



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday morning, February 26, 2020

Day 2

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UCP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Milliken, Nicholas, Calgary-Currie (UCP), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UCP)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UCP)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,
Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UCP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UCP)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP),
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),
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Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UCP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
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Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UCP)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horner, Nate S., Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., Taber-Warner (UCP)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Issik, Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UCP)
Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UCP)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UCP),
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LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UCP)
Loewen, Todd, Central Peace-Notley (UCP)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UCP)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, Edmonton-South West (UCP)
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader

Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UCP)
Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)
Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UCP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
(UCP), Government House Leader
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UCP)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
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Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UCP)
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UCP)
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UCP)
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UCP)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UCP)
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Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)
Savage, Hon. Sonya, Calgary-North West (UCP),
Deputy Government House Leader
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, Calgary-North East (UCP)
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
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, Calgary-Acadia (UCP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UCP)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UCP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UCP)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP),
Official Opposition House Leader
Toews, Hon. Travis, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)
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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Jason Copping	Minister of Labour and Immigration
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Nate Glubish	Minister of Service Alberta
Grant Hunter	Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction
Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Education
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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
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Tyler Shandro	Minister of Health
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Orr
Deputy Chair: Mr. Getson

Allard
Eggen
Glasgo
Jones
Loyola
Nielsen
Singh

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Neudorf
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

Allard
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Barnes
Bilous
Dang
Horner
Irwin
Reid
Stephan
Toor

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goodridge
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

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

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Schow
Deputy Chair: Mr. Sigurdson

Gray
Lovely
Nixon, Jeremy
Rutherford
Schmidt
Shepherd
Sweet
van Dijken
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Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Cooper
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Dang
Deol
Ganley
Goehring
Goodridge
Long
Neudorf
Walker
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

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Carson
Deol
Ganley
Issik
Jones
Lovely
Loyola
Rehn
Reid
Renaud
Turton
Yao

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Ms Phillips
Deputy Chair: Mr. Gotfried

Barnes
Dach
Guthrie
Hoffman
Reid
Renaud
Rosin
Rowswell
Stephan
Toor

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Hanson
Deputy Chair: Member Ceci

Dach
Feehan
Getson
Loewen
Rehn
Rosin
Sabin
Singh
Smith
Yaseen

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m.

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Please be seated.

Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

2. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve into Committee of the Whole, when called, to consider certain bills on the Order Paper.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to all members of the Assembly, welcome back. Let's start off with this motion if we could.

The Speaker: Hon. members, under Standing Order 18(1)(a) this motion is not debatable.

[Government Motion 2 carried]

Mr. Jason Nixon: So much agreement today, Mr. Speaker.

Let's try another one.

3. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The Speaker: Under Standing Order 18(1)(a) this motion is not debatable.

[Government Motion 3 carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will move Government Motion 5. Just so you're aware and all members of the House are aware, I understand there are some unintentional errors in it, and I expect one of my colleagues will make an amendment shortly after me moving this motion. I will do so. I seek your instructions. Would you like me to read all names? I'm fine with doing that. I'm just checking.

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader, I think it would be reasonable for us to read all of the names, and then, immediately following, should there be an amendment – I would never want to presuppose the decision of the Assembly. But if there was, we can just do the names that need to be changed and not the entire motion.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Membership Appointments

5. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that the membership of the following committees of the Assembly be replaced as follows:
 - (1) Standing Committee on Legislative Offices: Mr. Schow, chair; Mr. Sigurdson, deputy chair; Ms Gray; Ms Lovely; Mr. Jeremy Nixon; Mr. Rutherford; Mr. Schmidt; Mr. Shepherd; Ms Sweet; Mr. van Dijken; and Mr. Walker.
 - (2) Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Mr. Smith, chair; Mr. Schow, deputy chair; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk; Mr. Carson; Mr. Deol; Ms Ganley; Ms Issik; Mr. Jones; Ms Lovely; Member Loyola; Mr. Neudorf; Mr. Rehn; Mr. Reid; Ms Renaud; and Mr. Turton.
 - (3) Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Ms Phillips, chair; Mr. Gotfried, deputy chair; Mr. Barnes; Mr. Dach; Mr. Guthrie; Ms Hoffman; Mr. Reid; Ms Renaud; Ms Rosin; Mr. Rowswell; Mr. Stephan; Mr. Toor; vacant; vacant; and vacant.
 - (4) Special Standing Committee on Members' Services: Mr. Cooper, chair; Mr. Ellis, deputy chair; Mr. Dang; Mr. Deol; Ms Ganley; Ms Goehring; Ms Goodridge; Mr. Long; Mr. Neudorf; Mr. Walker; and Mr. Williams.
 - (5) Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future: Mr. Neudorf, chair; Ms Goehring, deputy chair; Mrs. Allard; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk; Mr. Barnes; Mr. Bilous; Mr. Dach; Mr. Dang; Mr. Horner; Mr. Reid; Mr. Stephan; Mr. Toor; vacant; vacant; and vacant.
 - (6) Standing Committee on Families and Communities: Ms Goodridge, chair; Ms Sigurdson, deputy chair; Mr. Amery; Mr. Carson; Ms Ganley; Ms Glasgo; Mr. Guthrie; Mr. Neudorf; Mr. Jeremy Nixon; Ms Pancholi; Mr. Rutherford; Mr. Yao; vacant; vacant; and vacant.
 - (7) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship: Mr. Hanson, chair; Member Ceci, deputy chair; Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk; Mr. Feehan; Mr. Getson; Member Loyola; Mr. Rehn; Ms Rosin; Mr. Sabir; Mr. Singh; Mr. Smith; Mr. Yaseen; vacant; vacant; and vacant.

The Speaker: Hon. members, under Standing Order 18(1)(h) this is a debatable motion. Anyone choosing to speak, please rise.

Seeing none, if a member wanted to propose an amendment, now would be the appropriate time to do so. The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika has risen.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you. It's good to be back in this wonderful Chamber.

I'd like to move an amendment, and I'll read it in its entirety. I move that Government Motion 5 be amended

- (a) under the heading Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing by striking out "Mr. Neudorf" and substituting "Mr. Yao,"
- (b) under the heading Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future by striking out "Mr. Dach" and substituting "Member Irwin," and
- (c) under the heading Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship striking out "Member Loyola" and substituting

“Mr. Dach” and striking out “Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk” and substituting “Mr. Loewen.”

I have the requisite copies if you'd like me to hand those out.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this will be referred to as amendment A1. Is there anyone wishing to speak to the amendment?

Just if I can confirm with the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods that the amendment is sufficient for your needs.

Ms Gray: To the best of my understanding, yes. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, is there anyone else wishing to speak to amendment A1?

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are back on the amended motion, Government Motion 5. Is there anyone else wishing to speak to the motion?

[Government Motion 5 as amended carried]

Amendments to Standing Orders

6. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

- A. Be it resolved that the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta effective December 2, 2019, be amended in the following standing orders by striking out “15 Members” and substituting “12 Members”:
Standing Order 52(1)(b);
Standing Order 52.01(1).
- B. And be it further resolved that the amendments in this motion shall come into force on passage.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Government Motion 6 according to Standing Order 18(1)(h) is debatable. Is there anyone wishing to speak to the motion?

[Government Motion 6 carried]

9:10 Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

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

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

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

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

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my great honour to rise today to accept the throne speech presented by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor for putting forward her vision for the Legislature.

The throne speech clearly laid out key priorities that this government will seek to achieve in the upcoming session of the Legislature. These priorities align with the three core commitments of this government made to Albertans when they were historically elected less than a year ago: getting Albertans back to work, standing up for Albertans, and making life better for the people of our great province. I am proud of how many commitments this

government has lived up to and how hard they are working for all Albertans, starting with the first bill introduced in the Legislature, to repeal the provincial carbon tax, right up until this week, with a 4 to 1 decision to uphold Alberta's appeal that the federal carbon tax is unconstitutional.

This government has also sent a strong message and a simple message to the investors and employers through the job-creation tax cut: Alberta is once again open for business. Albertans called for a government that would stand up for our province's natural resources. We have done that, and we'll reinforce that commitment with Bill 1, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act. This government has also been advocating for Alberta's industries and livelihoods in negotiations with the federal government, other provincial leaders, and influential leaders in North America and abroad. Making sure that Albertans are heard and respected within Confederation has been the foundational basis that the Fair Deal Panel has travelled across the province in order to fulfill.

With that voice for fair treatment, this government has continued to fight for major job-creating projects like the Trans Mountain expansion, Keystone XL, and a future for needed projects like the Frontier mine. We must return to an environment where investors are confident in the rule of law and willing to risk their investments for the betterment of all Canadians. Many of these projects also represent unprecedented opportunities to partner with our indigenous communities through the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, leading to more jobs, investment, and prosperity.

We also saw initiatives through legislation to reduce red tape by at least one-third, an investment of \$140 million to address mental health and addictions, and the implementation of a skills and jobs agenda set on bringing a stronger recognition for skilled trades and the corresponding opportunities for careers for our young people.

The new Speech from the Throne sets out the path that continues the guiding principle of our government's mandate and sets our province back on the path towards balance. Listening to Albertans, the way forward is clear. Job creation, support for the natural resource sector, and maintaining world-class public services are core mandates, unwavering responsibilities, and essential to the tasks ahead. I am grateful for the opportunity to further highlight to this Legislature some of the new initiatives that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor outlined in her Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, this government has already taken important action to address the economic issues facing our province. The MacKinnon panel, which released its report on Alberta's finances in August of last year, sent a clear message that our province had a spending problem. In the 2019 budget this government set a new course to change that and put into place a fiscal plan that would work towards achieving a balanced budget by 2023. At the same time, this government's first budget included important new measures to create jobs and grow the economy. But we are not done, and there is more work to do.

Budget 2020 promises to continue this path to balance, making fiscal responsibility and economic growth priorities while continuing to invest at the highest levels into health care, education, community and social services, and children's services. The task of returning this province to fiscal balance is monumental, and every aspect must be scrutinized not just for its relative merits and importance but within the greater context that resources are finite and limited, and if there is a demand in one area, there may be a lack in another. These decisions are weighty, complex, agonizing, and imperative. The character of these ministers to face these challenges with the utmost responsibility and compassion is why I am so proud to be part of a government that adheres to the adage promise made, promise kept.

As we enter this new session of the Legislature, I can confidently say to the people of Alberta that this government has deepened its resolve, it will not shrink back, and we will move forward. We will see change, and we will be equal to the task of seeing Alberta's future made stronger, more free, and with greater prosperity. That is the hope that I fight for for my children and for the children of every one of us, present and future Albertans.

To represent the people of Lethbridge-East with dignity and respect, to fight for the jobs that they do, the intrinsic value of that work, whether it be public or private, and for a balanced budget – crippling debt is an anchor and a dead weight to pass on the next generation. I will do everything in my power to prevent it so that they have every possibility to find a job, build a career, and have a life full of opportunity. That is my promise to my children, and that is why I am proud to be part of a government that is keeping its promises to Albertans and doing what has to be done to make that happen and make that future a possibility for all Albertans.

That is why I am grateful for the opportunity to move that a humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to speak? I see the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche has risen.

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm so pleased to rise today and second the motion to accept the Speech from the Throne. It is an honour to add my voice and comments to this debate.

It was less than a year ago that Albertans sent a decisive message. They called for a new way forward after years of feeling unheard and ignored. Mr. Speaker, since taking office, our government has listened. On issues ranging from health care to finance, this government has heard from tens of thousands of Albertans through public consultations.

In my own riding of Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche I hear every day about the needs and concerns of my constituents. In fact, my constituents have shared with me their concerns about extremist environmental groups such as Extinction Rebellion, who has blockaded the Walterdale Bridge and other transportation routes across our province and country. The frustration that they've shared with me over the fact that members on the other side of the House came out in support of this organization and, worst of all, supported this infiltration of this group in our children's classrooms reminds me that the need to fight for the support of our natural resource sector is still ongoing. In Fort McMurray and northern Alberta we're proud of our oil sands, and we're proud of how we produce some of the highest quality oil with the highest regulatory, human rights, and environmental standards in the entire world.

Just yesterday I had a productive meeting with Mr. Bill Loutit, who is the president of the Fort McMurray Métis. We discussed the importance of bringing jobs back to northeastern Alberta and getting our communities and our youth to work. Indigenous youth in Alberta seek opportunities just like every young Albertan, and it's up to our government to embrace industries that provide those opportunities so that Alberta can continue to be the best province in Canada in which families can live, work, and play.

Recently it was announced that this government has approved the Suncor Meadow Creek project. This important oil sands project is expected to create 3,200 jobs during construction and a continued 200 jobs once it is operating. These are projects that my constituents are very proud of, Mr. Speaker, and that Albertans need.

The Speech from the Throne has set a clear direction for Alberta, building on the strong record that our government has already set. In our first seven months this government has worked exceptionally hard to introduce legislation and make good on its promises to

Albertans. By the end of the fall session our government had either achieved or made a significant promise and progress on 162 of the 375 platform promises to Albertans. These achievements are a testament to how committed this government is to Albertans. The Speech from the Throne sets a vision of maintaining this robust legislative schedule and record of following through on promises.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the important achievements that have already been achieved. As you know, our first order of business was to remove the carbon tax, something that Albertans overwhelmingly supported during the previous election. Repealing the carbon tax has put more money in the pockets of families, businesses, and nonprofits, and it made it cheaper to hire employees, move goods around the province, and, most importantly in the wintertime, to heat homes.

9:20

When we started the essential work of putting this province's fiscal house in order, through Budget 2019 this government, the provincial government, laid out a path to balance by 2023 and kept spending in control without cutting core services. Other measures, through the Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2019, have reduced unnecessary rules and regulations that reduced investment in Alberta and ultimately cost the taxpayers money.

This government also took action on its promise to get Albertans back to work. We implemented the job-creation tax cut, which reduces Alberta's corporate tax rate to one of the most competitive in North America. We also created the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, which removes barriers to indigenous community investment in natural resource projects and allows our indigenous communities to be partners in prosperity.

We also passed Clare's law, a piece of legislation that was named after a young woman in the United Kingdom who was killed by her partner, who had a history of domestic violence. This is a critical new tool to help people experiencing or at risk of domestic violence. Our government has pledged to address domestic violence, and we're doing what we can to protect vulnerable people within our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would go on, but we simply don't have time today to list all of the promises that this government has kept for Albertans. You can see a common thread. Each of these initiatives puts the needs of everyday Albertans first, and I am proud to second a Speech from the Throne that is continuing this undertaking.

Another priority laid out in the Speech from the Throne was the protection of public safety and the pursuit of justice in our province. Protecting public safety and property rights is incredibly important to those living within my riding of Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche. Last year the RCMP found that over half of the suspects arrested for crimes in the community of Conklin within my riding over the past year and a half didn't even live in the community. The community has been pleading for help, and our government is listening.

This is not just an issue in my constituency, Mr. Speaker; it's happening right across Alberta. Crime needs to be addressed, and our government was committed to doing so. The first bill that this government will introduce will be the critical infrastructure protection act, an act to ensure that our railways, pipelines, highways, and other vital infrastructure are protected against rioters, illegal protesters, and other criminals. We will not allow Alberta's industries and economy to be held hostage like many in our country have been recently. We will protect Albertans' security, and we will always prioritize their safety. Other upcoming legislation will contain new measures to support survivors of human trafficking, and this legislation will also make important

changes that protect the safety of Albertans. These upcoming pieces of legislation all send the clear message that this government is making changes to improve the safety of Albertans.

As my time to speak ends today, I would like to once again say that it is an honour to represent the good people of Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche, and I am pleased to have a chance to second the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to join in the debate this morning? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West has risen.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in response to the Speech from the Throne delivered by Her Honour yesterday here for the Second Session of the 30th Legislature. Typically members often rise in response to Her Honour's speech, at least new MLAs do anyway, at least once per their time in this House to provide some reflections on their constituency and the character of the people and geography within the boundaries that we are first and foremost elected to represent. Now, I did so in the 29th Legislature for the so-called maiden speech, and I'm going to take this opportunity this morning to do that again. Members are afforded a broad latitude to reflect on their constituents and the character of their constituencies, and I would like to do that because I think the community deserves my reflection on what makes them so important and unique and special and my deep gratitude for having been sent to this Chamber to uphold the honour of the office and my duties as a legislator.

Mr. Speaker, we are first and foremost elected as individuals to this Legislature, and then we organize ourselves in this Assembly according to the wishes of our constituents and to our individual characters, in the way that we feel best reflects both of those things. So I want to provide some insight for my colleagues as to the individual character of my constituency for the benefit of those who are assembled for the 30th Legislature. Straddling the banks of the Oldman River, Lethbridge-West has as its founding, at least as an urban, modern settlement, the mining of coal, which then naturally, given that the resource was dominated by a handful of oligarchs, also meant the rise of various working-class movements. Indeed, the Alberta Federation of Labour was founded in 1912 in the city of Lethbridge.

In fact, Mackenzie King cut his teeth in the early 20th century as a Labour minister before he was Prime Minister. He was sent to Lethbridge to tamp down the labour unrest that was happening within the coal mines, a number of wildcat strikes, before we had orderly labour relations and before we had actual rules governing how employers and employees actually conduct themselves. The Parliament at that time, in response to what was going on in Lethbridge and throughout the Crowsnest Pass, passed the industrial disputes resolution act, which, you know, while not overly charitable to working people and to workers within the coal mines, essentially did form the foundation of orderly labour relations for the rest of the 20th century and into the 21st.

Lethbridge-West was also, at least the riding itself, founded around what was called at the time the great Indian battle between the Blood people, the Blackfoot, and the Cree. That was, of course, in 1870. At that time the river was not called the Oldman; it was called the Belly River. Apparently, Victorian sensibilities dictated that they change the name to Oldman, which is a fun piece of trivia, but it reminds us, when we go through that park, that essentially separates the two sides of my constituency, that the area was settled, it was important, it was a place of meeting, and it was a place of trade before the coal barons discovered it to be so.

Now, over the course of the 20th century the seat as it is right now, Lethbridge, developed a certain character, particularly after the founding of the university in the late 1960s. Much of the city's exceptionalism, the reasons why some people have begun to raise their eyebrows – why is Lethbridge such a progressive place? Why does it have the character that it does? Why do the public and private sectors co-operate as they do? Why is the workforce and the GDP essentially 20 per cent driven by public-sector activity?

In many ways it's because it is, of course, a regional health care hub – and as our health care system grew and expanded, certainly Lethbridge has served the needs that way – but also because of the founding of the university. That university both gave voice to indigenous southern Alberta voices, people like Leroy Little Bear, who has now been a recipient of the Order of Excellence and who was a constituent of Lethbridge-West; it also gave voice to rural Albertans who then were able to go and avail themselves of a university and a place to pursue scholarship.

I'm thinking here of writers like Rudy Wiebe and Joy Kogawa, who are nationally and internationally recognized, who wrote many of their important interventions into Canadian literature in Lethbridge, and Thomas King, who came from elsewhere and was in the department of English and wrote *Green Grass, Running Water* based on his time in Lethbridge. All of these writers and scholars, who have contributed to our Canadian story and to our broad understanding of what it means to be a Canadian, certainly in the case of Joy Kogawa provided us some insight, particularly through the novel *Obasan*, of the Japanese internment and its echo effects through the history of southern Alberta as a result.

Now, many of these stories are told, Mr. Speaker, in a contemporary context through cultural institutions such as the Galt Museum. The Galt for many years now has been under the leadership of executive director Susan Burrows-Johnson, who is about to retire. She has served our community in telling our past and current stories and developed the Galt Museum into a pre-eminent tourist destination and a community destination as well, with expanded programming for indigenous peoples and indeed a number of different initiatives around LGBTQ2S-plus history in southern Alberta, which is some amazing leadership and ought to be recognized.

9:30

The city of Lethbridge, too, the city itself, has undertaken a number of progressive initiatives that set it apart from the rest of the country. Councillors Crowson, Miyashiro, Carlson, Coffman, and Spearman have spearheaded the city's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations. As far as we can tell, they are one of the only cities who has done so as comprehensively as the city of Lethbridge has, culminating in the Reconciliation Week that they now undertake in September of every year, which is an extraordinary opportunity for the citizens of Lethbridge to understand the process of reconciliation, to understand both the past, the present, and to chart what the future might look like in the context of true reconciliation and understanding of the history of colonialism and its current ways that it reproduces itself in terms of systemic racism in the city of Lethbridge and beyond.

Lethbridge, too, has distinguished itself over the last few years in welcoming a number of newcomers. We were one of the highest per capita recipient cities for Syrian refugees. The school divisions, the family and community support services, all of the nonprofit sector but also employers, a number of whom have expanded their training opportunities in order to ensure that our economy is as diverse and inclusive as possible – and I will note, Mr. Speaker, that even as we as a city of 100,000 were one of the largest per capita

recipients of Syrian refugees, in those same years we led the province, certainly, and were one of the brightest lights economically in terms of economic growth. There was recently a report put out by the Conference Board of Canada in the fall of 2019 that noted that Lethbridge's economy was firing on all cylinders, so it is not true that we cannot welcome refugees and newcomers with open arms, that we cannot take action on reconciliation, that we cannot have a vibrant public sector and also a growing economy. The city of Lethbridge is certainly a bright light and an object lesson for us all.

I want to give a special shout-out to the folks at Lethbridge district 51 in the school system. The public school system did an admirable job of ensuring English language learners had the right supports in the classroom. We know that they used those classroom improvement funds in order to be able to ensure that kids had what they needed to be able to succeed. That's from the elected board leadership on down to the superintendent and all of the associate superintendents and administration and on down to the level of school leadership. Individual elementary schools, in particular, I know in my constituency have talked to me about the challenges but also the successes of such a massive integration effort for a city of our size.

I want to talk a little bit, as is customary with a response to the Speech from the Throne when members are discussing the strength of their constituencies – oftentimes what we do instead of simply repeating canned talking points is actually recognize the community of volunteers and the special people who sent us here as individuals because ultimately we are all sent here as individuals to organize ourselves into parties afterwards. In particular, I want to discuss the legacy of a certain constituent, Mark Sandilands. Mr. Speaker, Mark Sandilands ran for our party several times. He was an academic. He was an advocate for the environment, for postsecondary education, for young people, and he passed away of cancer some months ago. His partner, Leona Jacobs, continues to advocate for medical assistance in dying in our region and across Alberta.

These are the kinds of Albertans who have contributed to our democratic life, who have contributed to our broad understanding of what citizenship and true engagement looks like, and I want to say in this House that I am not sure I would be standing here right now – in fact, I'm quite certain I wouldn't – without the hard work of people like Mark Sandilands and Leona Jacobs over the years of keeping the Lethbridge-West NDP alive and, certainly, a strong presence in the community, outpacing the New Democrats' relative, I guess, broad-based organization at the time of the early 2000s. They did the work, Mr. Speaker, and it always is important for all of us in this Chamber to reflect on the work. It's not glamorous. The work can be fun if you think knocking on doors and talking to people is fun, which I do. People of all parties and volunteers of all parties are doing that work year after year and AGM after AGM and event after event, and they deserve our praise for that.

I want to talk a little bit about a few institutions in Lethbridge, Mr. Speaker, in the time that I have left. Of course, we have the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs, where people get together to hear a broad base of speeches and views. That, too, was founded by an active citizenship and, again, speaks to Lethbridge's sort of exceptionalism in this regard. No other city that I know has a Thursday afternoon luncheon where you can hear from everyone from sitting and former Premiers, leaders of the opposition, academics, nonprofit leaders, and so on.

I want to say a little bit about climate change education in the city of Lethbridge because, indeed, that is one of the reasons why my poor kids have to put up with me going into now year 5 of this,

because I think that this work matters, and I know they do, too, now. After five years of me being in public life, they are now starting to see the reasons why. Much of that basic day-to-day climate change education work happens through the Helen Schuler Nature Centre with Paige Rosner and Curtis Goodman, who are doing that work every day of just opening our eyes to the natural history that surrounds us and the way that our relationship to the grasslands ecosystems and to riparian ecosystems, where the Helen Schuler is located, in fact influences our daily lives whether we know it and whether we're aware of it or not.

Finally, in the remaining time I have, which is not long, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I am here now to advocate for a better life for my own children and for everyone's children. I am here to ensure that we take action on climate change, that we reduce child poverty, that we have a vibrant economy, where everyone is included, that we stand up for our medicare system. That won't change. It's the reason why I began this process in the fall of 2011, and it is the reason why I will continue.

Finally, I'm here to stand up for public education, and I want to give a special shout-out to the school community that supports my children at l'école La Vérendrye and their fantastic K to 12 education system.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks in response to the Speech from the Throne for this 30th Legislature. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Is there anyone wishing to provide a brief question or comment?

Seeing none, is there anyone else wishing to speak to the motion this morning? The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika has risen.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I already said earlier, it is good to be back in this Chamber. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak in response to the throne speech from the hon. Lieutenant Governor. Also, as the Member for Lethbridge-West had mentioned, it's a great opportunity for me to express the sincere gratitude that I have to my constituents, who elected me here back in last April, and the honour that I do believe that this is to serve in here. More than that, it's an opportunity to serve those who elected me here, but it's also an honour and a privilege to be part of such a great caucus as the United Conservative government.

In response to the throne speech I want to start off with a little bit of an anecdote talking about quicksand. Now, without the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, who might know this topic a little better, being a geologist, I'll do my best, understanding quicksand as a colloid consisting of fine granular material like silt in water. Now, it forms a saturated loose sand when it's suddenly agitated, and when water in the sand can't escape, it creates a liquefied soil that loses strength and cannot support weight.

9:40

Now, I took a bit of an interest in this not long ago because, you know, it's been talked about and displayed in movies often, so I wanted to know a little more about it. In 2014 Jonny Phillips of National Geographic shot a short video to determine if you can survive quicksand. If you'll bear with me on this, Mr. Speaker, with the help of first responders, he successfully sunk himself down to his shoulders and was able to get out. What I found most fascinating about this video wasn't the idea of quicksand but, rather, the process of getting sunk and the time it takes to get out. In about five minutes he was up to his shoulders, and it almost took half an hour to get him out.

Now, I look at our province in a very similar way. Over the last four years it was a very difficult time for Alberta, for Albertans in general. We had significant job loss. We had policies that were

detrimental to our oil and gas sector and to job creators across the board. This government is committed to righting this ship. A lot of those points and things that we'll be doing in this session were outlined in the throne speech, but the point of why I talk about quicksand is for you to understand that this is not something that can be – the ship can't be righted overnight. This is going to take some time. This is a process, a plan that our hon. Premier has laid out. We laid it out clearly with our campaign commitments last April, but also we continue to check off those commitments bit by bit in this Legislature.

Referring to the throne speech, I'd like to talk about a couple of those in particular. First off, I could read from the throne speech. It was made very clear that "the government of Alberta is prepared to do whatever it takes to develop our resources responsibly and get them to global markets to compete with and displace energy from some of the world's worst regimes." Mr. Speaker, we're talking about regimes that have atrocious human rights records, regimes who, to put it lightly, have little or no care for environmental stewardship, something that this government does take very seriously. We're also committed to ensuring that we can displace some of these worst emitters with our products. We have some of the best, you know, most ethically sourced products in the world, and we need to get those to market.

Now, unfortunately, we are seeing some difficulties in getting those products to market. In recent times it's been pretty clear in the news that there are those who oppose our resource development. They oppose getting our products to market, and I sometimes wonder why. What is the real motivation behind that? Why is it just Canada seeing these massive blockades? Why is it Canada that's experiencing such opposition to our ethical resource development? I think it's a question worth asking and one that the lefties, these green zealots have failed to answer. But I tell you that this government is not going to blink in the face of opposition from a few because over a million voters in this province elected this United Conservative government to right this ship. We will continue to do that and, as was stated in the throne speech, do whatever it takes.

Now, with that also said, the government's second key priority of the new session is getting our fiscal house in order, Mr. Speaker, and ensuring that all Albertans get fair value for their tax dollars. We are staring down the barrel of significant debt. The previous government ran deficit after deficit after deficit with promises to eventually balance the budget, promises that I thought were, at the time when they were made, hollow and promises that have proven to be just that. But most importantly is that now we have to actually find a way to control spending in this province and get the province back to balance and then begin to pay off this massive debt that we have incurred over time, debt that has seen us paying over \$2 billion a year to bankers and bondholders overseas.

Now, I am no fan of debt, both with government and personal debt. It weighs so heavily on the soul. I know that every Albertan must think about that themselves when they go to bed at night, thinking about their own personal debt, if they have some, but also about the debt that has been incurred on their children and future generations. I do believe that that kind of debt, that kind of irresponsibility is doing an injustice to the future generations. We're not doing them any favours. We want the next generation to be better than us. We want our kids to have even more opportunities than we have. It's why people come from across the world to Canada, looking for those opportunities, for a chance to succeed, for a chance of, if I may, the Canadian pie. What does it say to those people who are coming from outside of our province and outside of our country when they get here and they realize that the moment they become a Canadian citizen, they are saddled with massive

debt? It's unconscionable, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud that this government takes that concern very seriously.

Now, one thing I was also very pleased with, because I have a lot of public servants in my constituency, particularly working in education: the Westwind school division head office is in Cardston. There are a lot of employees for Westwind, and they are good friends of mine. They're wonderful people, and I have such a tremendous amount of respect for those who work in the public sector. That's why the government will work with the public service to contain costs and protect front-line services, Mr. Speaker – front-line services – by carefully reducing overall spending by less than 3 per cent.

This excludes the budgets for health care, Education, Community and Social Services, and Children's Services, where budgets are being maintained or increased to record-level costs. Now, I know that's a line that's going to be ignored by many on the left, including possibly the media, but I want to repeat that. The 3 per cent reduction excludes the budgets for health care, Education, Community and Social Services, and Children's Services, where budgets are being maintained at or increased to record levels, Mr. Speaker. Front-line workers need the resources because they got into the industries to help people. Teachers got into the industry because they want to educate kids. Nurses, doctors get into it because they want to help patients. It's what's most important. I want to make sure that they feel protected, and I want to make sure that they understand that we do have their backs.

We also have the backs of the everyday, average Albertan, who, just like those teachers and nurses, might be going through some struggles, Mr. Speaker. I think that there wouldn't be a person in this Chamber who would say that directly or indirectly they've not been affected by this opioid crisis that our province is afflicted with at the moment. My constituency in particular includes the Blood reserve, a place that is hurting. It is absolutely hurting, and it is unfortunate to see. I'm committed to ensuring that we are addressing the mental health and addictions problem we have in this province. That's why the government will implement a renewed health care and addiction strategy backed by an additional \$140 million in support. That's a tremendous amount of money. I was pleased to hear about the Calgarian Samuel Stordy, who succumbed to opioid addiction as a teenager and overdosed many times but now works as a youth addictions counsellor. He's living proof that treatment works and recovery is possible, not just perpetuating the cycle of addiction through the harm reduction strategy.

Now, finally, before I conclude my remarks, I would be remiss if I didn't talk a little bit about the choice in education, something that is so vital to my constituency. Parents in my constituency during my nomination, during the election, and even now continue to approach me about this important issue, something that is enshrined in the universal declaration of human rights, the importance of parental choice in education. Again, I'll read from the throne speech.

... my government will introduce a choice in education act, to reaffirm that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education. This law will be the first in Canada to incorporate the language of the universal declaration of human rights stating that "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

I'm so pleased to hear this kind of language, Mr. Speaker. This language is heartening to both my constituents and to me because it reaffirms that education starts in the home. Education starts with me. I have three wonderful children, and I wish one of them would sleep more than three hours at a time. That's a problem that we'll deal with as he gets older. But I will say this. The education they get starts with me. It starts with what I teach them in the home. I do

have, I believe, a right to know the kind of education they're getting and to have a say over their education, and my constituents agree wholeheartedly as well. This is so important, and it's fundamental.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

9:50

Going back to the analogy at the beginning, talking about quicksand, this province was, unfortunately, heading down a bad path, a place that no one wanted to go, and we were getting pretty deep in the sand. It is now incumbent upon us as a government to find solutions not only to throw money at problems but, rather, to curb spending. We are still in a position where we cannot just throw money at something but change the way we spend, change the way that we operate. We're still in a position to do that. I believe that if we continue down the previous path, we will reach a point that that was no longer a choice. We're simply asking Albertans to understand that this government is looking to save 3 cents on the dollar, if you will.

I imagine going to the grocery store, and I have \$100 to spend. I spend the \$100 on food. I can eat a lot. But if someone said to me the next day, "Now you have \$97," I believe that I could still make that work. I would still be able to go home and make a good meal. I wouldn't be starving. That's what we're asking Albertans to understand that we're doing. It's 3 cents on the dollar, Madam Speaker, and something that is so important, to curb our spending and curb the way we operate because the future of Alberta is too important to saddle with insurmountable debt. It's too important to allow our children to be faced with a problem that they didn't create.

So, Madam Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks by saying how honoured I am to be in this Chamber, how honoured I am to speak on behalf of my constituents. I'm grateful to them for their continued support of me. Also, I'm grateful for them for their activism, for the time they spend towards these important issues that matter most to them and letting me know how to come back up here to Edmonton and represent them best.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will conclude my remarks.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Anyone wishing to speak?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to rise in response to Her Honour's throne speech. I enjoyed listening to the speech yesterday, and I congratulate her on a well-delivered speech to this Chamber. I appreciate the hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika's statements in regard to the throne speech. I'd kind of like to start off where he left off in regard to the talk and expressing his support for the portion of the throne speech that referred to the work that the government is doing in regard to addiction beds inside this province and the priority that this government has put on tackling the problem that we have in this province and elsewhere in this country in regard to addictions, something I know that you know, Madam Speaker, is near and dear to my heart.

I had the privilege of spending much of my career before my elected life working with people who faced addictions and extreme poverty inside our province. I enjoyed that career very much, but it was a tough career for many of the people that are facing having to battle what is really a very, very tough situation within this province. This province, under the leadership of the hon. Premier and his government, is investing significantly in that area, increasing 4,000 beds, as the throne speech makes clear, towards treatment.

You know, Madam Speaker, I know that you know my dad well, my father, who came to this province facing terrible addictions. He often tells the story – they've written books about his story – of when he arrived in the province of Alberta. He was addicted to basically every substance that you could think of, up to and to the point where he was drinking Lysol from a can to be able to fuel his addiction as a teenage boy when he arrived in this province. He was fortunate that a group of men who were associated with the First Baptist Church, which still exists in Calgary – I think it's probably the oldest church, as far as the structure, within the city of Calgary that is still there. It's recognized in Heritage Park in Calgary. That group of men found him panhandling inside an area where the Calgary Tower is and took him in and were able to help him go through an addiction process. It was a long process. In fact, he talks pretty openly about it. After they took him in, he robbed them and had to go to jail for a brief period of time in Nordegg. I happen to be the MLA of Nordegg now, ironically. But he was able to come back out and actually go through an addiction treatment process that ultimately allowed him to go on with his life and succeed in significant ways.

He, of course, would famously go on to start the Mustard Seed, one of the largest homeless organizations in this province, a nonprofit organization that has 11,000 volunteers that work for it just in the city of Calgary alone, that serves thousands of people facing addictions and poverty across this province every day and helps them to be able to overcome those addictions. He was able to go on to raise a family of six boys, two of them who happen to be members of this Legislature, one of them who would go on to be a schoolteacher, and several others who would go on to work in trades and be successful in their own right, all because somebody took the time to be able to take him through an addiction process – an addiction process – to get him treatment for that.

This government is dedicated to doing the same thing, to tackle the problem of addictions. There's some contradiction between us and the opposition on this issue. The opposition I do think certainly cares about people that are facing addictions. I would not say that they did not. They speak passionately about it, and I think that they recognize the problem that we see across this province. But their focus is less about actually getting treatment to actually help people; it seems to be more just basically accepting that people are stuck within the never-ending cycle of addictions, and this government will not accept that. We've made it clear yet again in this throne speech that we will invest heavily in helping people get treatment so they can get out of the cycle of addictions and be able to succeed and help and benefit our province and be able to live full and fulfilling lives and go on to do other things.

It's important that we recognize that work and that we support that work. I want to on behalf of my constituents, and there are lots of addictions in rural Alberta as well. Often people only think about this sometimes in the large urban centres, but we face serious addiction issues inside the communities that I represent on a daily basis, and we certainly are happy to see that investment in addiction beds.

In addition to that, the commitment is to be able to stand up for Alberta and to make sure that the rule of law is followed. What has been shocking to me is the support of the NDP opposition in this province for people blocking infrastructure, for people blocking roads. I mean, some of their members have stood on the very steps of the Legislature with organizations who are dedicated to basically some pretty bizarre things when it comes to this topic. The law must be obeyed. We saw what has happened across this country in the last two weeks and what that does to our economy and what that does to the people of our country. This government is going to take immediate action with Bill 1, Madam Speaker, which was

mentioned in the throne speech. We'll also hear about it shortly, as we head towards that debate, to be able to say that you have a right in this country to make sure your voice is heard and to protest your concerns inside a democracy. You do not have a right to shut down railways. You do not have a right to shut down roads. You do not have a right to cause people to lose their jobs all across this country or businesses to go bankrupt. The province of Alberta will enforce the law, and I'm looking forward to hearing about that.

I'm also happy, Madam Speaker, to see in the throne speech the commitment to still get our fiscal house in order. I know the opposition continues to want to just spend money and not recognize the consequences to your children and my children and their children. The fact is that when you take the approach that they took when they were in government, you create a situation that is not sustainable, and our province now faces that. I'm proud of this government for continuing to fulfill the commitment that they were elected to do: to get our books balanced, to get our province's fiscal house in order. The reality is that most of my constituents by far want us to continue down that way. They do not want an Alberta that has to continue to live on a credit card, that continues to borrow against their children's children's future and under the NDP's leadership their children's children's children's future. That's not acceptable to the people of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. It's not acceptable to most Albertans. They expect us to get that job done, and the throne speech reaffirms that we will continue to be committed to fiscal responsibility.

The other thing, though, it commits to is that we will take a page out of the late Premier Peter Lougheed's book, and we will do what is necessary to get projects built in this province. We will do what is necessary to get our products to market to make sure that our province can succeed.

Now, Madam Speaker, you've known me for a while. You've had the privilege of sitting in the same caucus that I have for four or five years, coming up on six years, and you know that we are committed to free-market principles. But when we are in a situation like we have with our current federal government, who is doing everything politically possible to stop the success of this province and the people that work here, it is important for the government to be prepared to overcome those political hurdles for the people of Alberta and make sure we can get our products to market and continue to succeed. Albertans can rest assured that this government will do that. We'll take clear action in the coming weeks to make sure that happens and that Alberta succeeds.

10:00

I'm excited for this Second Session of the Alberta Legislature, to be here for the first sitting of that Second Session, at the beginning. I'm excited for the work that is ahead, that has been laid out in this throne speech. It shows a clear balance between compassion and making sure that we can meet our social obligations inside this province while at the same time making sure that our businesses, that create the wealth for those social obligations, can succeed. There is a clear commitment that we will continue to stand up for this province against a federal government that continues to go out of their way to make sure we can't succeed. That's not acceptable to Albertans. We won't accept it anymore, and we will work around them if that's what we have to do.

Lastly, we have a government that is still committed to getting its fiscal house in order, that will not allow the largest intergenerational theft, that took place under the last government, to continue, that will make sure that Alberta is strong and free for years to come, just like we promised Albertans during the campaign. We're well on our way, with almost 50 per cent of those campaign promises completed inside this Chamber, and you ain't seen nothing yet,

Madam Speaker. We're going to continue to move forward at a fast pace because Albertans are counting on us. I'm looking forward to that.

With that said, I'm mostly looking forward to talking about Bill 1 today, though, so I move to adjourn debate on the throne speech.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1 Critical Infrastructure Defence Act

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and welcome back. It's pretty exciting to be back here today and to have started a new session of the Legislature and to get things rolling to get Alberta back on track. I'm pretty excited to do that.

It is my honour today to move second reading of Bill 1, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act, on behalf of the hon. Premier.

I'm pleased to be able to speak to this bill because it is essential to preserving the economic viability and security of our province. Albertans expect their government to lead, to take bold action, and to make essential decisions to ensure that Alberta is an economic powerhouse and leader in property rights for generations to come. I have to say, Madam Speaker, that when I heard that the government was considering this as the first bill of this Legislature, I was humbled as I had actually planned on bringing this forward as a private member's bill when my time came. I understand the urgency and the need to bring this bill forward, so I'm glad that I could rise today to move second reading and to be in support of this bill.

Over the last number of weeks Albertans have witnessed the level of economic chaos and damage that a small group of lawbreakers can cause through blockades and other illegal protests. This level of lawlessness is unacceptable and should be met with serious repercussions. Matched by this economic damage is the potential of reputational damage that has been sown throughout due to an inability to get our products to world markets. These blockades have fundamentally disregarded the rule of law, jeopardized public safety, and continue to throw the national economy into chaos. While the Prime Minister seemed to be everywhere but dealing with the crisis, infrastructure was barricaded and prosperity was impaired by green zealots and eco radical thugs. We need to do everything that we can and use every possible option to discourage the illegal protesters, who are scaring away investors, shutting down a large part of our economy, and potentially jeopardizing the public safety of the workers on rail lines and critical infrastructure projects.

I'm glad that the Premier is taking this bold action. It is, in my opinion, necessary and exactly what it means to stand up for Alberta, just as we promised we would do in April 2019. In a country like Canada, Madam Speaker, these blockades and wilful disregard for collective civil respect and the infrastructure that quite literally keeps our country moving is absolutely unacceptable. We saw numerous news articles, countless columns, and I have personally received several e-mails asking for a stop to the madness and for the rule of law to be upheld.

As the Premier has said, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act recognizes that there are buildings, locations, and other infrastructure, either public or private, that are vital to our province's economy. Now, for the benefit of all that don't have the bill in front of them, these include pipelines; oil and gas production and refinery sites; highways; railways; dams; bridges; electric, gas,

and water facilities; and telecommunications lines and towers. If passed, this bill would create new offences for entering these spaces under false pretences, damaging essential infrastructure, and obstructing or otherwise interfering with the construction, maintenance, or use of essential infrastructure. It would see increased individual fines up to \$10,000 for the first offence and \$25,000 for a second offence. Also, you could have prison for six months or a combination of both, and if that wasn't enough, every day would be considered a new offence. In addition to that, we will hold accountable the organizations who direct, authorize, or otherwise participate in these activities with fines of up to \$200,000. In sum, Madam Speaker, if you plan on attempting to impede the economic success and the ability of our producers to get to world markets, you had better bring your chequebook.

Finally, to remove all doubt, it gives police clarity by providing them with the ability to more effectively do their jobs: uphold and enforce the law against those who set out to flout it. We are adding these additional layers of protection to send a strong signal to those who would try to sabotage our economy. This message is simple: not in Alberta. These measures will provide the strongest protections for critical infrastructure in all of Canada, and we encourage every province and the federal government to follow our example and take similar action to protect property and critical infrastructure.

This law recognizes the economic freedom of Alberta business, our essential infrastructure, and our workers. It creates tougher penalties to deter illegal activity and ensures that those who do not follow the law face stiffer punishments. It also sends a strong message that in Alberta, if you play by the rules, your government will stand with you. We want to show that our government will not stand idly by and allow Alberta to be an economic hostage, not now and not ever, Madam Speaker. It is time that someone said: enough.

I hope that all members of the House can get behind this essential piece of legislation and proceed with Bill 1 and support our government in doing this. Thank you.

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

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 1, Critical Infrastructure Defence Act. I think I will start by saying that what we heard in the throne speech yesterday – broadly speaking, they outlined three priorities in their throne speech. The first one was getting Albertans to work. I agree that that should be a priority. That's exactly what we've been hearing across this province, that the government needs to focus on getting Albertans back to work. In that context I would have expected that Bill 1 would be focused on getting Albertans back to work, focused on creating jobs since we have lost almost 50,000 jobs under this government's watch. Last month's numbers showed another 19,000 Albertans losing their jobs. It's really disappointing to see that instead of coming up with some forward-looking plan to help grow our economy and get people back to work, we see this bill.

I would say that, sure, there may come times when we need to protect our critical infrastructure and that having a piece of legislation like this in place may deter some folks in the long term, but it's not fixing anything in the short term. The things that are included in this piece of legislation are already illegal, and the authority to enforce the laws rests with the law enforcement agencies: police, RCMP.

10:10

Again, as I said, what Albertans were expecting from this government and as they outlined in their throne speech as well,

Albertans wanted to get back to work and they wanted to see strong action to make sure that they're getting the jobs they need today. I recognize that this bill has been brought forward in the context of two recent incidents, one involving Wet'suwet'en First Nations and the other one involving Co-op refineries, one in Manitoba and one in B.C.

However, I am unable to see how this piece of legislation will address the government's number one priority of getting Albertans back to work or how it's creating jobs for Albertans today, that they're looking for so badly. More recently I think there are many things that I can share that will suggest that government priorities need to be somewhere other than this at this point because Albertans are looking for jobs. For instance, a few days ago we heard about Teck Resources pulling out of a \$20 billion oil sands project that would have created 7,000 jobs here in Alberta. Also, their CEO stated the reasons for their decision in a letter. They highlighted two things. The most important one, they said, was that customers, investors, are looking for jurisdictions to take action and have a framework in place that will reconcile resource development and climate change. The second thing, which this bill is more geared towards, is that they also identified that the nature of their business dictates that a vocal minority will almost inevitably oppose specific development. They were prepared to face that opposition and deal with that, but what they wanted from the government was a framework that reconciled resource development and climate change.

What we would expect, had government learned something from that decision, is that the government will be coming up with that framework to create that certainty, give investors that confidence, but we didn't hear anything along those lines from the government. Clearly, the government didn't learn anything from Teck Resources taking a \$20 billion investment away from this province.

Also, we didn't hear: who did the government consult with, when did they consult, what did we learn from those consultations, and are those things reflected in this bill? If there is such a thing, I would ask that the government share it with all Albertans, with this House so that we can all see what people have to say about this. Both issues that this bill is trying to address for now are somewhere other than in Alberta.

Also, as I mentioned, the kinds of things that are mentioned in section 2, prohibitions, are already illegal. There are laws that prohibit those kinds of actions, and enforcement rests with the police authorities, RCMP. So I think the question I will have is: what are the enforcement costs of this bill? I would urge any member of the government to share those costs because lately, especially after their first budget, we have heard a lot of concerns with respect to cuts to municipalities, cuts to police funding. For instance, in Calgary the Calgary Police Service budget faced somewhere around \$13 million in cuts. Similarly, who are the municipalities who will be most affected by this bill, what will be the cost of enforcement, and are there any other features of the justice system that will be impacted by this piece of legislation or will have more costs? Again I would urge the government to share that analysis as well so that we have a better understanding what the enforcement costs of this piece of legislation will be.

There were protests previously as well. For instance, there were protests around United We Roll. What kind of impact would this piece of legislation have on those protests? What about, basically, children playing on the railroads, which I think is already prohibited for many other reasons? I think these prohibitions also extend towards people who are helping. I don't think it's very clear what that would entail. People bringing food or water to those people: are they helping them? Will they be impacted? Will they be fined?

And what about roads and other infrastructure that are on reserves? On this side of the House we do respect treaty rights, and we assume that the government does the same. I think that lately the protests we have seen involve either reserve land or indigenous communities, so certainly seeing this piece of legislation, for them, is concerning. We would want to know on this side of the House: what consultations took place with indigenous communities across this province? There are 48 First Nations. Have they raised any concerns? Were there any First Nations who were for this piece of legislation? These are all important questions that, if the government would address them, will help us understand this piece of legislation better.

I think there is infrastructure in all provinces that's under federal jurisdiction, for instance railways. What impact will this piece of legislation have on that infrastructure? There are these questions that I think the government should address to help us understand, help Albertans better understand the intent and reach of this piece of legislation.

Also, if it's about identifying critical or essential infrastructure, we should clearly identify that. But after having a long list of essential infrastructure, the government still gave itself the power that they can prescribe any building, any structure, or any other thing that they deem as essential infrastructure. Do we need that kind of *carte blanche* for this government, that they can decide at their will any building, structure, even devices or other things as being critical infrastructures? That's way too broad a power, and when the Government House Leader used to sit on this side of the aisle, he would specifically point to these powers and talk at length about these powers, how this kind of unrestricted power corrupts governments and whatnot. I hope that they will look into that as well, whether government needs that kind of power to declare, to deem any "building, structure, device or other things" – I don't know what "other things" may even include – as critical infrastructure.

10:20

I think I do see that at a point, at some time, we may need stricter penalties, we may need similar legislation, and there are many jurisdictions down in the States where they have similar laws in place. But at this point, one, there are a lot of questions that I outlined – I can outline them again – where we will need to see: who did the government consult, what were those consultations like, and what was the feedback? Then, two, we also need to see its enforcement costs, whether police agencies, whether the RCMP, whether municipalities were consulted about this and whether there are any estimates that the government will want to share. Third, with respect to those who are helping those protesters, whether people are bringing them food, water, and supplying any kind of basic-needs stuff, will they be covered under that? Fourthly, we would want to know, because this piece of legislation is coming in the context of ongoing protests which involve indigenous communities, indigenous reserves, whether there were any consultations with First Nations in Alberta and what they have to say about this piece of legislation. I think these are important questions that the government should talk about. The government should help us understand, the government should help Albertans understand so that we know the proper reach and implications of this bill.

Lastly, the government already has included many things in essential infrastructure. I think a good question for the government will be: why do they need another provision that gives them almost unrestricted power to declare anything and everything in this province as critical infrastructure? That's way too broad, that's absolutely not needed, and they should reconsider that as well.

As I started with, also, the number one priority for Albertans at this time is something that will get them back to work, and the government rightfully identified that getting Albertans back to work is their priority, but the problem is, the issue is that Bill 1 doesn't reflect that priority. Even within their own speech that was listed third, so the government chose to ignore what Albertans needed the most, and that was jobs. So far I guess what we have seen is that government policies, government programs have completely failed to create any jobs. For instance, if they wanted to create some jobs, they could have reversed their failed \$4.7 billion handout to corporations, where corporations were getting money and investing somewhere else: investing in Saskatchewan, Wisconsin, down in the States. That would have been a good plan to create jobs and get Albertans back to work.

The government is also cutting from infrastructure. Again, less spending in infrastructure, fewer people on infrastructure projects: that will also result in more job losses. The government should have increased infrastructure spending and not decreased it. They were about restoring investor confidence. To restore investor confidence, they would have done what investors were telling them.

For instance, Teck Resources was clearly telling them that in order to give some confidence to investors, to customers, governments need to have a framework in place that reconciles resource development with climate change, and here we see that the government still takes pride in – the first thing they did: they dismantled the climate change plan. That's what I think I heard earlier as well. That's not something that they should take pride in. It's something that investors are asking for, it's something that customers are asking for, and it's something that's written in black and white, as the Leader of the Opposition will put it, in the Teck Resources letter. They said that they would have dealt with protests, that that was fine with them. They recognized that that's inevitable in those kinds of projects and that they would not shy away from those. What they really needed from the government was some kind of credible plan that accounts for climate change.

I think we have mentioned before as well that those are the kinds of things that are, I guess, universally agreed upon. In 2018 the Nobel laureate in economics identified as well that it's a smart business practice to account for environmental changes and have a framework in place. Instead of focusing on that, the government basically chose to ride on an issue that may be popular and discussed across this country at this point, with people, rightfully so, expecting the federal government to act on it, but here in Alberta people are expecting this government to act in their best interest and act on what they are looking for, and that's jobs. Just saying that their priority is getting Albertans back to work won't cut it. They have to do something about it.

So far they have cancelled diversification plans. So far they have cancelled projects that were creating jobs. They are saying that they wanted to get their fiscal house in order. If they wanted to get their fiscal house in order, they could have just reversed the \$4.7 billion corporate cut. That would have helped them avoid . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, just a reminder: we are on Bill 1. Are there any members wishing to speak? [interjection] There is no 29(2)(a) on the second speaker.

Are there any members wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak in favour of Bill 1, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act. First of all, I would like to thank my good friend the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General for introducing this important piece of legislation, and I also give due credit to our House leader for getting this bill as

a priority for our government, looking at the prevailing situation in Alberta and in Canada.

As Minister of Infrastructure I feel it is fitting to speak to this bill. It's been a bad few weeks in Canada. Our railways have been illegally blockaded by thugs who have appropriated the noble goal of reconciliation with Canada's native peoples and used that as an excuse to hold the country hostage. Madam Speaker, it's sad to note that those protesters and illegal blockaders were actually aided and enabled by leaders like the NDP leader, Jagmeet Singh. It's a shame. It's not a stretch to say that railways built Canada, and a small group of environmental radicals should not be able to shut down the foundational infrastructure, if you will, of the country. But, sadly, that has been the case, and that's why we have been forced, we have been compelled to put forward this bill as Bill 1, because our province's critical infrastructure is too important.

I'll tell you why. The Member for Calgary-McCall, who is the opposition critic for Energy, talked about jobs, about funding for infrastructure. He, in fact, said that we cut funding for infrastructure. I don't know where he got that information. The budget is tomorrow. I would encourage him to wait till tomorrow and look at the budget, and we'll talk about it in the coming days and weeks. He talked about creating jobs. This bill is all about protecting jobs and getting people back to work.

10:30

Madam Speaker, our farmers feed the world, our energy powers the world, and our natural resources build the world. If these products cannot move by rail because the Trudeau government is too inept or cowardly to uphold the law, the most basic of government functions, well, then our government is left no option than to take instantaneous, rapid action. That's what Bill 1 is about, taking action to defend our vital economic interests.

As Minister of Infrastructure my role includes being a landlord for many buildings held by the provincial Crown, and it is also to ensure schools and hospitals get built in every corner of the province. These are important pieces of public infrastructure, but equally if not more important is the private infrastructure that moves our goods to markets around the world: pipelines, railways, highways, power lines. This privately held infrastructure is just as important as any government building.

I think, Madam Speaker, that is the reflection of the capitalist economy. The means of production, the major infrastructure of this nation, is not held by the Crown. Individuals acting in their own rational self-interests control the most crucial infrastructure. That probably makes some of the members across the aisle upset. They believe the state is better suited to manage these things regardless of how many times history has proven them wrong. Canada's infrastructure, whether publicly or privately held, has been held hostage by a small band of radicals, and that cannot stand. That cannot stand under our watch. That's why Bill 1 addresses this issue.

I know that my colleague the hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat was planning to introduce a private member's bill on this same issue even before this issue became as pressing as it is now because we saw this coming. We are concerned about the safety and security of Albertans and Canadians. That's why we're thinking about it.

In the country I hail from originally, Madam Speaker, India, there's a lot of significant infrastructure being built. In my previous career I helped build the world's largest oil refinery in Gujarat. In other countries, in every country, even in the country the Member for Calgary-McCall came from, Pakistan, people realize that building this vital energy infrastructure will lead to prosperity for everyday Albertans and everyday people. Meanwhile in Canada every pipeline project is subject to endless delays and regulatory

confusion. Many people have asked whether building large infrastructure projects is even possible anymore. That is a tragedy. As I spoke about earlier, Canada waltzed into nationhood with one huge infrastructure project. That is the Canadian Pacific Railway.

We refuse to build new projects, and now that the federal government refuses to enforce the rule of law to protect existing infrastructure, a small group of people are threatening to shut down our current infrastructure, the stuff that is already built. That's how we get investors to flee Canada to our neighbour, the States, which will have financial repercussions for not just Alberta but all of Canada. What kind of message will we be sending to our job creators, Madam Speaker? The federal government says we don't want their investment, and now the current operations are threatened to stop. The buck stops here, with our government. We want to ensure that no further harm comes to our economy.

Madam Speaker, the previous speaker, the opposition critic for Energy, talked about this climate change plan, CLAP. When I was the opposition critic we talked a lot about that. That plan they presented: the main premise of that plan was to gain social licence from these anarchists that are blocking our infrastructure today. That social licence never came. It doesn't take this; it would never come. We should realize that once and for all and reconcile to that fact. That's why this is the priority of government. We will protect our vital economic infrastructure. We will enforce the rule of law, and we'll protect jobs. We'll defend the vital economic interests of Albertans.

Madam Speaker, the member also talked about the list of critical infrastructure projects cited to fight. It is only the start. We'll observe if these protestors behave responsibly and exercise their democratic right to protest peacefully. But if we see any more disturbances or any more, you know, harm to Albertans, then as Minister of Infrastructure I won't hesitate to recommend to the Minister of Justice to amend this Bill 1, to update it as required.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, any members wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to be back and to speak to Bill 1, Critical Infrastructure Defence Act. Before I sort of get started on this, I think that, certainly, we do speak to and for and pass a lot of pieces of legislation throughout a session or during a session, but I think the government's opportunity to focus our attention on something is really an opportunity that the first bill we see presents us with. I, like many other Albertans, I think, was hoping to see something a little bit different. There are so many things to choose from, obviously. Of course, we were hoping to see a laser focus on employment creation, job creation, maybe something about fair transition for workers in our oil and gas sector because we know that this is a particular sector in Alberta that has faced enormous struggles, and so many people are out of work.

Looking ahead to the future with energy transition, we know that there are literally thousands of women and men in this sector that will require some support, whether it's to, you know, maybe fine-tune their skills or move their skills into another area, go back to school, change altogether. I don't know. Of course, the focus is on: what can we do for this particular sector and the communities that are so heavily impacted? But we didn't see that. We didn't see that at all.

Of course, I'm always hopeful that the government will focus on important things like poverty reduction. I think having the first bill

of the session be focused on poverty reduction would have made my heart sing because the poverty and the impacts of poverty that we see continue to grow and continue to harm Albertans in ways that we're really just starting to understand. But that wasn't the case either.

Bill 1 does not focus on Albertans who are struggling, Albertans who are unemployed, Albertans who live in grinding poverty, or the many other sectors in our province. No. In my opinion, this bill focuses on what is sort of happening in the news right now and is meant to inflame, is meant to divide people, and is meant to add a little bit of fuel to a fire that is burning and that has the potential to do a lot of harm to our country, to our province, and to our communities.

10:40

I would have thought that our Premier would have used this opportunity to address just the incredible amount of jobs that have been lost. There have been 50,000 jobs lost under this government. That is significant. It's a massive number. I think every single person in this Chamber has heard from at least one person or one constituent that has come to see them or perhaps called them or e-mailed them to say: "I'm hurting. I'm struggling. My family is struggling. We need some help." We're not seeing that here.

This bill is not a forward-looking plan at all that looks to grow our economy. It looks to divide. Increasing penalties and fines for folks who disrupt critical infrastructure certainly may deter some in the long term, but it does nothing to fix the issues that we face in the short term, and that's a lost opportunity, in my opinion. Obviously, this bill is a reaction to some of the things that are happening on the ground. Certainly, it is the government's prerogative to move quickly to address something, but is this really it? Is it worth addressing something without doing all of the work that is required before you introduce a piece of legislation that has the potential to create more problems than it solves?

My question, as always, to the government members, to the Premier is: who did you consult? Really, who did you consult? When did you consult them? What did you learn from that consultation? Now, I'm getting some funny looks from the other side. I don't know why because it seems to me like consultation is a pretty straightforward step when you're going to introduce a law that has the ability to either solve problems or create problems. I would think that the members sitting opposite would be humble enough to know that they are not experts in all things and should actually consult. I would like to know that. I hope that at some point the government will stand up and talk to us a little bit about that consultation. Consultation with law enforcement: did that happen? Consultation with municipal leaders: did that happen? It impacts law enforcement. There are a lot of questions about this legislation. I'm sure we will get into the specifics of that, and I'm sure we will see amendments that look to correct some of the things that are in this legislation or some of the things that are missing or some of the things that don't need to be there.

I would like to echo some of the thoughts from my colleagues on this side of the House. I'm not going to speak for the other side because I'm not party to your discussions. We respect treaty rights, and I'm going to assume that this government does the same. So going back to my original comment about consultation, what consultation did you do with indigenous communities to ensure that their voices are heard and their rights are respected? That's really, really important.

I think that what we see reported in the news and what we see on television, what we read in the paper, what we hear on the radio is that there is a struggle right now and that there is a lot of division. I don't know about you all, but I've always been taught and believed

that the best way to approach a situation like this is by speaking to each other, by consulting, by talking to each other, by finding out: "What is the problem? What is your position? This is our position. Here's our goal. What's your goal? How do we get there? How do we get there with the least amount of harm?" That seems to be an initial step that this government hasn't been really successful in. I would encourage the government to maybe stop and think about what are some of the things that need to happen to make sure that you mitigate the risk that this legislation will introduce and to really think about what it is that you could learn from people that have different ideas than you do, that see the world in a different way than you do.

It's not easy. I get it. I mean, I would applaud the government, Madam Speaker, for recently saying that they're not climate change deniers. I'm super happy about that, that they've publicly come out and said: "We believe the science. We believe this is a problem." That is a great first step, but now you need the other steps to follow. A piece of legislation like this without consultation, without careful thought about some possible unintended consequences has the ability to create a lot of division. I would encourage the government to do that.

Now, I just wanted to address a couple of points not so much in the wording of the legislation, because I didn't really allow for that, but in some of the speaking or talking points related to this legislation. Of course, the government members, or government, seem to be quite willing to stand up and say that these protests that we're trying to quash and prevent – and I don't know that, you know, more fines and jail time are going to prevent. I mean, that's a whole other discussion about that, but we'll leave that for another day. The government is saying that these protests were the reasons that a recent huge project, that I think we were all sort of holding our breath about, which was Teck, was cancelled.

Now, I don't know about you all, but I think it was on Sunday night that the Teck CEO – and I don't recall his name right now, and I can certainly table that letter later today – was very, very, very clear about why that organization, why that company was not proceeding. You know what they didn't say? What you're saying, what the government is saying, Madam Speaker. They didn't say that we need more legislation, higher fines, more jail time for anybody that engages in this kind of behaviour.

Do I acknowledge that the protests are creating a lot of stress for a lot of people and have the potential to impact our economy? Yes. I do agree that there are some problems here, but I do not agree that that's why this project was cancelled, and I do not agree that the first step that a government should take is to put earplugs in your ears and say: well, that's it; we're just going to fine you more money and put you in jail if you do this. That is a tool, but you don't use that first. You speak to people, you consult, and you find a middle ground: that's your job.

Back to Teck, I think it's incredibly irresponsible for the government to point fingers and on the same evening that Teck released the letter saying exactly why. It was directly related to this government's move to get rid of the climate leadership plan, all of the things that were in that plan, that created social licence, that this government, opposite members, mocked – mocked – for years. Now, it turns out that maybe you shouldn't have mocked it, anyway, because climate change is a reality.

I know that the government believes climate change is a reality and that it will be the single most pressing challenge but also opportunity that this province faces. It impacts every aspect of our lives. So to introduce a bill that seeks to divide as opposed to bring all Albertans together, every sector, bring them together and say, "Look, here's the goal; we all want our economy to do well; we want to be successful; we want to move our products; we want our

communities to be strong; we don't want 50,000 more people out of work; we want to address this problem; and we will consult" – but, no, this government chose not to do that but to introduce legislation to use a bigger hammer. That's not how you do it. That's how you divide people. If that's your goal, great.

I don't think that's a correct goal, not in the face of the challenges that we have in front of us, challenges and – again I'm going to say this – opportunities. We have great opportunities to address a changing global economy, changing needs. I mean, every single day – I'm sure members opposite read the paper, listen to radio. I'm sure you don't just pay attention to Rebel media for your news. You must look at other sources, and the sources are telling us that there is a problem. There's a big problem.

Let's talk a little bit about, I know, probably one of the favourite topics of the government, climate change. I think it's really important. Madam Speaker, I will table this article later today. I thought it was really important because a lot of the messaging around Bill 1 from government members really seemed to focus on: we're doing this so that a decision like Teck never happens again. I mean, okay, if that's where you're going to go.

10:50

But this government has been called out, Madam Speaker, for the numbers that they are using, that don't actually match up. Our provincial numbers under this government do not match up with the federal numbers. Now, I'm not saying that one is incorrect, one is not correct, because I am not a scientist. I am not the one that calculates those numbers, so of course, like most Albertans, I have to rely on experts. But here is some of the information that has come to light. This is from an article, and I will table it, as I said. This is from February 9, 2020, and it says:

There is a 20-megatonne gap between what Alberta and Ottawa say are the emissions from the oil sands, meaning that the energy sector is either swiftly approaching a provincially legislated emissions limit or there is ample room to grow before companies need to seriously curtail greenhouse gasses.

Now, the article goes on and talks quite a bit about what our Premier's position is on where we are in relation to the 100-megatonne cap, and then the federal government is saying that, no, those numbers aren't quite matching up. Federal findings suggest that the province is rapidly nearing the cut-off, but the Premier has used his lower number to justify approval of the Teck mine resource project, which is fine, but let's actually get to the facts.

Again, instead of introducing legislation that ignores the very basics of the problem – where are we, where do we need to go, and what do we need to get there? – instead of having that dialogue and consultation and bringing in the experts, they're introducing a bill that seeks to divide and point fingers at different groups that are protesting. Now, we can talk about whether or not law enforcement need additional tools, and I'm sure that debate will happen in the coming days, but I think this government needs to step back a little bit and present some facts other than: bad protestors; let's bring in the police; they're the world's problems.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise under Standing Order 29(2)(a) and respond to the comments made by the Member for St. Albert. You know, I am struck by her comments in that she says that this is not a forward-looking plan. That and the lack of consultation, I think, were the main themes of her conversation, when her government were the queens and kings of lack of consultation on I'm thinking of something called Bill 6. So I don't really think they have a leg to

stand on in providing clarity and criticism when it comes to consultation. I'd just like to start there.

As far as this not being a forward-looking plan that seeks to divide, well, a backward-looking plan would be to sit in this Chamber and act like problems that are happening in our province are not happening right now. We have illegal protestors and thugs and green zealots out on the rail lines protesting critical infrastructure. We have an obligation as a government to act. If that's not a forward-looking plan, I don't know what is.

As far as who was consulted, I don't know if the opposition would rather have had us consult Extinction Rebellion before we came and brought this bill forward, but I can tell you right now that that's not something that I would be willing to do, Madam Speaker. I agree that, you know, we have a right to hold our opinion, but that does not in fact make your opinion correct, just because you hold it. Now, I know that's something that the members of the opposition have a hard time with, but we as a government do not believe that groups like Extinction Rebellion who want to block critical infrastructure projects and erode the rule of law in Canada should be allowed to do so on Alberta soil.

Now, she also talked about treaty rights, which is something that I think is extremely important, and of course reconciliation is something that our government has taken a concerted effort towards. We know that it's very important to observe treaty rights and have a great relationship with our First Nations brothers and sisters and indigenous communities in Alberta, which is why the Minister of Indigenous Relations has made every effort possible to include First Nations in the discussions around resource development.

Now, I just wanted to allude to something that I saw – and I can't remember exactly where it was, but it referred to the government of Alberta's fresh, positive approach to reconciliation. I've also seen other articles that have been commending the government of Alberta and talking about meaningful tools for reconciliation by acknowledging treaty rights through responsible resource development. Now, by allowing foreign-funded groups to stand on rail lines and protest these strides and commitments that First Nations groups have made, that is ultimately undermining their prosperity: how is that forward-thinking? That is what seeks to divide this province, Madam Speaker. That action, action that is clearly supported, I would assume, by the members opposite, is not forward thinking.

Now, we're talking about scaring away investment, and the members opposite would like to not acknowledge that their failed action plan on climate change was unsuccessful. Our government knows that by taxing everyday Albertans, you're not getting anywhere ahead. In fact, the Alberta Court of Appeal also agreed with our government by saying in a 4 to 1 decision that the carbon tax of the federal Liberals is unconstitutional. We know that we need to take meaningful action to improve our environment, and that's why the hon. environment minister tabled the TIER legislation just this past session. This is real, actual, tangible action to reduce emissions in our province while not stifling the industry that makes our province successful and grow, Madam Speaker.

You know, I saw a quote from Tristan Goodman from, indeed, the Explorers and Producers Association saying that the cancellation of major projects is a problem that reverberates outside the country. So if we are sitting in this House today and honestly saying or trying to say, because of political grandstanding and theatre, that these decisions do not scare off investment and that blockades and illegal protests and failing to enforce the rule of law are not scaring away investors, I have a problem with that, Madam Speaker.

I have constituents in my riding who rely on getting their farm fuel from places like Carseland or on bringing in things by rail, and they need access to world markets. These are our agricultural

producers, who work so hard to feed Albertans and people around the world every day. Now, if they don't have the opportunity to get their resources to world markets, they cannot do their job.

When the member opposite talks about people coming to her office and saying that they can't find work, you know, I sympathize with her because I have people coming to my office and saying the same thing. I also worked in the constituency office of the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat for the last four years and heard the same thing there.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to speak to Bill 1. I'm voting yes for it. I just want that clear for the record.

With that said, though, Madam Speaker, I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill 1.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to move the following. Actually – sorry – I would like to say the following. Pursuant to Standing Order 3(1.2) I wish to advise the Assembly that there shall be no morning sitting for the following day, Thursday, February 27, 2020.

With that said, Madam Speaker, I'd like to move that we adjourn the Assembly until this afternoon at 1:30.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:59 a.m.]

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Alberta Hansard is available online at www.assembly.ab.ca

For inquiries contact:

Editor

Alberta Hansard

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875