" – the fact is that this government has reduced positions in departments who are in charge of approving applications in environment and essentially putting people back to work. Unfortunately, when you start eliminating those positions of environmental protection officers and people who are working on moving forward applications, well, we are not going to reach the targets that we are trying to reach when you're eliminating something like over 200 positions from the ministry of environment.

Then on the other hand, you're going to say: well, you know, we lost all those positions, but we'll still be able to do just as much work. I don't think that's the truth. The people in the ministry or the department of environment across this province, the people who work hard to make sure that all things are considered before moving forward on applications and approvals: I don't think those people appreciate that this government is reducing the people in their department and then saying: "You have to do twice as much work. What are you doing?" That's very concerning. Once again, when we see changes like that, unfortunately we can't accept things from this government at face value, especially in omnibus legislation like we see here.

Now, the Minister of Municipal Affairs also said, you know, that the NDP opposition may agree with very small pieces of what we're seeing here, so why won't they accept the whole thing? Well, unfortunately, that's not how it works, Madam Speaker. Just because we support one little piece of this omnibus bill before us does not mean we can support all the other things that are of concern to us. That is the job of us as legislators in this Legislature, to bring forward our concerns, bring forward the concerns of the people in our community, and unfortunately there are still concerns that are unaddressed in here. Once again, as we've seen through Bill 22 and essentially every bill that's come through this Legislature in this session from this UCP government, we have not had adequate time to take these concerns back to our constituents, and we are going to see that once again here.

The fact is that when legislation is brought forward so hastily, as it is in Bill 25, and we see changes that are brought forward to the Municipal Government Act and concerns raised by the RMA and other organizations, well, really, that should give us cause for pause. We should really sit down with these municipalities, hear their concerns. Though it seems that they support certain aspects of Bill 25 or the changes to the MGA, on this very important one about building frameworks for municipalities and their boards and working with the other municipalities around them, unfortunately, they have concerns with this, and they have not been addressed.

Madam Speaker, at this time I do not believe I will be supporting this legislation. You know, the changes that we see to ABCs in here seem relatively – I want to be careful with my words – harmless in terms of the fact that some of these advisory boards, the UCP says, have not been used since 2012. But, once again, I still have concerns about removing advisory boards at a time when this UCP government is moving so hastily to reduce supports in education, for seniors, in AISH programming, and across the board. When we talk about reducing ABCs, when we talk about reducing the ability of advocates at a time like that, that's very concerning for me.

The fact is that in a democracy, in a strong democracy, there will be the opportunity for dissenting voices to be heard, and what we've seen from this government, as they cut back on the number of advocates and they put party insiders in positions to be the advocates on behalf of Albertans, is, once again, really, what I believe to be a conflict of interest. Unfortunately, it's setting a precedent that this government does not actually want to hear from the people that their legislation is affecting.

Once again, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I will not be supporting this legislation as it stands right now. Thank you.

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

Seeing none, any members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 25. Every time somebody from the government side gets up and speaks about this bill and explains what red tape is, the meaning of red tape is completely lost on me. Every time I have to look it up and google what red tape actually is. Again, when I was looking at it this morning, I think it's something that's referred to as "excessive bureaucracy or adherence to rules and formalities . . . in public business." It refers to excessive regulations or rigid conformity to formal rules that are bureaucratic and hinder or prevent action or decision-making. That's the understanding I have of the words "red tape" and what red tape reduction would mean.

There are many clear examples in our province, in our regulations, where we can make improvements; for instance, the New West Partnership trade agreement between Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan,

and now Manitoba as well. That was one example of how governments were working together to reduce red tape, to facilitate business, to facilitate transactions across provincial boundaries. With red tape, I have something like that in my mind. That's what the reduction of red tape would look like. It will facilitate some process, it will facilitate small businesses, businesses to do things more efficiently and without any bureaucratic hindrance or without any adherence to rigid formal rules.

9:50

Before I go to the provisions of this bill, I also want to say that when the government was campaigning during the election, they used red tape reduction in a completely different sense. At that point they wanted Albertans to believe that there are managers managing the managers in the public service, that somehow there is bloated bureaucracy and that that's why processes are not very efficient, and that that's not what they would do. But now they are using that language, this bill, to just, I guess, check off something that they promised during the election. With this bill, they can check off that they have fulfilled that promise. However, I think what they are doing here doesn't reduce red tape within the meaning of that word. Rather, it's reducing services, eliminating services, all to pay for their \$4.7 billion corporate handout.

If we look at the different acts that were changed, let's, I guess, start with the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Foundation Act. The government says that the foundation has not existed since 2002, and they're cleaning up that act. I don't understand how something that hasn't existed since 2002 and was never used was a hurdle, how that was obstructing any kind of decision-making. It's just a cleanup that is usually done in a miscellaneous statutes act, so this change doesn't do anything to reduce red tape. I think the Minister of Municipal Affairs would agree with me that this is not red tape at all. This thing hasn't existed, wasn't used since 2002. It's a cleanup, and standard government practice is that those kinds of things are dealt with in a miscellaneous statutes act.

We look at other changes; for instance, the Small Power Research and Development Act. Essentially, this bill repeals that act. The government is saying that all contracts have been concluded under this act and that the small-scale generation regulation already supports market-based electricity generation from renewable and alternative energy sources. Again, this act has already been spent. Whatever business was happening under this act, those contracts have already been concluded. Again, this is a cleanup typically done under a miscellaneous statutes act. It was not adding to any kind of red tape, and removing it is just a cleanup. It's not red tape reduction within the meaning of those words. I guess that repealing that may be a good idea, but so far the government has shown very little interest in renewable and green or alternative energy. I hope that by doing so, they are not just signalling once more that they have no interest in that kind of electricity, in those kinds of renewable or alternative energy programs.

Similarly, this piece of legislation also deals with the Hydro and Electric Energy Act. This change and also another change, that is in the Forests Act: for both these changes what they are doing is changing the process. Instead of cabinet approving a project or instead of legislation to approve a project, now the minister will be able to do these approvals.

A minister approving things may be more efficient and may cut bureaucracy, but I think that it's consolidating powers within the hands of the minister, and there won't be any oversight. Again, this change may not necessarily be red tape reduction. What we have seen from ministers when they had the power was, for instance, appointing failed UCP candidates to the energy war room, appointing your donors to the boards, and those kinds of things. So

consolidating power in the minister's hands may not be a good thing. There may need to be better oversight instead of just consolidating all the power in one minister for decision-making. Again, I don't know if this will cut red tape or create some other issues that we have seen in other appointments and other processes.

Similarly, under the Health Professions Act, Bill 25 dissolves the Health Professions Advisory Board. The government is saying that this board has not been used since 2012. If something has not been used since 2012, it's clearly not in the way of any action or any decision-making. It's just a cleanup, and for the most part governments have done that in miscellaneous statutes acts. Again, in no way, shape, or manner within the meaning of the words "red tape reduction" does that amount to red tape reduction or even come close to reducing red tape. It's just a cleanup, standard practice in a miscellaneous statutes act. That's what governments previously have done, and by previously I mean for decades.

This repeals outdated references to "chiropractic services" in the Alberta Health Care Insurance Act. It changes it, updates it. I don't know how it's red tape reduction because we have stopped using a term, "chiropractic services," and changed it to some other term. This piece of legislation just changes that terminology and wants us to believe, wants Albertans to believe that that amounts to red tape reduction. By no stretch can you bring that action under your red tape reduction. It's clearly not. It's just, again, a cleanup of legislation, and typically that has been done by previous governments under miscellaneous statutes acts. I don't know if they will count these changes toward their goal of cutting red tape by one-third and if that's what red tape cutting will look like.

Then there are changes to the Human Tissue and Organ Donation Act. It changes the consent through an online registry and certainly makes the process easier. But, again, we don't know what kind of consultation was done with organ donor organizations or Albertans in general and whether it was a fit for Service Alberta or whether it would have been better for Health to take the lead on this one.

Lastly, I will speak a little bit about the M.S.I. Foundation Act. These changes update the board appointment process. The government says that the appointment process has not been changed since 1970. The way I think this change may work – at least, we are skeptical that it may be another opportunity for the UCP to appoint their friends, insiders, and 22 other failed candidates. One has already been appointed, so 22 remaining failed candidates.

**10:00**

Similarly, other changes in the Municipal Government Act are changes to their charter agreements. The municipal government gets 120 days instead of 90 days to call a by-election. We already know that this government initially, during the campaign at least, didn't mention that they would not respect the charters, and there may be some suggestion that they may have said that they would even honour those agreements. They didn't, and now there are further changes to that.

I don't know what kind of consultation was done with municipalities. These changes could very well – these are policy changes, substantial changes – have been brought forward by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, not of Red Tape Reduction. These are substantial changes. These have nothing to do with process. These are policy changes that will require consultation and conversation with municipalities.

Similarly, the government gets 120 days instead of 90 days to call a by-election. Before, a municipal government was able to do that in 90 days. Adding another month to that is not red tape reduction by any stretch of those words. It's adding more red tape. Instead of 90 days, now they have 120 days, so that will slow down these by-elections. I don't know who was consulted on this change, which

municipalities were saying that they need to move to 120 days, and what the reasons were for that move. I think there is a lot that needs to be explained by this government. Again, if we look at this bill, this change is fairly substantive. It's a policy change, and I don't think it amounts to red tape reduction.

Considering that lately the government has gone after municipalities a fair bit, using this omnibus bill to hide changes to the Municipal Government Act I don't think is a fair use of this Legislature. As I said before, the rationale behind these changes needs to be explained. I think it will help us if we know what kind of consultation was done with municipalities, which municipalities were in favour, whether only pro-business councils were consulted or if councils in general were consulted, all of those kinds of things.

On safety codes: that's also a substantive change, that allows wood buildings to be higher than six storeys. That may very well be . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Member for Highwood.

**Mr. Sigurdson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me. I'm just listening to the talking points from the Member for Calgary-McCall, and I guess I'm a little confused here. Out of that whole thing, I gather that what he's saying is that if the name of this bill was just slightly different – he doesn't see any problems with what the content of this bill is. He seems to agree with everything that's in there, that they are improvements and that they're all seen to have a positive effect.

I guess what I'm trying to ask is: maybe the Member for Calgary-McCall could clarify, you know, that if the name was just slightly different, this would go through. I can't see any other reason in anything he said that was a clear objection to the positive things that are contained in the bill. So I'm just kind of standing up to see if he can clarify his position as to whether just a simple name change is what he's looking for.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. What I was saying is – I'm pleased that at least one member realized that what the bill said that it's doing is not what the bill is doing. That was the purpose of my comments this morning. What I said is that the bill is claiming that it's a red tape reduction act. I started my comments with a definition of what red tape reduction means. It means that you are removing "excessive regulation or rigid conformity" to some kind of process that hinders decision-making, that hinders action. That's what red tape reduction means. You're absolutely right that this bill says Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act. It doesn't do anything along those lines.

The things that are contained in it, as I said, may very well be good things, but they are not reducing red tape. For instance, the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Foundation Act hasn't existed since 2002, and removing that doesn't really do anything to reduce red tape. It's simply something that was sitting there, that governments have done through miscellaneous statutes acts. You're right that the name of the bill says something different. The bill actually is not doing anything along those lines.

Similarly, on the Small Power Research and Development Act, every contract, according to the government, has been concluded. This act doesn't do anything. It doesn't serve any purpose. It's not red tape. It's just sitting there and needs to be cleaned up through a miscellaneous statutes act. Again, you're right that the name of the bill is very confusing because it doesn't do anything in these changes.

Other things. For instance, there was one more thing on the Health Professions Act. It dissolves the Health Professions Advisory Board, that according to the government has not been used since 2012. So if a thing has not been used since 2012, help me understand how that can be red tape, how that can hinder any decision-making, how that can hinder any action. It's just sitting there and can be cleaned up through a miscellaneous statutes act. It's not red tape reduction.

Again, I agree with you. You're right. The name of the bill is so confusing. If it was something different, I may have been able to analyze these changes a bit differently. But since the government wants us to believe that this bill is about red tape reduction and it doesn't do anything to reduce red tape, that's why I'm confused.

Sure, there are changes that I may not disagree with. For instance, this bill will allow wood structures of more than six storeys. It's not red tape reduction at all, but it's a matter of, I guess, discussion and consultation, analysis on whether they're safe or not, on what kind of supporting infrastructure we need. It's a policy question. Again, it's not red tape reduction.

Similarly, with the Municipal Government Act, before they were to call a by-election in 90 days. Adding another 30 days, making it 120 days for a government to call a by-election instead of 90: how is that red tape reduction? That's why I was confused.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

**Ms Goehring:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 25, the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2019. I have to say that I agree with a lot of the conversation that's happening on this side of the House about this piece of legislation. I think that in the past I've made reference to this ministry as being a little bit of a *Seinfeld* episode, a ministry about nothing.

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

There's a lot of information in this bill that could better be defined and used under the ministries that hold the piece of legislation that they're proposing to change. We know that ministers have the ability to go through their ministry and look at efficiencies, inefficiencies and make those decisions to streamline things, to make things easier. The fact that there is a ministry that specifically is on red tape reduction seems a little bit ridiculous in the sense that it's adding one more level of government looking through other ministries that are quite capable of doing that.

10:10

We've heard a lot from the critic from Edmonton-Decore, and I just have to say on the record, Mr. Speaker, that he's been doing some incredible work and advocacy in reaching out to the many different industries that are being impacted by this legislation. One of the themes that we're hearing is that there hasn't been a lot of consultation and that people aren't being asked when their industry is being impacted.

So we have questions on this side of the House when some of these things are coming forward through this piece of legislation. Who did they ask? Did they ask Albertans if this was something that was perceived to be a barrier? Did they have conversations with the ministers directly to say, you know, "Is this something that you would like to address under your ministry?" which makes sense to me, that they're capable of dealing with their own ministry and looking through their own capabilities, or is this something that was just kind of concocted within this ministry to show that they are perhaps doing something? That is a question that I have.

Specifically, when I look through this significant piece of legislation, there are so many different ministries that are involved. We have Agriculture and Forestry, Community and Social Services, culture, Energy, Health, Municipal Affairs, Education. All of these ministries, I would argue, are very likely capable of reducing red tape within their own ministry, yet here we are debating this piece of legislation.

I would like to speak a little bit to some of the things that impact culture and, in my opinion, should have been addressed through the culture ministry, specifically to the Glenbow Museum and the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Act. It's something that removes a provision prescribing the management and display of items in the Glenbow collection. The government is saying that this will enable more long-term loans and changes how the Glenbow can manage its inventory. I would like further explanation as to what this means and how they came to this decision. Was this something that the museum had asked for? Was this something that they had heard through their ministry of culture? Perhaps it is. It's unclear how this decision came to be. Was it something that the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction came up with?

I know I've been meeting with museums all across the province. We've been listening to their incredible stories and prideful stories about what they do to contribute to the history of Alberta as well as what they do to engage with people that visit Alberta. We have museums in every corner of this province, Mr. Speaker. As a mom I've taken my children many, many times to the museums, the Glenbow included. I have to say that the curators of these museums, the volunteers that come in, and the staff work so hard to make sure that the experience of the person going to the museum is incredible.

I would say that I would trust the museums and their curators to make these decisions about their collections. I know these things are planned well in advance. They're constantly coming up with new experiences and new ways to tell the stories of the beautiful history that we have in the province. The Royal Alberta Museum here in Edmonton is highlighting some of the incredible stories of Alberta, of our indigenous communities. We have beautiful stories about the prairies. We talk about different collections that are coming through the museum, and I know that those decisions happen well in advance. In seeing that there's this change that's being proposed, I'm curious how this came to be.

One of the things that we saw in the budget was that museums would be getting less money, and the suggestion to make up for that is to charge people more in admissions, so asking Albertans to pay more while the museums are being given less to run their programming. I don't think that that's very fair. I think that that's probably something that museums absolutely did not ask for.

In the fall, Mr. Speaker, I attended the Alberta Museums Association conference gala and awards. I have to say that it was an absolutely incredible experience to hear from many museums and individuals across the province that spoke with such passion about the work that they do bringing the experiences to Albertans and to people that travel through our province. From military museums to the Edmonton Valley Zoo to a museum in St. Albert: just absolute pride. A lot of the discussion was about telling stories, being able to share experiences, and a focus on education with our young people.

Like I mentioned, as a mom I've often taken my kids to museums where we hear there's a new collection, and they're excited to go and see it. The *Vikings* collection that is happening at the RAM right now is something that I didn't think my 15-year-old would be excited to go and see, but he sure was. We put our hats on, and we went in and looked at what it was like to be a Viking. It's those experiences that you can have as a participant walking through the museum, or it's the experts that bring in that collection, that have

that history, that took the time to understand and learn and then turn around and educate the public about that. It's incredible.

I know as a mom that those were some really great years when my kids were little, trying to find out what we could do in the city or around the province, being able to turn them loose on the museum staff and let them ask all of their hows and whys and have experts from the museum share the story, where I didn't have to answer those endless, endless whys with my children. I know it's something that they take great pride in. I know that they want to work with the government, and they want to be able to share the experience.

I'm curious if the culture ministry or the Red Tape Reduction ministry had these conversations and if this came from something that was authentic and came from the museum itself saying, "We would like this in place," or if this was something where they said: "Okay. We need to add one more ministry to this Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, so let's choose this." It feels like some of this stuff is just thrown together for the sense of throwing it together, which is a little bit concerning because the ministries, like the museums, are the experts in their area, and they know what's best. They should be having those conversations, and I fear that those conversations aren't happening with the experts. Perhaps this isn't even an ask from the Glenbow Museum. It might have been. It's not clear. This is definitely something that hasn't been explained.

I know that what the museums are looking for in the province is support to be able to share their story. When you have little communities, rural communities, that have a really great museum, it's a way to attract the public when they're travelling through. There's a fantastic museum, an aviation museum, in southern Alberta that I hadn't heard of. We were driving through on our way to Lethbridge, and lo and behold there was this beautiful museum, so we stopped in and, you know, were able to enjoy the museum and learn about some of the history of aviation in the province. Had it not been for the museum, I probably never would have stopped there.

Stopping at the museum also led me to stop at their candy store, and I have to say that I got some fantastic candy. It's investing in that small rural community in Alberta. The whole community comes together to celebrate these wonderful little pieces of history that they have. I know it's a place where families come together, and they talk about the history. There's pride when they're engaging in their museum. Sometimes in the small communities it's just a great hub for community to come together.

When we're talking about red tape reduction, I would suggest that the government created this ministry to say: "Check. We did this as a promise made, promise kept." So it's more wording than actual action. Like the Member for Edmonton-West Henday mentioned, if we're really talking about red tape reduction, what that means, and looking through this legislation, it should be about getting people back to work. I don't see how many of these actually accomplish that.

10:20

The strategy right now should be taking care of Albertans and looking at what we can do to support them and get them back to work at this time. Changing the structure of some of these things that the ministries could have done themselves is not getting people back to work. I would suggest that it's just smoke and mirrors and somewhat, like I mentioned earlier, like an episode of *Seinfeld*, a bill about nothing, a ministry about nothing that really has no impact on the betterment of Albertans.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

It's a little bit concerning that there is so much in this piece of legislation – like I mentioned earlier, all of the different ministries that are impacted – without a lot of outcomes. These things could have all been easily addressed, if needed, by the ministry that holds the portfolio. I don't feel that we're at a place right now, Madam Speaker, where we can say, "Yes, I believe that enough consultation has happened, that this is actually something that is reducing red tape" as opposed to just saying that it is, saying those fancy words. It's a word that this government has used, that they're taking pride in, but it's not actually doing what I believe they intended it to do, which is to remove some of that bureaucracy and to get people back to work, to make life easier for Albertans. I don't see how the majority of this piece of legislation does that, and I don't understand the rationale of taking it away from the ministries, which are quite capable of dealing with that.

When we talk about the Glenbow Museum, I don't know why it couldn't have been addressed under the ministry of culture. I think that she's a minister that can go through her ministry and meet with the different museums that are represented across the province and have those discussions and make those decisions if it's something that's required. I just question if all of the other ministries have done that.

When we look at the Human Tissue and Organ Donation Act, which some of the members have talked about. I think that anything we do that can make it easier for Albertans to consent to organ donation is absolutely something that is positive. I've spoken very, very openly in this House about my support for education around organ donation. I think that something that is being missed in this is: who should house this information? Does it really need to sit under Red Tape Reduction, or would it be better served under Service Alberta, where the registries of Alberta sit already? They're already the organization that's responsible for getting consent for those that wish to donate their organs.

It's something that should be happening at every registry across the province. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I can speak from personal experience that this question isn't asked. And being that my best friend's son is a heart transplant recipient, it's something that I'm very sensitive about, so I'm very aware of how as an Albertan I can become an organ donor. Waiting for it to be asked at the registry, it didn't happen this last time when I went to renew my licence. It's something that's already in place. It's something that already happens, so I would suggest that as a way to continue to support Albertans in becoming organ donors, it has to start with ensuring that the policies that already exist are happening as opposed to making new policies and new regulations. It doesn't make sense.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

**Mr. Jeremy Nixon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I had to get up because I appreciated the reference to *Seinfeld* so much that I felt the need to comment on it. As a huge *Seinfeld* fan myself I wanted to talk about my favourite show. I want to thank the member for that reference. I also wanted to point out that, as she actually just demonstrated for us, *Seinfeld* being the show about nothing actually seems to apply to absolutely everything, even here in the Legislature. I think most of us who are *Seinfeld* fans can think of moments where we have been living life and been able to reference a *Seinfeld* episode that applied to life. Anyway, thank you for that.

I wanted to talk a little bit because I think there's been an exception taken to the title of this bill, red tape reduction. As well, there's been some exception towards the department itself, saying

that this is a way we can save \$10 million. I wanted to comment a little bit just because of my history. I used to work at the Mustard Seed. My title was the mobilization strategist. That was kind of a fancy way of saying the volunteer manager, but the reason that they didn't just call me the volunteer manager is because they wanted me to think about mobilization and strategy across the whole organization. This wasn't just about recruiting, training, orientating volunteers and figuring out where they could fit within our organization. This was about coming alongside each department and helping the managers in those departments really think through how they could change their department so that they could include and incorporate the community in the work that they did. The point is that the mission of the organization was mobilization – that was one of our main pillars – but it wasn't happening. It didn't necessarily happen. When you're working with vulnerable people, when you're working in a shelter in crisis, there's always something else that's taking place.

I think that the Member for Edmonton-North West, being a former minister, could attest to the busyness of a ministry and that there's always some new priority on your plate for that day. So the idea of having a department, an area, a champion that is focused on the concept of mobilization or that is focused on the concept of red tape reduction coming and working alongside ministries, alongside government, helping us think through "How can we be better at this?" and making sure that it is a focus, that it is a priority – the idea that this can naturally just be done in the ministries: yeah, that makes sense. It should be done in the ministry. Just like when we worked at the Mustard Seed, our team should have been thinking about how they build their programs to incorporate and include volunteers, but it made a huge difference when there was somebody to do that.

Another example of that was when I worked at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary. The same idea. I managed the shelters. We knew how important natural supports were for the young people that we worked with. We knew how important it was to focus on that, to be able to help wrap people around and reconnect back with family. But, again, we didn't necessarily always have the time to really focus on that or think about how to develop our programs around that. We started a pilot project called the fusion program, where we had a team that was dedicated specifically to doing that work. What we found by developing that team is that they came and worked with our programs, and it changed the entire culture of our organization to make sure that family worked, and natural supports were a part of what everybody did. But it took that catalyst, if you will, to come in and work alongside people to help develop that culture and motivate people towards that end. I've heard a number of speakers talk about whether or not this ministry should even be there. I'm very much supportive of this ministry.

The other thing that I'd like to comment on, too, is that there's been some talk about whether or not there's been consultation happening on this. I know we've been criticized for not consulting on some things, but from my perspective the entire Department of Red Tape Reduction is a consultation process. I know that the associate minister and his team have been stretched across this province trying to hear from people and have created mechanisms for people to be able to speak to this. This has been a massive consultation process to make sure that we're hearing from Albertans across the board, not just in business but also in government bureaucracy, recognizing that the better we are at reducing red tape and redundancies within the bureaucracy, we're going to save money and be more effective and efficient for the Albertans that we serve.

I just wanted to throw all of those things out there to create, you know, some counterpoints to what I've been hearing from the

previous four speakers. Thank you very much for the *Seinfeld* quote. [Mr. Nixon's speaking time expired]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Very good timing.

Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very pleased to take the opportunity to say a few words in regard to Bill 25, the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2019. Again, we've sort of heard a theme for the morning, which I think rings true when one looks to common sense and looks to the ways that things get done here in the Legislature. You know, the role of each ministry that we have here represented in this government and in this Legislature is to ensure the delivery of services that they are responsible for and to make adjustments along the way to ensure that those services are delivered in an efficient manner.

**10:30**

Although, you know, we certainly see ebbs and flows of the degree of efficiency in regard to those responsibilities. I think that is an ongoing process. Actually, the comments from the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein are interesting and instructive in a way. Yes, it is important to always take a step back and reflect and perhaps have outside sets of eyes to help move things along – right? – in any given organization, and sometimes it's helpful to have someone point out those things that can be done differently. But the idea that you have a ministry that does do this: then things start to become obscured and confused and, I believe, actually serving to increase the bureaucracy and the so-called red tape that this minister and this ministry is supposed to be charged with reducing.

Again, I mean, I can't think of a better time and place to illustrate this very thing than to shine a light on a release that just came out here this morning, as we were debating this bill, from the Ministry of Service Alberta, that talks about revising regulations, governance around condominiums here in the province of Alberta. I can see that the minister is listening. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that on cursory reading of these changes that Service Alberta are making to condominium governance and so forth, they look pretty good. I think they're things that need to be done, right? I think there are a lot of, you know, overdue things that have been worked on for quite a long time, and here we are with a series of changes to condominium governance around these various things, I guess, in regard to bank accounts and insurance and reporting and so forth.

Two things. Number one, it's important to not categorically say: oh, well, you know, we're just removing regulation here to make things better for condominium owners and governance and so forth. You're changing regulation, right? One of the underlying messages that we get from this red tape ministry generally and this Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2019, specifically is that somehow inherently regulations are bad and that the more you take out, the better. I know that this government has imported this concept from some American jurisdictions, some of them saying that, you know, if you make one law, you've got to take out two kind of thing. We've heard this from different places in the United States.

I mean, the idea behind that inherently is that you're saying: well, regulation in law and governance are somehow inherently bad, and the more you take out, the better off everybody is, right? For example, these changes to the Service Alberta condo thing: again, I could see some definite benefits. I've heard of issues that have come from condo governance and so forth that, you know, needed to be addressed. But it's a question of changing those regulations and sharpening and refreshing them – right? – not just taking things out

and taking out regulation. This was all very happily done within the Ministry of Service Alberta.

You know, I noticed, sort of to my amusement, that the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction is kind of tagged onto the release, like colour commentary, and saying, “Hey, this is great,” sort of like Don Cherry talking about a slapshot or whatever and how great that was but having little or nothing to do with the whole process otherwise, right? Let’s call it for what it is, Madam Speaker. The Service Alberta minister is fully capable of doing his job. He seems to have done so at least today, and that’s great. It’s really little or nothing to do with the red tape ministry or ministry reduction or anything like that.

As we move through this specific bill, again, this is very poor governance because it’s sort of a mishmash omnibus bill. You can have statutes amendment acts that come up from time to time in a legislative session for things that maybe come due or need to be addressed or what have you. Often they will be discussed – well, almost always, in fact, they will be discussed with all parties so that you get a briefing on it and you come to an agreement or a concord around: yeah, these are a bunch of things that need to get done, we will put them together, and away we go. Again, this government is importing a very troublesome concept from Ottawa, which is to create substantive omnibus bills that span the globe, the universe of what the provincial government might be doing. You might have some things that are innocuous or self-evident tagged in with something that’s absolutely serious and reprehensible, as we saw with bills 20, 21, and 22.

Then you have Bill 25 popping up like a gopher on the prairies here. What it looks like to me is that the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction sort of made an all call-out and asked ministers if he could just hand them something, please, to put into a basket so that we can show that this red tape ministry is actually worth while or is doing something at least. I can envision, Madam Speaker, sort of a fire drill thing going on, people handing in stuff from the side of their desk and saying: “Okay. Maybe you can have this. You can’t have the condo one because that’s more substantive and we want to have a separate press conference for that, but you can have some small thing that you can tag onto Bill 25.”

Combined in there as well are things that I think are quite troublesome, as the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs talked about in regard to culture and museums and so forth, or the Hydro and Electric Energy Act changes in regard to hydroelectric projects, and the Health Care Insurance Act changes in regard to chiropractic services. You get the point, Madam Speaker. You have this mishmash of things that come together in this bill that – you know, you find to varying degrees. I certainly do see some concerns around some of these things specifically. I just wanted to go through some of them because it’s, I think, incumbent and responsible to do so. You have the Forests Act, talking about entry into forest management agreements. I’m quite certain that this is one of those classic ones that could have been dealt with in a statutes amendment act or by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry himself. I just think that that seems self-evident. You have the issue around the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Foundation Act, and this repeals this one.

Now, again, it really speaks to me of the utility of having a statutes amendment act. This is a foundation that has not existed for 17 years, which is quite a long time, since 2002. It’s very straightforward to do this. It’s not like there was something – again, if you use the definition as the hon. member explained to us earlier this morning, of moving regulations getting in the way of progress, well, if you have something that’s been lying idle for 17 years, I don’t suppose there’s a whole heck of a lot going on there that would suggest that it’s within the definition of red tape reduction

that has meaning. That to itself: I mean, maybe you can repeal the act or what have you. Again, it feels like someone that has tossed their share into the pot for the red tape reduction associate minister, finding something that otherwise they could just leave off to the side of their desk.

**10:40**

I think that the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs talked quite eloquently about the Glenbow collection. I concur with her. I think that a critical issue I know with the Glenbow is that they have one of the best collections of western Canadian history in the world, and they need support to ensure the integrity of that collection. Just trying to change some small regulation on them, that’s great, but I would suggest that’s a great opportunity for us to talk about something substantive in regard to the Glenbow, which is that it needs more support to both ensure the integrity of the collection and to increase the capacity for them to display that collection for the benefit of Albertans and the general world as well.

The Small Power Research and Development Act change is, again, repealing an act. You know, I think that the government says that all contracts have been concluded on this, so that means it’s kind of defunct, right? The small-scale generation regulation already supports market-based electricity regulation from renewable and alternative energy sources. Again, it begs the question of something that is substantive and top of mind and relevant to our economy, producing jobs and producing power and helping to diversify our economy, which is investing in renewable energy.

We know that we’ve seen substantial setbacks since this government was elected in regard to renewable energy because of the insecurity or instability that this government has created by signalling that they’re not interested in supporting solar and wind energy and geothermal to the degree to which our economy requires. Again, let’s maybe use this Bill 25 and just happen to hit on some small regulation that the government claims has already concluded – right? – and remind ourselves of the importance of actually making an investment in renewable energy.

Another area here is the Health Professions Act change, which is dissolving the Health Professions Advisory Board, which has been sitting idle according to this government for 17 years. You know, that just tells me that if that’s the case, then this is statute amendment act material and easy to work with in that regard. And on and on.

There are a total of 13 different acts here. You know, again, by looking for things that are self-evident that need to be changed, first of all, I guess, it’s important to try to have some sort of coherent package that you can work with to define those things and to make sure that you’re not taking one thing down by attaching it to something else. In other words, if you have something that’s self-evident and pretty obvious and easy to deal with and then something else that’s contentious, tying them all together is a problem.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

I see the hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

**Mr. Glubish:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, I was listening intently to the Member for Edmonton-North West as he was commenting on this bill. I just wanted to rise quickly to make a couple of comments. First of all, I wanted to thank the member for mentioning some of the work that was announced earlier this morning out of Service Alberta but tied to red tape reduction. These things do go hand in hand. As the Member for Edmonton-North West mentioned, we announced the updates to the condo

regulations that we paused back in June of this year, and I was very happy to be joined by condo owners groups like the COF and the Strathcona County Condominium Association to support the work we did as well as property manager groups like CCI north and south. At the end of the day, we've accomplished something really, really great here, which is to find an agreement among many different interests who all have a stake in the regulations that impact condo owners and condo managers and everyone in between.

At the end of the day, this does reduce red tape. This is reducing unnecessary burdens on condo owners and on property managers and ultimately eliminating and reducing the risk of increased condo fees. This is a perfect example of what, you know, our Premier and our Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction have always asked of us as fellow ministers and MLAs in this government. It's not just about reducing the number of regulations although that's a part of it. At the end of the day, at the root of what we're trying to do here is to reduce the unnecessary costs of compliance with regulations on Albertans and Alberta businesses. If we get that right, Madam Speaker, we're going to unleash the productive capacity of our citizens in Alberta and our businesses here, and we're going to make it easier for folks to invest in Alberta and to create jobs in Alberta.

In this case, with the condo regulations, we're going to reduce the risk of increased costs on everyday Albertans who live in condos. Madam Speaker, there are over 500,000 residents in Alberta that live in condos, and this impacts every single one of them. I'm really proud of the work that my officials have done, that my team has done, and of the time and attention we took over the last number of months to get this right.

I just wanted to, you know, make a bit of a comment: just because I did that in Service Alberta doesn't mean we don't need an associate minister leading this very important file. This was a huge platform commitment of ours: to reduce red tape and to make Alberta the most competitive jurisdiction for folks to do business in but to also reduce costs on everyday Albertans. That's why I'm very proud of the work that my colleague the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction is doing to lead this charge. He is making sure that every one of our government ministers as well as our MLAs are always thinking about: how can we reduce unnecessary costs of compliance related to red tape, unnecessary regulations? In some cases that might mean actually reducing the number of regulations.

In other cases, as with this condo example, it might mean tweaking the regulation to ensure that it is accomplishing the appropriate objectives. In this case my task was to find the right way to balance the need for improved governance for condo owners with the need to ensure that we don't layer unnecessary burdens on them that would cause an escalation in their condo fees in perpetuity. I'm confident we found that right balance. We have the support of the full condo industry on this. You know, it is because of the leadership of our Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction and the leadership of our Premier, who have both made it very clear that this is of critical importance to our broader vision as a government to get Alberta back to work, to attract investment to this province, to accomplish getting our province back to a path to balance. All of these things are interrelated and of critical importance.

I guess I just wanted to say that I take a bit of issue with the comments made earlier by the Member for Edmonton-North West. While I appreciate his complimentary comments about the work that Service Alberta did and announced today, I don't believe that that's evidence to support his claim that we don't need the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction or the bill that he's bringing forward. I think these things all go hand in hand. We need someone at the helm, leading this very important exercise, to make

sure that we get it right. You know, I'm proud of the work that my team has done, and I'm proud of the minister.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, are there members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

**Mr. Getson:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Red tape reduction, honestly, is wonderful. One of the reasons why I actually stepped off the bench of private industry and decided to throw my hat in the ring was right around this one particular item. I can give you an example. It was a project that I was consulting on. It was called the Whitefox project, and it was going to displace processed water that was being released back into the McLeod River, move that upstream to the Fox Creek region through 135 klicks of standard little pipeline, heavy walled, that we had put in there. It was going to start using processed water. It would make a value-added chain, so diversifying the economy, if you would. It would take ANC's processed water and also Millar Western's.

**10:50**

These folks had a process. They had a supply they're putting into the rivers. It's costing them money. The upstream side guys, the guys who are doing the actual fracking in that area: well, they're actually drawing out fresh water. They're taking it from lakes, they're taking it from rivers and streams, and they can't get a constant supply. Arguably, industry was looking at doing innovative green technology, looking at all those types of things, and that project got delayed.

Now, here's the reason why it got delayed. My team, my own consulting group, had to go find other work. I had to find places for my guys. The engineering group down in Calgary: well, they had to be displaced to other projects. The contractors were lining up to consult and trying to get some of that capacity back to work and folks in those areas, the drilling programs from the upstream guys all had to be rejigged and pushed back, and that money didn't go into the economy. And what do you know? The fresh water is still being used, and they're still putting it down a hole.

Now, the reason for this? Red tape, the red tape being that it wasn't an AER project. The commodity type: it didn't quite fit within the box because we were being innovative. They decided that both the AEP – well, actually, they had a choice to make: should it go under the AEP, or should it go under the AER? Well, pontification and these different groups doing all their due diligence, following all the processes and procedures, came up with the glorious decision that both of them should. That delayed the project another couple of years, with \$135 million, \$155 million sitting on the table. Investors were offering to give us another \$200 million to spend the next year, and we can't even spend the cash.

There's no need for red tape. The well-intentioned groups, the well-intentioned ministries can come up with their own solution and point at themselves in the mirror and say: hey, we're part of the problem? Not a chance. Even the best intentioned ones in those groups can't break through that culture. The reason is simple, absolutely simple. We've seen this lots in industry. Bill Gates has spoken to it, about business at the speed of thought. When you've got a brontosaurus, a lumbering beast that's been built up for hundreds and hundreds of years based on our government procedures, it clumsily moves through the forest, you know, hypothetically. I know some of the members opposite won't get the concept unless it's literal and right in front of them. Brontosaurus don't exist. Climate change did happen. They got wiped out way long before. They're not around anymore. If you can stick with me, this would be great. There's this big brontosaurus lumbering along, and it can't react quickly enough to some other animal chewing on

its tail. It'll bleed out by the time it hits the ground because of – here's the leap – red tape. It becomes too cumbersome.

One of the other things that I did in my prior life: I was one of those consultants that would get tapped on the shoulder and would be asked to go look at different divisions and different groups within business. You would go into these groups. They're all well-intentioned, well-run organizations, but they're always looking for efficiencies. The good companies are always looking for efficiencies. The way they do that is that they open up the dialogues and have, you know, little suggestion boxes, and they do all those things, but the really good ones get peer groups. They get either different departments from different divisions, different managers to come in, or they hire a consultant. They bring a consultant in with outside expertise, because as consultants, well, you're kind of the mercenaries of the world. You go to different organizations, and you get this tribal knowledge that you bring from these different groups, and the best part about that is that you get to bring in and plant new ideas and seeds. You wouldn't believe how many organizations, well intentioned or otherwise, had so much resistance internally because they're not adaptive to change.

There was this book called *Who Moved My Cheese?* I mean, Dr. Spencer Johnson labelled that one out. You've got, you know, a couple of little characters. They're at cheese station number nine or number six or something like that. Basically, these folks become normalized. They think that the cheese is going to be there every single day and that nothing changes and that life is good. All of a sudden these two other little characters come into the story. Well, it's Hem and Haw. No. I'm sorry. Hem and Haw were the characters, the people. You've got Sniff and Scurry. All of a sudden they show up, and they've got little running shoes on. They actually had to come from the outside world, not from cheese station nine. They had to look at something different. They came from the outside, and they find – ergo, the story, Madam Speaker, without regaling you with the whole book, is that things change. All of a sudden the cheese isn't there. Things aren't the same. You don't just have – let's take that leap – the fat of the land and money rolling in hand over fist anymore. There's a scarcity in that little market.

So what do the mice do? They take off those little running shoes they had. They go out and they find new cheese. They go out and they look for the innovations. They go out and look for the change. They come back at night, and they're kind of looking around, but they take that risk. They go out there and they make a change. One of the little people: all of a sudden they're starving. Well, they're indignant. "The cheese isn't there. We deserve this. We're entitled to it." And here's another leap. "Maybe we'll just, you know, tax everybody to death and have more cheese come." Well, that doesn't work. No cheese magically fell from the sky.

One of the characters actually took a risk. It was tough for them at the start, but then they found Sniff and Scurry down the road. What do you know? Things were actually better. They had a variety of choice, but they had to make that cognizant choice, that leap. The other little character: he was so entrenched. I think it leaves the story readers to their own devices, that he actually just starved to death because he wasn't adaptive to change.

I'll give you another example. In my little campaigning run I was up at the Rockyford colony. The Hutterites up there: they're a fantastic group. They've got a wonderful farm, like we've heard, down in Jumbo Valley. A lot of these communities have just the best stuff. You know, they're totally onto it. They produce eggs and poultry.

He gave me an example of how much red tape was being built up. He said: "You know, we produce the same eggs. We have the same chickens. We have the same barns. We have everything. It's all the same. It used to cost us about \$5,000 a year for one person

to kind of part-time do this. We do the same cleanliness in the barn. We do everything with all of the same protocols. All of a sudden, in the last four years, a new regulation comes out, and then that one gets taped over because it's partially covering the original one. Some of it's applicable, some of it's not, so you can't take them both off. It's not just a revision; you've got to have two. And then another one comes out and another one." He said: "The only thing that's changed is that it went from one or two inspectors to eight, and now I have to pay \$45,000 to somebody off the colony to be able to manage the new regulations. Nothing has changed substantially." So we've piled this up.

I've used this phrase: the enemy is us. Yeah, we keep building this stuff up, all of these great intentions. The movie reference: we talked about *Seinfeld*. I'm thinking it's more like *Guardians of the Galaxy*. We've got the starship troopers next door running around thinking that they're saving things, and for everyone else in the studio audience it's a comedy of errors. We know that this doesn't exist. If we don't actually go and change something, it's just not going to magically work out in the end by happenstance or chance or, heaven forbid, a talking rodent who looks like, you know, whatever.

Part of the healthiness of all of this dialogue is that we're actually having a dialogue today. We're talking about some substantial changes – no, not substantial; tweaks, if you would. We've got one little piece of legislation. We were criticized that the red tape department wasn't doing anything. Lo and behold, we've done something, and here it is.

Well, now they're surprised, coming back to Hem and Haw, that you actually did something. Now that you've done something: "Well, yeah, it's not that specifically. We'll go to the dictionary again about what red tape literally is, what it means to you, what my feelings are," et cetera, et cetera. But it doesn't really change the thing. This little law that we put out here, this little Bill 25, is actually going to make some changes. Are they huge changes? No. But it's going to be a culture of change.

Again, coming back to that point, this ministry is self-sufficient. It's a subset of Treasury, so the money was always there. We're not going out and finding new money. It was always there. We're just reallocating it so that we can actually help. When the groups and the organizations understand that there's a red tape group, they're looking internally as well because this is that culture of change that's taking place.

As far as consultations, there's a website out there. People have been pouring all of their ideas, all of their concepts into there all summer long, and it won't stop. This is four years of change. Because we can't personally as an individual see everything around us, you get different lines of sight. You get different viewpoints that come in. That's true consultation. We had round-tables. I was fortunate enough to be at several of them to help facilitate those dialogues, and you wouldn't believe the gamut of information that came in, again because we're all experts in our own little areas. All of this stuff is coming, and I'd suggest that the members opposite, like those little mice in that thing, get on their little running shoes and get ready. Change is coming. We're keeping our word. We're doing what we said. We're making it happen, and this is proof. So if you like the cheese, fantastic. If you don't like it, too bad – go find some new ones – because we're going to have more of an appetite for it.

Minister, thank you so much for what you're doing. Don't get distracted by the little potshots that are taken from the sideline. Let's keep going forward. To all of those folks out there that have actually been sending in their information and their feedback and their comments, keep it up. We're acting on it.

I'm going to leave you with one other item, Madam Speaker, that came up at a round-table down in Calgary. This is from those, you know, energy guys. When they were looking at the energy market, some rules had been changed in behind. If I have a genset that's running on-site and it's producing all the power I need for my site and I have a surplus, I can't put that surplus back into the grid. Rules were changed. I might have a surplus of 50 to 60 per cent of my capacity. You know what they're doing right now because the rules in behind changed? Here's another thing that we can look at as red tape. They have to waste it on-site. They've got things out there called toasters. That's what the euphemism is. They put the energy into them, and they displace it in heat because they can't put it back into the grid.

So you can stick up as many windmills as you want, you can stick up as many solar panels as you want, but you've still got waste energy up there that's doing nothing. Industry wants to sell this power. They want to do something good with it. They want to have the capacities, but they can't because of these silly rules and regulations. And, of course, this department that's not doing anything: well, guess what? We are. We're looking at it. We're hearing what the stories are. We're hearing what you have to say. We're not going to boil the ocean all at once, but, guaranteed, we're going to stick with you. We're going to do the right things for the province, and we're going to get things done over the next several years, well, the next four years, for sure, and, you know, God willing and the creek don't rise and the voters come onside and like what we're doing, we'll be here a long time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

11:00

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, I shall call the question.

[Motion carried; Bill 25 read a third time]

### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

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

#### Bill 20 Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2019

**The Chair:** Are there any speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to speak to the Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2019. This bill is also 102 pages long. It repeals five acts, creates two new ones, and amends a dozen others, clearly an omnibus piece of legislation. How quickly the folks over there forgot that they used to complain about even two pieces of legislation brought together by us. Now here we are dealing with more than a dozen pieces in one act, and it's becoming routine for this government.

I guess they're using this omnibus legislation to hide many things from Albertans. This legislation has a lot of broken promises, broken promises such as to "maintain dollars promised to municipalities for 2019-20, as well as the multi-year agreement in the Bill 32 Charters for Calgary and Edmonton." That's from page 77 of the UCP platform. Again, another quote: "consult with

stakeholders in the film, television and digital media industries to create an optimal tax credit designed to attract large productions and series," on page 81 of the UCP platform. Given that the industry is calling this tax credit a catastrophe, I think it's safe to say that that promise was broken, too.

What this government has done through this bill, along with the budget and other related bills, is they have put forward their plan for this province. What we see through this is that they are giving \$4.7 billion to corporations and telling Albertans, want us to believe that somehow that policy will fix everything. We know that this government promised Albertans jobs, economy, and pipelines. So far we have not see any improvement in the economy, we have not seen any improvement in job numbers, and we have not seen any progress on pipelines. Their policy of \$4.7 billion follows, like, the classical trickle-down theory, which is not even economics. That kind of policy has been rejected, has failed previously. Even the Nobel laureate for 2019, one of them, Dr. Banerjee, recently stated that cutting taxes for the richest doesn't spur investment or create jobs.

We have clearly seen that in Alberta, where we saw the government promise that this \$4.7 billion giveaway will help them create jobs, will help the job creators. Instead, what we are seeing here is that companies like Husky got \$233 million from this, but they are still laying off Albertans. They may have money to invest, but they are not investing in Alberta because market conditions need something other than these tax breaks. Similarly with EnCana, they are leaving Calgary. They also benefited from this policy, but again they cannot invest here because market conditions need something other than these policies.

This legislation clearly is not helping us by any means to improve our economy or get some jobs or help with the pipeline. Instead, I think there are things contained in this piece of legislation that will make things even worse. For instance, this piece of legislation is ending all kinds of tax credits: the interactive digital media tax credit, the capital investment tax credit, the community and economic development corporation tax credit, the Alberta investor tax credit, the scientific research and experimental development tax credit. These are all tax credits that are in place to encourage investments that will create jobs. This government, again, wants us to believe that their \$4.7 billion handout will fix everything, and they are getting rid of these important programs that were actually bringing in investment, that were actually creating jobs, to pay for their failed policy.

This legislation is also making life difficult for everyone, for everyday Albertans. For instance, it also takes away the personal tuition tax credit, the personal education amount tax credit. On top of that, we have already seen that they're increasing the interest rate on student loans. Again, this legislation is shutting the door of postsecondary on everyday Albertans. With the kind of hikes and elimination of these tax credits, it's becoming more and more difficult for everyday Albertans to get postsecondary education. Clearly, this bill is not helping with jobs, with the economy, or with pipelines.

Earlier I mentioned about film and TV tax credits. That's how they've bungled those credits, and the entire industry is not happy with that. They've been asking this government to reconsider their policies because the film and TV industries, those production industries, generate jobs, they generate investment, and they showcase our province. Cutting their support is clearly not helping us with the economy or jobs.

In Advanced Education they also are ending the access to the future fund and leaving it in general revenues. There was a reason for these dedicated funds: they were dedicated to achieving certain goals. Just mixing it up with general revenue is showing Albertans: "No, no. These funds will still exist to do the same thing." I don't

think anybody is buying it. Similarly, they are cancelling, like, the environmental protection enhancement fund, the Alberta cancer prevention legacy fund, and the Alberta lottery funds.

**11:10**

A couple of these funds I want to comment on; for instance, the Alberta cancer prevention legacy fund. They are moving these funds into general revenue while these funds were set aside for reasons. They were dedicated to cancer prevention research, and there are many Albertans who are not pleased with this change. They don't trust the government that keeping these funds in general revenue will serve the purpose.

They did the same thing with the Alberta lottery funds. Nonprofits across this province are not pleased with this change, but this government is not willing to listen to them. They are moving these funds into general revenue and want Albertans and want these organizations to believe that even though they are putting them in general revenue, somehow these funds will still exist for them to use. There is a huge concern out there in the nonprofit sector, in community organizations, and in community associations who were relying on these funds for important programs.

Other changes: bracket creep. They are deindexing personal income tax. I think that when those things were done at the federal level, our Premier, then in the federal Parliament, was very vocal against these changes, how creepy those changes were, how insidious those changes were. Now they are sliding these changes into Bill 20 to increase income tax on every Albertan. That's the same bracket creep as when they were in Ottawa. They used to oppose it, but now they think it's okay while Albertans are not okay with their taxes going up because they were promised. They were even told during the campaign that the 5 cents that they were paying in a carbon levy on their gasoline was too much and that they will remove that one. Instead, they are adding in personal income tax. They're charging them more in income tax. They're cutting their services. They're cutting their health care. They're cutting their education. These things were never promised, and the public never gave them the mandate to do those kinds of things. This bill clearly breaks the meaning of those promises that they said they wouldn't do and that now they're doing through this piece of legislation.

Because of this legislation, I think all Albertans, in all our ridings, will end up paying more in personal income taxes because of these changes that are contained in this piece of legislation, omnibus legislation. This piece of legislation will have an impact on their services. This already has an impact on municipalities, and people in our ridings will end up paying more in property taxes.

The government said that their agenda is to create jobs, but through this piece of legislation they are taking away all the tax credits that were bringing in investment, that were creating investment and incentives for investment, and that were attractive for the venture capitalists. Now, I think they are chasing those investors and that venture capital to other places because of their ill-conceived policies. Similarly, I think we are losing millions in the film and television industry, again because of this government's policies. Those jobs along with tech sector jobs will be heading to Vancouver and Toronto just because this government can't get it right. Fewer companies will end up investing in our province in research and development, in development of new inventions, because they are cutting from those grants as well. They are laying off people at Alberta Innovates.

While we are losing all these important things, we are seeing our property taxes go up, we are seeing our income taxes go up, and we are paying more to get less. Money is being diverted, essentially, from our schools, from our health care, from our community organizations, from the lottery fund, from the cancer prevention

legacy fund, all of those programs, just to fund their \$4.7 billion tax giveaway. That's on page 144 of the budget, just in case. We have also seen reductions in capital spending. Two projects, the green line in Calgary and investment in the LRT in Edmonton, are in jeopardy as well.

I think the government needs to think about it. This was not what they promised Albertans. Albertans went with their promise on jobs, the economy, and pipelines. That's what their mandate was all about. But anything and everything contained in this bill is not helping us create any jobs. It's not helping us improve our economy. It's not helping us build the pipeline. Instead, it's taking things away from Albertans, what they already have. It's attacking their livelihoods at a time when the government has money, \$4.7 billion, to hand out to companies who haven't been able to create any jobs because the market conditions are not there. The government is not interested in addressing those things, in addressing the takeaway capacity issues and in addressing new market access issues, which will automatically, I guess, attract investment, and with that investment will come jobs.

But here so far under this government's watch we have seen 27,000 jobs lost. We have downtown Calgary, where people are still looking for jobs. Just in the last week or so we lost 1,000 jobs. All of those jobs were lost because of this government's policies. They didn't fund the CBE properly. The CBE let go 300 teachers and instructors, support staff. Because of government policy, Calgarians are losing jobs, and that will also compromise our education. I don't think that is what Albertans voted for, what the UCP promised during the election. They said that they would fully fund education. Now we are seeing job losses, and then they find somebody to blame – in this case it's the Calgary board of education – and commit not to do anything. They know that their policies have resulted in that job loss. We are seeing cuts at the University of Calgary, and we are seeing cuts at Mount Royal, all because of this government's policies.

This bill, essentially, is helping them implement those policies, which clearly don't help Albertans, which don't create any jobs, which don't create any investment, which don't help us with the economy or help us with pipelines. They don't want to reconsider or listen to Albertans who are asking them to reconsider their policies. Every other day we see that their big mandate gets humiliated on the steps of the Legislature. Teachers are protesting, nurses are protesting, nonprofits are protesting, and kids are protesting: everybody is protesting against your policies. So I guess you need to listen to Albertans. You need to listen to what they need, what their priorities are, and reconsider these things which will clearly make life more difficult for Albertans, which will clearly not help us with jobs or the economy.

**11:20**

Moreover, one more thing that I want to mention is that when we became government, Alberta was the only province without a child tax benefit. I'm proud to be part of the government who brought forward that child tax benefit. Now what we are seeing here is that they are making changes to the base component that is paid to families. They lowered it to a net income of \$41,000. Madam Chair, that will impact many families in your riding, in my riding, and all across this province. That child tax benefit change will impact 165,000 Albertans with this new threshold. There are 55,000 Albertans who will completely lose this. In the term of the previous government . . .

**The Chair:** Are there other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

**Ms Goehring:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise this morning to speak to Bill 20, the Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2019. I've spoken numerous times in the House about this omnibus bill that's being proposed and the many concerns that I'm hearing from industry and from my community, whether it's parents or community leaders, nonprofits. There are so many that have concerns about this piece of legislation that's coming through. There's just so much that's incorporated into this. It's hard to break it all down and talk about what the impacts are.

As the critic for culture I've been an advocate for industry, for encouraging government to listen to industry. I know that something that is of grave concern is that the minister of culture stood in the House and praised her colleague the minister of economic development and tourism, saying that now that the budget has been introduced, they will be starting consultation with industry. Well, Madam Chair, this is a little bit too late. We've heard loud and clear – our side has, for sure – the concerns that they have with this legislation and the budget that's been proposed, about going forward the way it is. We know that industry is pleased overall that it's moving to a tax credit, but we have continued to hear, prior to the budget being introduced and prior to this piece of legislation being introduced, that they have concern with there being a cap.

I know as the critic for culture that this is something I take very seriously. I've been meeting with industry all across the province to hear their concerns, and I'm being included in their correspondence to government and to the Premier with their suggestions. It's really unfortunate that I hear members opposite stand up in the House and make no reference to hearing these concerns. I know they're being brought forward because I'm being included in the letters and the e-mails.

I just am concerned that this isn't resonating with members of the government and that they're not listening to industry when they're saying very loud and clear that the way that this is proposed is definitely going to be damaging to their industry. It's taking away jobs, an incredible number of jobs, that are here in the province, good-paying jobs that we know are part of diversifying our province. We have a workforce that lives in the province, that works in the province, that wants to remain in the province of Alberta, and they have solutions on how that can happen. The government isn't listening to those suggestions.

There's considerable concern when we're hearing that projects are leaving the province. We hear from this government over and over about how they want to bring investment into the province. Madam Chair, we have it here right now. We have incredible talent in the province of Alberta when it comes to the film industry, and they're leaving because of the decisions that this government is making. They talk about bringing investment in, yet it doesn't seem to be a priority that they want to maintain what's already here.

We know that industry hires so many across the province in different fields, whether it's catering, whether it's truck driving, whether it's hair and makeup. There's so much that's diverse about the film industry that it just simply doesn't make sense to me why this government wouldn't efficiently fund it, wouldn't efficiently support it, and won't even sit down and talk to industry about how they can make those investments stay in the province. I know that when I hear from producers that they are leaving to go to provinces like B.C., that is a huge concern. Why the government doesn't see that this is an incredible opportunity to continue to invest in this strong industry in the province is mind-boggling to me, Madam Chair.

I would just like to share with the House some correspondence that I've received from numerous members of industry that have also reached out to the government. I haven't heard it yet come up in the House in any of this debate. I haven't heard members of the

government make reference to any of the concerns or solutions that industry has brought forward. So as the culture critic it is my absolute pleasure to stand in the House and to give voice to the industry that has been pleading with the government to make changes, pleading with the government to hear them. It's not happening, and I'm just concerned that their voice isn't being shared, so I would like to be able to stand and share some of the experiences and some of the correspondence that I know the government is getting, but it isn't being talked about.

The first letter that I received as the critic says:

Dear hon. Premier and ministers,

The following post is from a gentleman who worked for many years in the Alberta film industry and has had to move to British Columbia to be able to continue to work. He has given me permission to pass on some of his posts. Please read this carefully and understand the urgency with which we ask you to change what you have set up for our industry. We ask you to remove the cap and open the doors to the film industry in Alberta, open the doors for business in Alberta.

I am one person in a large industry. In the past two days I have turned down shows from three media companies. One is the richest company in the world today. The other is the third richest. Both companies are tech companies that are new in creating broadcast content for entertainment. The companies will hire hundreds of Canadians to create that content at middle-class to upper-middle-class wages. The average age of the new workers they will be hiring will be mid-30s and a number of mid-20s, all the way up to us old veterans. As I hung up the phone with a producer from the world's richest company, my first thought was: where are they going to find crews? None of these shows are on any active rumour lists. Vancouver is at maximum capacity. I just happened to be contacted very early in their planning.

As I read about cutbacks in education, health, environment, et cetera, in Alberta, I think: what are they doing? You need to get your province working right away to add to your revenue stream, not lay them off waiting for the oil fairy to show up and give you another boom to [expletive] away. UCP, you are either open for business in your province or you are not. Either way, they better figure it out soon because this new media tech content boom, like all booms, will level out into a smarter, more streamlined model at some point.

All shows start with a person and a bank account set up where they choose to do business. People are hired; then the millions pour into the economy of the place they choose. If they like the place, they return over and over again. In the case of one Hollywood network, they produce most of their broadcast content in Vancouver. As for the current content boom, even Hollywood says that this cannot be maintained at this level, yet nobody knows when it will slow down. The main reason for a slowdown: there are not enough top crews available in the world to produce all the content on the books right now. Wow. An industry crying for more people to train and then pay well.

So, Alberta, you have a choice. Add to your provincial coffers by putting in a sustainable program to keep Alberta rolling. By doing that, you can get more people working, which means more taxes. More taxes means less cuts to services. Less cuts to services means happy services. How hard can that be?

Thank you for your time.

Joanne Jacobsen, Alberta film and television makeup artist.

**11:30**

Now, I don't recall any of that content being discussed in the House by the government. I think there are incredible points when it comes to the validity of the investment that the film industry makes here in the province of Alberta. Again another story shared of people leaving the province to go to B.C., where they're a supported industry in that province. We already have it here. Why

not sustain it, help it grow? We know that productions are looking to come to the province. We know Netflix, Disney: they love Alberta. We have world-renowned crews with incredible, incredible experience and history right here in the province who want to stay in Alberta. They've shared over and over that they love living in Alberta and hate the fact that they're now forced to leave the province because of this budget.

When we look at what's been proposed in Bill 20, like I had mentioned, moving to a tax credit is absolutely something that the film industry has asked for, but they want the cap removed. They're saying that this is a barrier that is going to impact them, and it's not enough. It's being supportive of one part of it but then feeling like the other piece, that's so essential, isn't there. While government has taken a piece of what they've asked for, which is complementary, it's not actually going to be effective with what they've proposed. Industry is saying loud and clear that it's an opportunity right now when film is booming in the province of Alberta.

This is going to absolutely, catastrophically, impact for years to come. We know that when productions leave the province, crews leave the province, and they're not going to come back because they're going to be successful somewhere else. To me, it is an incredible shame that we're losing out on all of that knowledge, that talent, and those good-paying jobs that so many rely on here in the province.

We talk about being able to diversify our economy. Well, the film industry is a natural place to do that. I've made statements in the House from someone who had experience in oil and gas, who worked on a rig, and had an incredible comparison between life working in the oil and gas industry and working on a film crew. It was skills that he had learned in the oil and gas industry. He was no longer able to work in that field and is now thriving in an industry where his skill set is just transferable. It's something that absolutely makes sense to me, Madam Chair. When we hear that people are being laid off in oil and gas, where can they go? This is a natural fit for those jobs that are continuing to be lost in the province.

My son is 25, and he is a fifth-generation oil and gas worker. He is a journeyman insulator. He has seen the impact on the economy and what it means to work in the oil and gas field. He needs to diversify, and his skill set is something that can be easily transferred to this industry. He's got so many opportunities here, but why would you take a career that you have in oil and gas and take the time to invest in a new industry such as film when you know that it's not being funded and you know that the industry is saying: we're leaving the province. You've got all of these incredible opportunities for these young people, like I had mentioned, in their 20s and in their 30s and, as he has referred to himself, an old veteran. They're able to take their skill set and work within the film industry, but they're leaving.

It just doesn't make sense to me why the government waited to talk to the film industry after the budget was introduced, after this piece of legislation was introduced. It just says to me that it's not something that's a priority, and it's potentially too little too late. That's something that is very frightening.

I know that government can make a difference. They can create an amendment and propose it. We saw them do that with the recent amendment to this specific section of the act that made applications possible for January 2020 as opposed to waiting until April 1, which is a positive first step. So we know that they've been listening somewhat to what industry is asking for, but we're still not seeing the commitments that they had made in their platform. They made promises to the film industry in their platform that are not reflected in the legislation that they're proposing, which, to me, is a promise made and a promise not kept, which is very concerning.

Now, I'm very appreciative that the minister is meeting with industry, or they are saying that that is going to happen, and we on this side of the House are paying attention because we can't trust what they're saying. The information that industry is providing to them isn't coming through in the decisions and the conversations that we're hearing from members of government. They're pleading. They're writing letters to their MLAs, they're writing letters to the Premier, to the ministers with their solutions, yet they're not talking about it, which is very concerning to me, because I'm receiving that correspondence in overwhelming amounts.

I know that it is a solution that makes sense. It's a solution that's going to continue to have industry thriving in the province, and it's going to keep them working here in our province, which I know every member in this Chamber wants to see. We want to see job creation. We want to see Alberta be successful, and we have an industry that's already here and is willing to continue and wants to continue to create that environment.

We know that in rural Alberta, when you have a production come in, that means that hotels are busy, that the local coffee shops are busy. Catering: we know that they're socializing; they're eating out for dinner. They're doing all of those things that are just creating an incredible economic impact in that small community, and it creates buzz in the community. When you know that there are actors like Bill Murray that are going to be at your local diner, it creates an excitement there, and it creates more people to come into that community to experience that with a chance of being part of a production, however that looks.

When you hear people in industry talk about their excitement and their passion, it's hard to not get excited about what they do for a living. It's something that I would say the majority of Albertans experience. We all enjoy at some point going and watching a movie or watching a documentary, and knowing that it was Alberta made, as an Albertan it makes me proud. When we hear about documentaries of experiences that Albertans have, I know that it's something that's very touching. Knowing that it came from Alberta, that it's about Alberta's history, whether it's about an organization or an individual, there's great pride in that, and it's something that we are world renowned for.

People from Hollywood look to Alberta. We have some of the most beautiful landscapes here in this province that I think the world should experience, and the way to do that is by investing in an industry that wants to help. They want to work with government. They want to continue to see this thrive in this economy, and they're just being told no. This piece of legislation does not do enough to support an industry that is telling the government that they are leaving.

When we're looking at ways to diversify, when we're looking at ways to create jobs, they have a plan to do that. It's concerning, Madam Chair, that the government isn't listening and isn't making those incredible decisions that so easily could alleviate that fear and alleviate the mass exodus out of our province.

**11:40**

I have another e-mail letter that I would like to share. It's to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

Dear Minister,

Prairie Dog Film & Television is an award-winning dramatic production company dedicated to scripted television series production. We have filmed 198 episodes of television, creating thousands of jobs for Albertans. We have impacted our local economy by injecting over \$40 million into the Alberta community by hiring Alberta crews, cast, and businesses.

Our company provides the highest ratio of Alberta spend per project, meaning we hire Albertans to be the content creators and decision-makers. Our goal is to increase the above- and

below-the-line positions in Alberta. To do this, we hire and train from within. We're the only Alberta organization that not only films its shows in Alberta but completes postproduction in the province, offering more jobs that spend money within Alberta.

In May 2019 our company moved its head office from Edmonton to Calgary to grow our business and develop a new crime series called *Tribal*, airing on APTN in February 2020. We proudly film the series in Calgary and are currently in postproduction in our new postproduction facility here in the city.

At this time the impact to our company is severe. The cost of investment to uproot the company and move to the production centre of Calgary, build a postproduction facility so we don't have to send the work to Toronto or Vancouver, and relocate our team members is significant. The longer the government continues to freeze our industry and reduce our incentives, the more impact it will have in the long term. Our talented crews will leave if they can't sustain full-time work, leaving us with unexperienced and limited amounts of crew to continue our craft.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Hon. members, are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 20 here this morning. I think that yesterday I was focusing on the bracket creep that we saw in this bill. The government is increasing personal income tax for every Albertan by a number of \$600 million during the course of this action. Increasing personal income tax I think goes against almost everything that this government was running on in this last election and the general rhetoric that they seem to indulge in on a daily basis both inside and outside of this House. So I think that everyone in Alberta should know that this budget through Bill 20 is increasing everybody's personal income tax with this tool or this contrived process of bracket creep.

Today I'd like to talk about tax credits. I know that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs did a great job just talking about the loss of support for the film industry, but this budget through Bill 20 also inflicts significant damage to business incentives that had been in place for a number of years and that businesspeople built their plans on. They might have moved or built new business interests here in the province of Alberta based on these tax credits.

You know, tax credits are a very effective way by which you can incent business development in any number of areas. I know that our government used them quite a lot in regard to building a value-added petrochemical industry here in the province with the incentives around polyethylene and polypropylene plants, that we see now being constructed in Alberta. Tax credits were the foundation for the success of those businesses being given incentives to build here in Alberta.

A number of tax credits that we saw here that were very successful as well included the equity capital tax credit for businesses doing research and development and the commercialization of new technology. This was part of the Alberta jobs plan, and – boom – suddenly it's gone. We know that, for example, tech industries such as the video game industry took a significant hit in regard to the choice that this government is making, as part of Bill 20, to take these credits out. We know that probably there have been a number of testimonials and people, tech companies voting with their feet, quite frankly, making their intentions known that they would leave the province based on the lack of support that they received from this government by cancelling these tax credits.

The community economic development corporation tax credit was also cancelled. Alberta-based investors in community

economic development who are encouraging rural economic development or making a social impact in the community were eligible for this community economic development corporation tax credit. This was a way by which we could see investment in areas outside of the major cities. It's gone, much to the concern of those who were counting on this credit.

The capital investment tax credit: cancelled. Again, this was a nonrefundable tax credit that was valued at 10 per cent of a corporation's eligible capital expenditure, up to \$5 million. The capital investment tax credit encouraged companies to make timely capital investments by returning a percentage of the company's costs, including the purchase of machinery, equipment, buildings, for projects related to manufacturing processes or tourism infrastructure – right? – again, a very, very focused, targeted investment that was very popular, that encouraged capital investment and encouraged small business to expand to meet their needs.

Now, I know that the government has words and rhetoric around the cancellation of credits like this, saying that, well, they're going to have a corporate tax reduction that's global and covers off anything that might be lost from these tax credits. But, you know, we heard loud and clear, from the very people that had the rug pulled out from under them in regard to these tax credits that they built a business model on, that, no, what most of these small businesses do, especially tech industries, is that they fold back their profit, fold back their capital and money into making further investments in their company, because they're growing. It's not this static thing that other, large corporate entities might be, that take a corporate tax reduction and just take it as profit-taking or take it as liquid capital and move it out of the province, as we saw with many companies choosing just to take the cheque and go, right? With tax credits, you know that you're targeting something that will be reinvested back into the Alberta economy.

In fact, we have demonstrable evidence that these tax credits were succeeding. In the absence of them, as the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs pointed out very clearly, they have to vote with their feet, right? The film industry is super competitive, and it's super mobile. We saw productions literally pack up in mid-season sometimes because they can shoot something like *Fargo*, the show, in Alberta or they can shoot it back in North Dakota, where *Fargo* actually exists, if they're giving them a better incentive to film there. This same scenario is playing out with tech industries and tourism investment as well.

**11:50**

Another tax credit is gone, the interactive digital media tax credit, a 25 per cent refundable tax credit for labour costs associated with interactive digital media activities, to support growth in the interactive media industry. This encouraged corporations to stay here in Alberta, talented entrepreneurs of the province. The program was available to corporations to create digital media, in particular gaming. Gone. Gone, Madam Chair. Left close behind in the wake would be those people making choices to invest elsewhere.

The scientific research and experimental development tax credit: cancelled. This was providing tax credits to corporations, partnerships, individuals to conduct scientific research and experimental development. This was a tax credit that was built in tandem with a federal program, which is still there, right? Often businesses or development institutions, universities and so forth, and scientific research look for grants and/or incentives that can be combined at different levels of government. They count on that partnership to build this development and experiment in scientific research, that often provides game-changing industrial

development. We look at some of the work that's been done in artificial intelligence here in the province of Alberta.

Nanotechnology, biomedical research, and so forth: it's a long game, Madam Chair. It isn't something you just produce and give away like you cut a cheque for a corporate tax cut and then they get the money the next day and they take it off to put in the bank in Switzerland or wherever – right? – or invest in other states or provinces, because they got the money, and they run. Instead, scientific research tax incentives and tax credits allow long-term research that pays significant dividends by helping to diversify the economy. Making investment in biotechnology, in nanotechnology, in artificial intelligence, and so forth is a wise, long-term investment.

We must make decisions in this Legislative Assembly that don't just affect next week but affect the next decade, the next generation. Clearly, with Bill 20, this budget generally is an affront to that cause, to that idea that somehow we can clear the ledger from tax credits and so forth, that we can make these reductions – we reduce and cut cheques to large, profitable corporations, and we look good for the media cycle next month rather than the business environment and diversification over years and decades.

Shame on this government for doing something that I find absolutely stunning – this list goes on and on – the attack and the affront of increasing personal income tax, pulling the rug out from under a whole range of tax credits that were functioning very well,

thank you very much. You know, you end up in a worse place. You might be able to show that your ledger is reduced for this next fiscal season . . .

**The Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt, but we will now need to rise and report progress on Bill 20.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**Mr. van Dijken:** Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 20.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any opposed, please say no. Carried.  
The hon. Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I got that kind of nod. With the fact that we're at about four minutes to noon here, I think it would make sense for us to adjourn the House until 1:30 p.m. today.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 11:55 a.m.]







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