



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, 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

Aheer, Hon. Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UCP)  
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),  
Official Opposition Whip  
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP),  
Government Whip  
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)  
Fir, Hon. Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UCP)  
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)  
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader  
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UCP)  
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)  
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader  
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)  
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),  
Premier  
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),  
Leader of the Official Opposition  
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)  
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UCP)  
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

#### Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Shannon Dean, Clerk	Philip Massolin, Clerk of Committees and	Amanda LeBlanc, Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta</i>
Teri Cherkewich, Law Clerk	Research Services	<i>Hansard</i>
Stephanie LeBlanc, Clerk Assistant and	Nancy Robert, Research Officer	Chris Caughell, Sergeant-at-Arms
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Janet Schwegel, Director of Parliamentary	Tom Bell, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Trafton Koenig, Parliamentary Counsel	Programs	Paul Link, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms

### **Executive Council**

Jason Kenney	Premier, President of Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Relations
Leela Aheer	Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women
Jason Copping	Minister of Labour and Immigration
Devin Dreeshen	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Tanya Fir	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism
Nate Glubish	Minister of Service Alberta
Grant Hunter	Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction
Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Education
Jason Luan	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Kaycee Madu	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Ric McIver	Minister of Transportation
Dale Nally	Associate Minister of Natural Gas
Demetrios Nicolaides	Minister of Advanced Education
Jason Nixon	Minister of Environment and Parks
Prasad Panda	Minister of Infrastructure
Josephine Pon	Minister of Seniors and Housing
Sonya Savage	Minister of Energy
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Community and Social Services
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Children's Services
Doug Schweitzer	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Tyler Shandro	Minister of Health
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

### **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  
Walker

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

Chair: Mr. Cooper  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Ellis

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  
Sabir  
Singh  
Smith  
Yaseen

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

[The Speaker in the chair]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, please be seated.

### Statement by the Speaker Amendments to Standing Orders

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, prior to the Introduction of Guests today, I want to bring to your attention that you'll find green sheets showing some amendments made to the standing orders by Government Motion 6, that took place this morning in the Assembly. Replacement pages for your Standing Orders, which I'm sure is all of your favourite reading, are being prepared and will be distributed in the coming weeks.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, guests visiting us today, we have a number of school groups, three of them to be exact. Please rise as I call your school. From the constituency of Edmonton-McClung please welcome grade 6 students from Lymburn elementary; from Edmonton-Glenora, grade 6 students from Edmonton Christian West; and from Edmonton-Rutherford, Stanis school . . .

**Mr. Feehan:** It's Stanislaus.

**The Speaker:** Yeah. What the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford said.

Please welcome the students.

Hon. members, I also have a very, very special introduction. Before we proceed to that, I would like to officially congratulate Chris Caughell as our new Sergeant-at-Arms for the Legislative Assembly: his exceptional leadership skills, security expertise, and background with the LAO. I know that I'm speaking for everyone. We are very excited to have you in the permanent role as the Sergeant-at-Arms and, I might add, the ninth Sergeant-at-Arms in the province of Alberta. Welcome.

But perhaps more importantly than that is that Chris's family is joining us here today, and I encourage you to rise as I call each and every one of you: his daughter Michelle Caughell and her partner, Kelly Haggstrom; daughter Tricia, her husband, Devin, and their daughters Ruth and Abigail; daughter Kristine, her husband, Tyler, and their kids Jake and Mia; daughter Alyssa, her husband, Kevin, and their son Troy; and Chris's son Robert Caughell. It's an absolute pleasure to have you all joining us here today. We hope you enjoy seeing your dad and granddad in his finest form. Welcome to the Assembly.

Also in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon are very special guests of the Member for Highwood. He paid me to say that because it's his wife, Leanne Sigurdson, and their good friend Angie Clarke.

Also visiting today: guest of the Minister of Service Alberta Brenda Neville.

Welcome, all, to the Assembly.

### Ministerial Statements

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

## Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the Legislative Assembly at the first available opportunity to express our sorrow and solidarity for those families that face the tragedy of flight PS752. Albertans learned of the news of Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 with shock and heartbreak. As soon as we heard of the tragedy, so too did we hear of the tremendous loss to our own Alberta family. We remain united in our grief for those who tragically lost their lives, and as a province, as a community we are here for all of those who must live with this profound heartbreak as they piece together a new normal in their lives.

Those families that were shattered in an instant in this unexplainable act of violence remain in our hearts and our minds as we reflect on the magnitude of their loss: so many innocents, with so much more to contribute to our country, now gone, leaving inconsolable pain in the hearts of their loved ones and a deep well of sadness and loss shared by all who knew them. Their personal stories collectively speak of the best and brightest in our community: dedicated educators, successful professionals, gifted students, and loving couples, parents, and children.

Many who live here in Alberta often refer to it as a small town because of the interconnectedness of its communities. Many of the Albertans that were lost were part of a really tight-knit community that exists within the heart of our large cities, with more than a million people; across our province, four times that size.

For Alberta's Persian community the tragic impact of this disaster cannot be overstated. The togetherness of their community helped new families establish roots here and provided support for the less fortunate and taught, loved, and lived here. Indeed, part of the heartbreak comes from the shared purpose that so many had being on that doomed flight, returning from a wedding and celebrating that togetherness for which they are known.

There are more than 14,000 Canadians of Iranian descent living in Alberta today. It is startling how many can cite a direct or indirect connection to the victims. This devastating incident had a profound impact on the whole of our province but especially here in Edmonton, our capital city. A disproportionate number of those who lost their lives call this city home, and now this city bears that disproportionate loss. It is all the more tragic that the Iranian-Canadian victims aboard flight PS752, having known the peace and security of living here, were claimed by violence during a visit to their homeland.

Incidents like this remind us how precious and how fragile our peaceful and pluralistic society is and how unbelievably lucky we all are to call it home. As we grieve for the enormous losses to our community, we should take solace at what we have achieved in Alberta – our diversity, our civility and compassion for each other – and celebrate what we have built together as Canadians. We should resolve to remember the people that we lost as exemplars of these Canadian virtues and to tell the world of the irreplaceable loss that stems from another act of senseless violence.

On behalf of the government and the people of Alberta I wish to express condolences and to pay homage to the victims of flight PS752 and the families and friends. The road ahead of us is not easy. The journey through this grief is unimaginable to bear alone, but please understand this: for all of those living in the shadow of this catastrophe, you are not walking this road alone. An entire province stands with you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and God rest their innocent souls.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview to respond.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to honour and remember the victims of a terrible tragedy. On January 8, 63 Canadians were killed when flight PS752 was shot down shortly after takeoff in Iran. The investigation into the crash is ongoing, and I hope investigators get the answers that can provide at least some closure to the families of those who perished in the crash.

Alberta's Iranian-Canadian community suffered a devastating loss, and it has touched all of us. The lives taken belong to our families, our neighbours, and our friends. The sudden loss of these members of our community has left a trail of heartbroken family members, classmates, and colleagues. My constituency of Edmonton-Riverview is home to the University of Alberta, who lost 10 members of their campus community. Thousands of Albertans came together at the university to remember the victims and to extend their support to those grieving. I was honoured and grateful to be among them. This past Saturday a memorial was held at Edmonton city hall, organized by the Iranian Heritage Society of Edmonton. The memorial paid tribute to the members of our community who perished in the crash.

I'm proud of Albertans who united to mourn and to support each other in the days and weeks after the crash, but the impact of this tragedy will be felt in our country for many years to come. This year Western Canada high school in Calgary will be a graduate short. The University of Alberta is mourning scholars, classmates, and leaders whose careers and contributions have been tragically cut short. Across the province many families are grieving children whose laughter no longer brightens our days. Next month, as Iranian-Canadians prepare to celebrate Nowruz, many will mourn again for those who cannot join them for the coming new year.

On behalf of our caucus I extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. You are not alone. Albertans are here for you, and we will continue to support you.

1:40

### Members' Statements

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

### Private Members of the Legislative Assembly

**Mr. Toor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe all the members in this House have worked hard, demonstrated exemplary leadership skills, a passion for public service and helping people. For some of us it might have been a lifelong dream. Most of us spent countless hours at the doors, on phones, and at events in order to take our place inside this Chamber. Becoming an elected member is no small feat, and even if we disagree with other views, we should expect all to be treated with the basic amount of respect, dignity, especially by other MLAs.

This is why I was shocked when I heard the Member for Calgary-McCall insult the intelligence and importance of private members on a radio talk show recently. No one here became an MLA to sabotage our province. We all have Albertans' best interests in mind, even if we take different paths to achieve these goals. Everyone in this House plays an important role, and downplaying the contributions and efforts of other MLAs is a behaviour you would expect on an elementary school playground, not in the most important building of this province. Private members pass along constituency-specific viewpoints and resolve issues that only a local representative might know about. They also vote on bills and motions and debate issues in a way that represents their specific riding's views. Without private members, a party could not hold government and democracy would not exist.

Regardless of our political views, our party loyalty, our personal opinions, elected members are expected to set the bar for professional conduct, not lower themselves into the mud of ignorant comments, as the Member for Calgary-McCall did. I would urge the member to keep in mind why we're all here, to serve the best interests of constituents with respect, dignity, and honour.

Thank you.

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

### Support for Postsecondary Students

**Mr. Eggen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we stand in this Chamber on Pink Shirt Day, I'm reminded of the need to not only address bullying and the toll that it takes on everyone who experiences it but also to make sure that we have supports in place for those who are struggling. Quite frankly, I'm very concerned about supports for Alberta's postsecondary students.

Over these past few months I've been meeting with students and leaders across this province to talk about what they've been experiencing. Mr. Speaker, students are stressed. Students are worried. Students are struggling. They're dealing with massive tuition increases, increased interest on student loans, operational and capital cuts to their institutions, cancellation of the STEP program, uncertainty around scholarships and bursaries, fears around the impact of performance-based funding, and much, much more. Overarching all of this, again and again I heard these stresses and fears affecting mental health on campus.

During our time in government we knew that providing actual funding and supports for campus mental health is critical. We allocated \$25.8 million for three years in a framework that would be expiring this month. To date this government has not committed to the stability of ongoing supports for students.

With the unprecedented costs and stresses being downloaded onto students' shoulders to pay a \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway, taking away their certainty and security of being able to access essential mental health supports and the tools they need to cope with that stress, I believe, is deplorable. Postsecondary education is the single greatest tool that we have to create the leaders of tomorrow and to ensure the success of our province, but if we continue to put up barriers to entrance, accessibility, affordability, and the supports that students need on campuses, we are compromising everyone's future in this process.

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Member for Grande Prairie.

### Pink Shirt Day

**Mrs. Allard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today sporting a pink shirt to highlight the issue of bullying. Bullying continues to be a problem in our world today in classrooms and workplaces, and unfortunately, it can even follow us home through online bullying.

Celebrated around the world, Pink Shirt Day began in 2007, when two students, David Shepherd and Travis Price, took a stand against bullying after a young grade 9 boy was harassed and threatened for wearing a pink shirt on the first day of school. The next day David and Travis distributed pink shirts to boys in their school and sent the clear message to the bullied student that he was not alone. This act of kindness started a movement that is now known as Pink Shirt Day, and these young students helped inspire others to stand up to bullying.

Pink Shirt Day continues to grow every single year, with participants working together to raise awareness and eliminate bullying from their communities. We know that it is important to

foster strong and healthy relationships within our society. Pink Shirt Day is one opportunity to publicly stand for community kindness and support. Together through this simple act we celebrate diversity and promote positive social relationships and inclusion.

I am honoured to rise today, Mr. Speaker, in my pink shirt along with many other members in this House to stand in support of this movement and to encourage Albertans to join us against bullying today and every day. I encourage you all to spread this message about bullying prevention. Getting involved is easy: wear your pink shirt and share it on social media with the #pinkshirtday and #wheretoturn hashtags to raise further awareness.

The theme for this year's Pink Shirt Day is Lift Each Other Up, a simple but powerful message encouraging us to look beyond our differences and celebrate the things that make us unique. When we lift each other up, we see past the things that separate us and see instead the things that unite us as people. I think that we can start that in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

### Opioid Addiction

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I read a letter from a group of Albertans who have been impacted by addiction.

We lost our son, brother, and partner a little over four years ago to a fentanyl overdose.

Nathan was a guy with a formidable intelligence, good looks, a loving family, and an amazing partner. Yet none of these things mattered when it came to addiction. We watched with a feeling of helplessness as he struggled with his addiction and sank farther away into a world that we couldn't reach.

Over the year and a half before Nathan died, we came to realize that the available community supports were neither sufficient nor appropriate for dealing with opioid addiction. Nathan's six-week stint in a rehab facility was ineffective and too short. The stigma he felt was huge, particularly when he overdosed just a couple of weeks after getting out of rehab. His embarrassment was palpable and heart-wrenching.

After Nathan's death we decided to start Change the Face of Addiction, an organization that advocates for evidence-based policy change. We felt strongly that something needed to be done to change the system. If there was anything we could do to prevent more deaths, to ensure that other families didn't have to go through what we and so many other families have gone through with the death of their loved ones, we wanted to do that work.

We were so pleased to have supervised consumption sites approved in Alberta. They are an important link in a larger system of care and have certainly saved many, many lives. They also provide important links to other services so that those suffering can access addiction counselling, mental health workers, adequate housing, and, of course, rehabilitation centres.

One of the things we realize about Nathan's journey into a downward spiral is that he was losing his community connections. Community is so important for all of us and even more so for someone dealing with substance use issues. As Johann Hari says in his seminal book *Chasing the Scream*: the opposite of addiction is not sobriety; it is human connection.

We are here to advocate for better policies for those impacted by substance use disorders.

We are here to advocate for evidence-based treatment, for community connections.

We are here to advocate for even more supervised consumption sites in Alberta.

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition has the call.

### Job Creation

**Ms Notley:** A blueprint for jobs: the throne speech certainly contained the word "jobs," Mr. Speaker, but, not surprisingly, it didn't include one single program to create them. It was less of a blueprint and more like those fliers selling time-shares in Florida swampland. The truth is that Alberta has lost 50,000 full-time jobs since this Premier's \$4.7 billion corporate handout. These are Albertans who are struggling to make ends meet. Why won't the Premier admit that his plan is failing them?

1:50

**Mr. Kenney:** First, Mr. Speaker, I welcome all members back to the spring session, and I invite all members to be focused on job number one, which is getting this province back to work.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans understand that far too many are out of work after the four-year-long NDP jobs crisis, and we're doing everything we can to restore growth. That's why banks and think tanks, economists all project that Alberta will lead Canada in growth this year. The Petroleum Producers have said that as a result of our job creation tax cut there will be billions of new investment. CNRL is spending a quarter of a billion on new wells. But raising taxes on everything, which is what the NDP wants to do, would kill jobs.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that he's obsessed with job creation, but I really think he should go get a new hobby because he's really bad at that one: 19,000 jobs gone last month alone, and this year Canada's big banks are projecting 17,000 fewer jobs than this Premier promised just four months ago, and that's the best case scenario. After the election the Premier claimed that his very presence would bring back jobs. Didn't he really mean to say that his very presence would drive them away?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to tomorrow's budget and the forthcoming blueprint for jobs, which will focus on our vigorous efforts to restore the investor confidence that was so deeply impaired by the NDP. But we should all grant that we continue to live through a time of economic adversity. What is the NDP's response? They actually are insisting that we raise taxes on job creators, they want us to raise income taxes – that was in their so-called shadow budget – and even after we won in defeating the federal carbon tax, they want us to reimpose an Alberta carbon tax.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, sooner or later this Premier is going to run out of other people to blame.

Let's be clear. He promised 215,000 jobs in the next four years, but so far he's lost 50,000 in six months. That puts him at a full 265,000 jobs off target with no plan in sight. Meanwhile investor tax credits, gone; digital media supports, gone; partial upgrading, gone. When will this job-killing Premier start doing his job? Albertans are desperate to know.

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I know that the socialists on the other side of the House want to cheer on the enemies of this province that have been trying to land-lock us. They even want to bring the Extinction Rebellion into our classrooms. We just won an historic victory on the job-killing carbon tax, and what does the NDP want us to do? To impose an Alberta carbon tax. Could the Leader of the Opposition tell us: during a time of economic fragility when too

many people are out of work, how would we create jobs by raising taxes on job creators? That's the NDP policy.

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Ms Notley:** Blaming everyone else.

### Climate Change Strategy and Investment in Alberta

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, you know, it was bad news for Alberta jobs when Teck withdrew its application, but contrary to this Premier's wild claims, their reasons are in writing. Investors need "jurisdictions to have a framework in place that reconciles resource development and climate change . . . this does not yet exist here." Why won't this Premier admit his overheated hostility to environmental science, his lack of real action on climate change, and his irresponsible rhetoric, like we just heard, cost Albertans over 7,000 jobs?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am so proud of the work of this government to ensure full indigenous support for the Teck Frontier mine, something the NDP did nothing about. Thanks to the work of the Minister of Indigenous Relations, minister of the environment we had unqualified agreements from the local First Nations to support that project, which the NDP has cheered against. You know, they support Extinction Rebellion. They have MLAs out there at rallies sponsored by Extinction Rebellion . . .

**Ms Sweet:** Point of order.

**Mr. Kenney:** . . . to oppose the Teck mine and every project while we moved heaven and earth to get that done.

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Official Opposition. This is the first supplemental of your second question.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, none of the things that that Premier just said are true.

And it's not just Teck, however, making that case that I just outlined from reading a letter that was in black and white. The Calgary Chamber says, "We can and we must be able to lead in natural resource development and solve climate change through innovation . . . We need real, decisive action on climate change, with tangible outcomes and conviction." Mr. Speaker, everyone but this Premier can see that his fake-it-till-you-make-it climate plan is failing Albertans and leaving them behind. Why can't he?

**The Speaker:** A point of order noted. Is that what you're asking for? Got it.

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, this government imposed, to keep our platform commitment, the technology innovation and emissions reduction program that will help to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Alberta by an estimated 57 megatonnes. This government has been trying to get an equivalency agreement with the government of Canada on methane regulations that would be even more rigorous than their regulations but at a lower cost to our economy. This government has demonstrated its willingness to work with indigenous people and the government of Canada on habitat protection for caribou and for bison. This government is showing real action on these issues. All the NDP wants to do is to tax.

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, you know, the Calgary Chamber of commerce also said, "The rhetoric by political leaders," i.e. this Premier, "is severely hindering any future progress . . . More anger and louder voices are not in the best interest of our citizens." How

did the UCP respond? Their executive director accused the chamber of, quote, stroking their own vanity with downtown elites. When will this government realize that attacking everyone that disagrees with them is not a job-creation strategy and in many cases loses jobs, 7,000?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, Teck was very clear, both publicly and to me privately, that the environment of rail blockages in Canada has created a situation that is unfriendly to any investment in this country. You know who's blocking those rails? In part a group called Extinction Rebellion, which has been endorsed by the NDP as a group that should be presenting to children in Alberta classrooms. This is a group who sponsored a rally attended by half the NDP caucus, the same group that's blocking railways and roadways in this country. They'll face tough fines.

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Family Physician Compensation

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't bad enough that this Premier is firing thousands of registered nurses, he's now attacking family doctors just to pay for his \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout. The AMA says that the Premier is putting patients at risk, but instead of negotiating, he's daring doctors to leave. Well, news flash: they are. Family doctors in Canmore are already packing up, leaving thousands of people with no doctor. To this Premier. He promised Albertans he would not attack front-line services. Why is he breaking this promise?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I see that the campaign of division and deception just carries on. The NDP will not be bothered by the facts. There's no \$4.5 billion giveaway, subsidy, tax cut. In this year's fiscal plan the job-creation tax cut represents \$200 million in forgone revenue as multiple independent economists have confirmed. With respect to physicians, last year physician compensation was \$5.4 billion. Under what we are proposing, next year physician compensation will be \$5.4 billion, the highest level in Canada and the highest level in our history.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this Premier is costing families their actual doctor, the only one in town in some places. You know what happens when people don't have a doctor? They get sicker, they end up in hospitals, and costs go even higher. The Premier is not saving money. He's dismantling our health care system. Why won't this Premier stop the attack on Albertans' health care?

**Mr. Kenney:** Why won't the opposition leader stop scaring people irresponsibly? This government is spending more on health care than the NDP did. This government is spending more on health care than any Alberta government in history has. This government is spending more per capita on health care than any province in Canada. This government is compensating physicians at record levels. This government is compensating physicians at, in some cases, a hundred thousand dollars a year more than comparable physicians in other provinces. Within that budget we must control our expenses, and we ask our physicians to be partners in that.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, here's what doctors have to say. Dr. Vishal Varshney says that this Premier is putting "these patients at huge risk." Dr. Marsha Kucera says, "This will put strain and increased costs on our system." Dr. Jill Konkin says, "We can't afford to lose our next generation of #rural physicians." Dr. Donovan Nunweiler says that it will result in worse outcomes for patients. Dr. Fiona Mattatall says, "The repercussions . . . will last



a generation.” To the Premier: who should Albertans trust, him with his record of constant misinformation, or their family doctor? Don’t bother; don’t answer. We know the answer. [interjections]

2:00

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier has the call.

**Mr. Kenney:** Yeah. Mr. Speaker, there you just saw the performance that landed that leader as the first Premier in history to be fired by Alberta voters: the incivility, the deception, and the division. You know what people should trust? The numbers. The numbers tell the story: \$22 billion in expenditures on . . . [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. I heard the question very clearly. I have the opportunity to hear the answer as well. The Premier is the one with the call.

**Mr. Kenney:** They can’t even get through their first question period without shouting and trying to bring disorder to this place because they respect Albertans so little. We, however . . .

**Ms Sweet:** Point of order.

**Mr. Kenney:** . . . are prioritizing health spending, \$22 billion this year, a record high. Physician compensation: \$5.4 billion, a record high. If that’s bad, then why did the NDP spend less on these things, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at 2:01 by the Opposition House Leader.

Now the Member for Lethbridge-West has the call.

### Energy Policies

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you. Albertans, Mr. Speaker, were pretty startled to hear the Premier’s plan for a new state-owned oil company in the throne speech. No one was more startled, as it turns out, than the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat. The former Finance and Energy critic went on a social media spree last night, arguing that Lougheed-era projects touted by the Premier cost Albertans billions of dollars. Who should the people of Medicine Hat listen to about state-owned oil companies, their UCP MLA or the UCP Premier?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, this government will defend Alberta’s energy industry. This government will defend the high-value asset that Albertans own today. We recognize that the energy industry has great challenge out there in today’s environment partly because of misinformation that has been circulating. Alberta has the most environmentally responsible energy industry in the world, and this government will support it.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, Mr. Speaker, a note for the Finance minister: the call is coming from inside the house. This Premier’s so-called jobs plan has actually lost 50,000 full-time jobs, and this Premier’s economic plan has led all the big banks to downgrade their forecasts for Alberta, and this Premier has come home empty-handed from every single one of his international junkets to seek investment. Isn’t the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat quite right to be skeptical of the Premier’s belief that he can outsmart global capital markets?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, we remain confident in our plan to improve the business environment in this province and turn the tide on investment that the members opposite chased out of the province and with it tens of thousands of jobs. We remain confident that our

plan will return investment and with it jobs and activity. This will take some time. We remain committed to it. We’re confident that we are on solid ground.

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier has apparently ruled out any involvement in his new state-owned oil company from the investment professionals at AIMCo. I’m quite relieved he won’t be meddling in AIMCo, and I imagine that AIMCo is pretty relieved, too. But his government does already have a record of no-bid contracts for the Premier’s friends inside less than a year, so shouldn’t the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat also be worried that this announcement will be a way to funnel his constituents’ tax dollars into pet projects of the Premier’s friends?

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** I know without a doubt that the people of Cypress-Medicine Hat, what they do not like was the NDP government, who brought in the largest deficit in the history of the province, who brought in the largest job loss in the history of the province, who messed with our electoral system at every chance they got. What the good people of Cypress-Medicine Hat said loud and clear when they sent their hon. member to this House was: come here, defend the system, defend our province, get this province back on track. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, through you to them, that we will get this province back on track, we will balance the budget, and we will reject all of the NDP policies. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, order.

### Skilled Trades

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Mr. Speaker, following yesterday’s Speech from the Throne the Member for Edmonton-South expressed his outrage at the notion that young Albertans might pursue careers in trades instead of following the outdated advice that the only acceptable option for youth is an academic degree. To the Minister of Advanced Education: could you enlighten the opposition and this House as to why this disregard for the trades is offensive to many young Albertans? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Minister of Advanced Education is the one with the call.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn’t agree more. The comments that the member made are completely reprehensible. In fact, it’s comments like those that cause people to denigrate the trades and look down on apprenticeship learning. That’s the view that they have. But I can be really clear. On this side of the House we believe that a trades certificate has the same value, merit, and worth as a university degree. In fact, we need more young people to pursue apprenticeship learning, which is why we have developed a robust skills for jobs agenda to encourage more people to pursue apprenticeship learning. They don’t believe that that’s a viable pathway, but we do.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Given, Mr. Speaker, that I myself am a journeyman tradesperson who knows the opportunities available in the trades and given that too often young Albertans are not well informed of the kinds of economic opportunities that can be obtained through the pursuit of a trades certificate, can the minister please tell the House about the kinds of opportunities available to those who want to pursue experiential learning and how these skills are in demand in the 21st-century economy?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Advanced Education.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, work-integrated learning and other experiential learning initiatives are incredibly important when we talk about postsecondary education. In terms of helping set our students up and our graduates up for success once they finish, there are a number of opportunities in many different curriculums within the postsecondary world as well as other initiatives, primarily those of Women Building Futures and Careers: the Next Generation. With respect to Women Building Futures it's an incredible organization that helps to encourage more women to enter the skilled trades, just like Cecile Bukmeier.

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Given, Mr. Speaker, that we need more tradespeople to build and grow our economy and given that the opposition seems to not be fully informed on this issue and given that the members opposite claim to support tradespeople but did nothing to support them, can the minister please tell the House what our government is doing to make the trades more accessible and encourage young Albertans to pursue the valuable careers that they offer? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Almost difficult to hear the question that time. I know it's surprising.

The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

**Mr. Nicolaides:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Indeed, our government has implemented a number of initiatives to encourage more individuals and young Albertans to pursue apprenticeship learning. We've invested over \$10 million in Careers: the Next Generation to quadruple the number of students that participate in the registered apprenticeship program. We've provided \$10 million as well to Women Building Futures to help encourage more women to enter industries and professions in which they are underrepresented. Again, we believe in the value and importance of apprenticeship learning, and we'll help ensure that our students have those pathways.

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

### Education Funding

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a simple question for the Minister of Education. We seem to be having a hard time getting facts out of this minister in this House or in press conferences. But it's a new year, so let's try turning a new page in this place and start with some transparency and honesty. Yes or no, if you please: does the Minister of Education acknowledge that in the current fiscal year, under her leadership, schools saw a net reduction in their funding of \$136 million?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. I can absolutely acknowledge that our government has maintained record spending in education. We are committed to providing a world-class, high-quality education for our children. That starts with more money being directed to the classroom.

Thank you.

**Ms Hoffman:** Given that words and numbers used to mean something in this place, Mr. Speaker, and given that the cuts to education funding are why Edmonton public schools has cut five days of instruction from their calendar and given that this puts more stress on parents trying to find child care and drives up costs for

their families and given that this means our students here in Edmonton will have fewer days in the classroom, to the minister: will you finally admit that your cuts are harming the education that our students deserve and creating tons of grief for their parents?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Education.

2:10

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Under this new model that we have brought forward, I can absolutely assure everyone that Alberta will continue to have one of the best funded education systems in the country. I can quote Mary Martin from the Calgary Catholic school district, who said:

The reduction of red tape afforded by the new model will help reduce the complexity and workload involved in providing extensive and repetitious data, which in turn, will allow our teachers to focus on what is most important – our students.

**Ms Hoffman:** Given that the Premier said that we could trust him with education and given that the Minister of Finance said that new students would get new funding – Alberta parents thought that meant that 15,000 more kids would mean more funding – but given that there was no new funding, that there was actually \$136 million cut, as documents released by the minister's own department in black and white prove, why won't the minister set the record straight? Did she ignore her Premier and decide to cut the funding unilaterally, or did her Premier direct her to do it?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. I categorically disagree with that statement, and I can absolutely assure parents that under this new model we will be providing a world-class, high-quality education. I want to quote John Lehnars from Grande Prairie public school division, who says, "The increased flexibility afforded by this new funding model will help us to better allocate resources to address the unique needs of our students." We're meeting the needs of every single student in this province. I'm happy to say that our new model is going to be well received by everyone. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

### Municipal Funding

**Member Ceci:** This government gave a \$4.7 billion handout to profitable corporations and is forcing families across Alberta to pay for it. We're all paying more in income taxes thanks to this government, but the minister is also forcing municipalities to do his dirty work by compelling them to raise property taxes to maintain their existing services. These tax hikes are the most painful in rural areas. Why is this minister taking money away from rural families to pay for his no-jobs corporate handout?

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

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me be clear. We have provided the highest level of funding, compared to comparable jurisdictions in this country, to our municipal partners. This isn't a tax increase; this is about ensuring that tax dollars already being paid are going to the right places. We think Albertans' precious dollars should be allocated to core priorities. The NDP spent their entire four years increasing taxes and making life unbearable for everyone. We've taken a different approach to make sure that we are living within our means.

**Member Ceci:** Given that this minister has cut MSI funding that towns and counties rely on to maintain their infrastructure and given that the minister has announced that the province isn't even going to pay all of its own municipal tax bills and given that this adds more than \$1,000 to the tax notices of rural families, I'll ask the minister again: why is he pulling money out of the household budgets in rural Alberta to line the pockets of profitable corporations?

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

**Mr. Madu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The MacKinnon report was clear. In case the members opposite have forgotten, municipalities in this province are being funded 20 per cent higher than municipalities in provinces in this country. We have brought in responsible restraint measures to bring this critical overspending closer in line with our fellow jurisdictions in this country. This includes our ability to sustain the MSI program across the board.

**Member Ceci:** Given that these new additional taxes don't include cuts to speeding tax revenue, cuts to the Alberta community transit fund, cuts to the municipal water/waste-water program or the community resilience program and given that they don't include the huge new municipal costs associated with the new rural policing model, you know, the one that the government hasn't invested a single cent in yet, can the minister tell rural Albertans just how high their property taxes will go in order to pay for his \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout?

**Mr. Madu:** Mr. Speaker, many of our municipal partners are doing great work to deliver services while keeping taxes low. We know that they can get the job done. The NDP, again, left a physical disaster for us to clean up. We are implementing the responsible restraint to clean up the NDP's mess, and our municipal partners support this approach.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

### Rail Blockades and Teck Frontier Mine Cancellation

**Ms Goodridge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recent weeks Albertans and Canadians from coast to coast have been inundated with news of illegal barricades and protests disrupting railways and highways across our country. These barricades have been set up in response to RCMP action protecting the Coastal GasLink pipeline in British Columbia. These irresponsible actions have caused rail companies to lay off hundreds of employees and have delayed or jeopardized passenger travel across our country. Could the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General please advise what stance our government has taken on these blockades?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, this government respects the rule of law, and we expect our law enforcement personnel to enforce the laws across this country. [interjections] That's why we're calling on justice ministers from coast to coast to follow Alberta's lead to make sure we crack down. Not now, not ever will we fall prey to these people that want to hold our economy hostage. People on the other side of the aisle: they're heckling. They're endorsing Extinction Rebellion to go into our schools. We say no. We say: not now, not ever, not in Alberta.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

**Ms Goodridge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. The federal government remained silent for far too long on this disruption of peace and, frankly, this act of violence against our economy. Given that the Liberal cabinet had been considering

refusing the approval of the Teck Frontier oil sands mine despite thorough consultations with stakeholders and affected indigenous communities over the past five years and given that earlier this week we found out that Teck Resources has withdrawn their application, alluding to public safety concerns, could the Minister of Justice please explain possible repercussions of the federal government's delayed response to the attack on our resource sector? [interjections]

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a breakdown in confidence in the justice system across this entire country.

**Ms Hoffman:** Fraud, forgery, bribery.

**Mr. Schweitzer:** The other side right now: they're heckling. They're endorsing Extinction Rebellion on the other side. On this side of the aisle we respect the rule of law. That's why we're bringing in new measures, Mr. Speaker, to crack down on these illegal blockades. On this side of the aisle we're calling on justice ministers from coast to coast to follow Alberta's lead.

**Mr. Loewen:** Point of order.

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Do not enable these people, Mr. Speaker. Crack down on this. Enforce the rule of law across Canada.

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted at approximately 2:18.

I might just provide some caution to members of the Official Opposition on what words they might choose to heckle with.

The hon. member.

**Ms Goodridge:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the response. Given that Teck has withdrawn their application, which, had it been approved, would have provided the opportunity for 7,000 jobs in Alberta, and given that the future of the Coastal GasLink project still faces uncertainty and given that the attack on our energy sector seems to be increasing despite First Nations approving these projects, as was the case with Teck, could the Minister of Energy please tell us what the government is doing to combat these disrespectful and, frankly, dishonest attacks on our clean, ethical natural resource sector?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Energy.

**Mrs. Savage:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Teck withdrawal is part of a pattern of over a hundred billion dollars in projects cancelled or vetoed by the Trudeau government in the past four years. What the Teck withdrawal highlights is the need for the federal government to have a climate plan that reconciles the need to develop our natural resources, and that's what's been missing. Ottawa won't recognize that Alberta has a constitutional right under section 92A to develop our resources. That's why our government is doing everything we can to defend our constitutional rights. The NDP didn't, they wouldn't, they abandoned our constitutional authority to Justin Trudeau, and we won't do that.

### Capital Plan

**Mr. Dang:** Mr. Speaker, this Premier promised to create jobs. He promised to be, quote, laser focused on jobs. However, all we've seen is investment in Wisconsin and Newfoundland while hard-working Albertans are left picking up the bill for his failed \$4.7 billion corporate handout. Yesterday's throne speech promises to cut nearly \$200 million from the capital plan, which will cost us potentially thousands of construction jobs. Will the Minister of

Infrastructure explain to construction workers and tradespeople why he wants to put them out of work?

2:20

**Mr. Panda:** Mr. Speaker, if you remember, on our cabinet commitment platform we committed to honour the existing capital plan, which was \$24.2 billion over four years. That's our commitment, and we are keeping that commitment. Construction workers in Alberta know that fully well. They were put out of work by the NDP when they were in government. We are creating jobs in the construction industry. Even today we announced a major project for central Alberta.

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

**Mr. Dang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that this minister just reiterated his commitment to the capital plan that our NDP government proposed but given that in yesterday's throne speech the only concrete promise this government made was to reduce that capital plan by \$200 million and given that our government prioritized building our province after decades of Conservative neglect and created good jobs in this province, to the same minister: why did you favour paying off billionaire CEOs over the paycheques of our hard-working construction industry?

**Mr. Panda:** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member opposite to wait for the budget tomorrow, and then once he sees that announcement in tomorrow's budget, he'll be deflated. So stay tuned for now.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Dang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that these cuts have already been shown in the throne speech and given that this government only seems to care about propping up the balance sheets of big corporations, to the minister: will you let the House know what projects will be cancelled or delayed because of this broken promise on the capital plan, and can you tell this House exactly how many jobs will be lost due to this \$200 million cut?

**Mr. Toews:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the member on our side to stay tuned for the budget tomorrow, and perhaps we'll see the member deflated tomorrow as a result of his allegations.

Mr. Speaker, we will be rolling out some key capital projects that will improve our productivity in this province, improve our competitiveness, attract investment, create long-term jobs for Albertans. We're looking forward to rolling out the budget tomorrow. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall would like to ask a question.

### Electric Power Prices

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard from many concerned constituents and Albertans about the rising electricity prices. Yesterday it surfaced that electricity rates in Calgary have shot up 19 per cent – 19 per cent – above the cap that we had in place. This is shameful. So, Minister, can you commit today to Calgarians and Albertans paying more for electricity all over the province that you will reinstate the price cap so they don't get left out in the cold?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Mrs. Savage:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By ending the rate price cap program, Albertan taxpayers have been saved millions of dollars

and have maintained consumer choice. In the two years since it was implemented, this has cost Alberta taxpayers – those are the same taxpayers that pay for electricity – \$90 million, and had it continued until April 2021, it's expected that it would have cost Alberta taxpayers, the same people who pay electricity bills, an additional \$283 million. We have restored the energy-only market, which will solve some of the electricity problems.

**Mr. Sabir:** Given that during debate for Bill 18 the government voted against an amendment to ban economic withholding, thus protecting consumers from potential price-fixing, and given that actions such as economic withholding potentially lead to price spikes for consumers, will the minister commit to establish a strong consumer protection framework banning economic withholding and protecting consumers from unfair price spikes like the one Albertans are seeing now?

**Mrs. Savage:** Mr. Speaker, the previous government implemented the regulated rate cap to disguise and to protect electricity consumers from rising electricity costs that their policies would have caused. They phased out the coal-fired generators at a cost of \$1.4 billion. That costs taxpayers. Their debacle with the return of the PPA contracts cost taxpayers \$2.7 billion. All of those things were being added on to electricity bills, and many of their policies were to hide their incompetencies.

**Mr. Sabir:** Given that Calgarians are only just learning of the added costs to heat their homes – and heat their homes in Alberta, I might add – to the minister: can you at least commit to Calgarians, whom you also claim to represent, that they will not see another price spike of 19 per cent, or do you just not care?

**Mrs. Savage:** Mr. Speaker, the consumers in Calgary and elsewhere and across the entire province can choose to sign a contract with over 30 rate providers that will set a firm electricity rate that is below the 6.8-cent rate cap that the NDP had initiated. That option is available for all Albertans. We also have the Utilities Consumer Advocate, that is there to help Albertans and to direct them to various sources. There is no reason that Albertans have to pay more than 6.8 cents. There are rate options and regulated contracts.

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

### Physician Funding Framework

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, we are in a period of fiscal restraint. On Thursday, February 20, a new physician funding framework was announced. It was announced that Alberta will maintain physician funding at \$5.4 billion, the highest level ever, and implement its final offer to the Alberta Medical Association, or AMA, to avoid a forecasted \$2 billion in cost overruns. Can the Minister of Health walk us through key events that led to this decision and the timeline of negotiations, consultations, and mediation?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Health has the call.

**Mr. Shandro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I can advise the House that in September of last year we advised the Alberta Medical Association that we wished to begin negotiations with them. Those negotiations began in November. We gave them a few months to be able to prepare. At the same time, we began consultations on 11 proposed changes to the schedule of medical benefits, and in January, when no agreement was reached, we then agreed to voluntary mediation. We actually also agreed that those 11 consultation

proposals be included in the mediations. But despite repeated efforts throughout that month we were unable to . . .

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

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. The 11 consultation proposals put forward by the government will also be implemented on March 31, 2020. This includes phasing in changes to complex modifiers, reducing the rate physicians can charge for this billing code to \$9 from \$18 for a period of one year before the code is removed in 2021-2022. Can the Minister of Health explain complex modifiers, how they compare to other jurisdictions, how they are being used here in Alberta, and why this change is being made?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Health.

**Mr. Shandro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, complex modifiers are intended to pay physicians, who are paid on a fee-for-service basis, extra for a longer visit. The first modifier was intended to pay for a patient visit going from minute 15 to minute 25 as opposed to a typical 15-minute visit. However, most physicians were billing that at minute 15, so it became a 50 per cent increase in the cost of a 15-minute visit. It means that, instead, we're commonly paying \$62 for a basic office visit, and this was absolutely not the intention of the complex modifier at the 15-minute mark. So we're reducing that first modifier by half for this fiscal year.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again, Minister. In the summer of 2020, at the direction of the Minister of Health, the government of Alberta will introduce a new alternative relationship plan, or ARP, with built-in transition benefits to encourage physicians to move from fee for service to three-year contracts. For the benefit of everyone here and my constituents, can the Minister of Health please explain ARPs and the perceived advantages over a fee-for-service arrangement?

**Mr. Shandro:** Well, as we know, Mr. Speaker, fee for service isn't right for every physician and every practice. The alternative relationship plans enable a physician to spend more time with patients and to address complex needs without worrying about their compensation being tied to delivering specific services. The Canadian average for physicians on those ARPs is 34 per cent. Alberta is the lowest among primary care physicians on an ARP; we're at just 5 per cent. So Alberta Health is streamlining the process for joining an ARP, and once we receive an acceptable application, we're implementing those within six weeks. I encourage all physicians to be able to proceed with this.

#### **AISH and Income Support Payment Schedule**

**Ms Renaud:** On January 21 the Minister of Community and Social Services e-mailed me a 2020 calendar for AISH and income support payments, and it was consistent with the previous year's, with payments several days before the end of the month. But only seven days later the minister suddenly released a new calendar, which delayed payments to the first day of the following month. To the minister: what happened in those seven days to make you change the payment calendar?

2:30

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Mr. Speaker, the payment date was changed to ensure that the benefit was aligned with the cost that the payment actually incurred in the same month. Thank you.

**Ms Renaud:** Given that these changes mean that disabled and low-income Albertans are now at risk of being penalized for late rent and not having a bus pass on the first of the month and given that this minister's press secretary accidentally sent an e-mail to reporters that revealed there had been no consultation with the community before the changes were made, to the minister: isn't it true that this last-minute change to the schedule was driven by instructions from the Finance minister to find in-year savings?

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Absolutely not. Absolutely not. What I can tell you is that every year in January we see an uptick in emergency support services because folks do run out of money. At that time there was a 41-day period between cheques. This change was made to ensure consistency, predictability, and to make sure that that day between payments was reduced.

**Ms Renaud:** Yeah, people knocked down my door, saying: don't pay me before Christmas; wait till after.

Given that the payment date for the seniors' benefit did not change and given that I'm sure the minister has been inundated with letters and phone calls about this huge change – trust me, they speak to me, too – to the minister: will you right here and now reverse your thoughtless and cruel decision to change AISH and income support payment dates? It's time to do the right thing. You didn't do it for seniors. Give these guys a break. They should have been paid Monday. Why did they have to wait until Friday?

**Mrs. Sawhney:** Mr. Speaker, no changes will be made. The new dates are going to stand as they are. What I would like to say to all folks who are impacted by these date changes is: please do contact your caseworker or the Alberta Supports offices. I'm certainly committed to helping them transition through this change, but there will be no changes to the dates.

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

#### **Public Service Pensions**

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Eight thousand Albertans and counting have signed a petition telling this government to take their hands off their pensions. Every time they sign this petition, the Minister of Finance gets an e-mail. Albertans can sign this petition at [yourpensionisyours.ca](http://yourpensionisyours.ca). To the Minister of Finance: can you explain to all the Albertans who are flooding your inbox why you're meddling with their hard-earned money and their retirement?

**Mr. Toews:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question because I can answer that question very simply. We're not meddling with their pensions.

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

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Albertans have also joined us for Facebook Live conversations about this government's terrible decisions and given that specifically teachers and their pensions have been particularly vocal; on one of those Facebook Lives Stephen from Red Deer wanted us to ask the minister: will he cover any shortfall if the investment returns from AIMCo are not as high as they were under the very successful Alberta teachers' retirement fund? To the minister. Please answer Stephen. Will you cover any shortfalls?

**Mr. Toews:** Well, Mr. Speaker, to answer the question from Stephen, the reality was that back in the pre-1992 teacher pensions, Alberta taxpayers covered those shortfalls. We as a government

have a responsibility to all Albertans to ensure that pensions are in the strongest financial position possible. That is why the investment management portion and function was moved to AIMCo, so that these pensions could be managed at a lower cost to the benefit of teachers and Alberta taxpayers.

**Ms Gray:** Given, Mr. Speaker, that Albertans are listening to this and Albertans are aware of the facts of this case, having been shared for months now, Pam also tuned into a recent Facebook conversation, and she had a question for the minister that I will ask on behalf of her and the other concerned Albertans. To the minister: how is it legal to enact what Pam described as a, quote, essential hostile takeover of the teachers' pension fund? How is this the government's money to take? Will you apologize for your shocking lack of consultation? Will you undo Bill 22 and restart this process with proper engagement, and have you learned how to govern like adults yet?

**The Speaker:** I might just caution the member that she can't do indirectly what she can't do directly even when using a quote.

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, this government has not taken over teachers' pensions. We have simply mandated that the investment function of teachers' pensions is moved to AIMCo. ATRF will continue to be the trustee of teachers' pensions. ATRF will continue to provide high-level strategic direction of teachers' pensions. This move to move the management function to AIMCo simply strengthens teachers' pensions and provides better return to Alberta taxpayers.

### Rail Blockades

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, Canada is a vast country, and rail plays a crucial role in transporting heavy goods and passengers across thousands of kilometres. With the recent blockades, however, Canadians are feeling the consequences. Thousands of workers were laid off at CN Rail and Via Rail as a direct result of the blockages. Ships are backlogged in our ports, and businesses are threatening to move elsewhere. The protesters are holding our country hostage. Minister, hard-working Albertans are suffering. What immediate steps is this government taking to mitigate the situation and restore confidence?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, when blockades went up in Alberta, moments after that, that very morning our government came out with a clear statement: not in Alberta. We will not tolerate this behaviour in this province. Within 12 hours those blockades were down in Alberta. Around the country we're asking them to follow Alberta's lead. Take a decisive step. Be on the side of the law. Be on the side of making sure that the law is enforced in this province and across our country. We're calling on justice ministers coast to coast: follow our lead. Take a look at Bill 1. It's an amazing bill. We expect to see it passed in this House.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

**Mr. Amery:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that industries from coast to coast are feeling the burden of these blockades and given that eastern provinces are running out of petroleum, exporters' goods are going to waste, rail companies are ceasing operation, and millions, potentially billions of economic losses are at stake and given that thousands of Canadians, many of whom are here in our great province, are facing the threat of layoffs, can the minister tell this House what actions need to be immediately

taken to protect the livelihoods of thousands of Canadians, many of those right here at home?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, we need to have a conversation about the future of justice across this country. Our current system is designed for decades ago. Right now we have situations where people are doing TikTok with social media stuff on our rail lines. We've got Extinction Rebellion advocating for the shutdown, for blockades. We have the members opposite, who won't even condemn Extinction Rebellion. They show up at their protests. We respect the rule of law on this side of the House. We're bringing forward bills. The members opposite are laughing at the rule of law. They don't respect it. This side of the House does. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora will come to order.

**Mr. Amery:** Mr. Speaker, Dennis Darby, CEO of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, said, quote, if the blockades extend into that two-week range, most companies will have to start temporary layoffs and cutting shifts because we don't have inventory. Given that the Trudeau government has refused to take concrete action and has instead pandered to the illegal protesters and given that Canada's reputation as a safe and reliable country is being threatened by the actions of these rogue actors, to the minister. We know about Bill 1. What other steps are being taken to prevent these types of incidents from reoccurring?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice.

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More damage to Canada's reputation as a place to invest has been done over the last few weeks than, I would say, even by Bill C-69. This is catastrophic. We need the rule of law in this country. Are we going to be a country of anarchy, or are we going to be a country of the rule of law? We're calling on the federal government to enforce the law. We're calling on justice ministers from across this country. Take a look at the legislation we're bringing forward in this province. Take a look at the leadership in this province. We expect the law to be enforced. We hope that the rest of the country will follow Alberta's lead.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will proceed to Members' Statements.

2:40

### Members' Statements (continued)

#### Energy Industry Opposition

**Mr. Loewen:** I stand with those who believe Canada is in crisis caused by years of complacency and inaction by our governments, our people, and our corporations. Years of legal attacks have turned to brazen illegal attacks, foreign interference, meddling, and manipulation brought about by misguided crusaders and self-serving financial opportunists who attack Canada because our gentle and polite democracy allows them the opportunity to exploit us in our own country. Teck Resources' withdrawal after years of work and a billion dollars is just the last of many losses to our economy. Kinder Morgan is pulling out of Trans Mountain, Northern Gateway, and Energy East: all stopped by changing regulations. Line 3, line 9, Keystone XL: all delayed by legal challenges. Companies follow the regulations set out by our government only to have the goalposts moved and the existing laws ignored. These are hallmarks of a banana republic, not an established democracy.

Our detractors have learned that they don't need a "no" when they can cripple industry by breaking down the rule of law. Investors get the message: development is costly and a futile effort. The protesters and their supporters in the halls of Ottawa keep Canadian oil in the ground and cause oil to come from countries with poorer environmental records. They hinder the export of cleaner natural gas, which would displace older technologies. They ensure the rest of the world gets 60 per cent more for their oil than we do. They haven't saved the world, but they've sure hurt Canada. Crippling our oil and gas sector cripples the clean energy research and technology that we do best. We are stopping our oil from being exported by double-wall tankers on the west coast; meanwhile we import oil from jurisdictions with poorer environmental records in single-wall tankers on our east coast. You can't make this stuff up.

Given this dysfunction we need to take steps to increase our autonomy. We will be bringing in legislation for citizen-initiated referendums that will allow the people of Alberta to give government the mandate to act. It is the will of the people and the power of our collective resolve that will make the most difference. We've talked of ways to take more control over our destiny. These things now require the strong will of Albertans standing together. If we don't stand for the rule of law, for the protection of our economy, and for the ability of Alberta to make our own decisions, nobody else will.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has a statement he'd like to make.

### Lent

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today Christians in Alberta and around the world begin the observance of a 40-day period of reflection and preparation known as Lent. Time is taken over the period from Ash Wednesday through to Easter Sunday to think about the message of the Messiah and for the faithful to recommit themselves to His service. On this day many people will attend services, where they will receive a blessing consisting of the placing of ashes of burned palm leaves in the shape of the cross on their foreheads. When the ashes are placed on the forehead, the priest or pastor may say: remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. This is a reminder that our bodies are not eternal and that the material gains of our life are transient.

It is common for followers of the faith to use the opportunity of Lent to recommit themselves by sacrificing some personal indulgence such as candy or alcohol for the duration of the Easter season. The message for Christians and non-Christians alike is that we need not focus only on personal advantage but on greater values such as equality, justice, and the elimination of poverty. Lent is a time of renewed effort to provide alms and to share our wealth with others.

As this is a time of reflection, I would like to take this time to recognize the passing of a significant Catholic leader. Joan Carr died of cancer on February 9 of this year after a life devoted to Catholic education as a teacher, a principal, an administrator, and ultimately a superintendent of Edmonton Catholic schools. Her obituary tells us that service to students was a primary focus and resulted in the establishment of innovative centres that provide wraparound services for students and families by creating the potential for engaging community partners. Thank you, Joan, for your service. You will be missed. Lent is an opportune time to reflect on the work of so many people like Joan, whose life was given in the service of others.

Thank you.

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

### Energy Industries and Economic Diversification

**Mr. Jeremy Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was too young to remember the oil crash of the 1980s, but I've heard the stories. The economy came to a screeching halt, layoffs announced every day. Money was scarce. Needs were great. Premier Lougheed and Premier Getty had to borrow heavily just to keep the lights on. Internationally times were just as tough, especially in areas like Texas, whose oil-dependent economy had flatlined. Years later we had climbed out of that economic crater, and I can remember the bumper stickers with the phrase: please, God, give us one more oil boom; we promise not to blow it all away this time. Sure enough, oil prices rose, and soon enough our economy was booming again. Unfortunately, that bubble burst, and the aftershocks through our economy are still being felt to this day.

But what of Texas? It weathered the storm far better than Alberta. While the recession gripped Alberta after the 2014 oil crash, Texas avoided the worst of the swells because of the past efforts to diversify its economy. During the lull between the oil booms their financial sector expanded exponentially and connected with many sectors of the economy besides oil and gas. Mutually beneficial relationships grew, eclipsing the once central figure of oil in the Texas economy. Manufacturing was still heavily tied to the oil and gas sector, but it branched out into other areas, allowing for growth even as oil prices took a dive. While the transformation of their economy involved many non oil and gas sectors, it still retained a firm presence in the global oil trade market. West Texas crude is still the benchmark that oil is compared to.

I believe Alberta can do the same transformation of its economy. Our province is the youngest, most driven province in Canada. I truly believe that we can imitate the Texas way, but we can also surpass it to see our oil and gas companies grow and prosper and to see all sectors within our economy prosper.

### Climate Change Strategy and Economic Development

**Mr. Schmidt:** Teck's withdrawal of its application to build the Frontier mine is a dire warning: get it right when it comes to climate change, or get left behind. This project would have created 7,000 construction jobs, 2,500 operating jobs, and brought in more than \$70 billion in government revenue. This project would have reduced the emissions by employing cutting-edge technology and had the support of all affected indigenous communities.

Given all this, it came as a shock that Teck pulled the project. Teck noted in its letter to Minister Wilkinson that markets are looking for policies that balance resource development and climate change and that without clarity on this issue, "it will be very difficult to attract future investment." It's clear that they're looking for serious action to combat climate change, and instead of taking action, this Premier ignores what everyone else seems to understand, that the environment and the economy work hand in hand. The Premier has built his career demonizing efforts against climate change. He dismissed Teck's concerns and continues to falsely claim that Teck made its decision due to a vocal minority despite Teck's explicit statement to the contrary. Let us remember that the organizations criticizing the government's policies are trillion-dollar international investors such as BlackRock. The Calgary Chamber has stated that we must balance resource development with climate change.

It doesn't have to be like this. We can take real steps to combat climate change while growing our economy. Our government's plan balanced the economy and the environment, a plan that was attracting investment, responsibly developing our resources, and diversifying our economy. That plan would have allowed Teck to

proceed. Instead of picking fights and blaming everyone else, we need a government that understands that taking climate action seriously leads to growing the economy, or we'll have to get used to more stories like Teck.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

### King Edward Hotel in Pincher Creek

**Mr. Reid:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The King Edward Hotel in Pincher Creek was a piece of southern Alberta history for 116 years before it was tragically destroyed by fire on February 15. The King Edward had just finished massive renovations, so my thoughts go out to the owner, David McQuaig, as well as the staff at the hotel.

The King Eddy was built in 1904 and named after the reigning monarch, King Edward VII. This was common practice on the Alberta frontier as it gave structures a sense of importance and permanence. The destruction of the King Edward Hotel isn't just the loss of a local business or of a source of livelihood for some local families. It's a tragic loss of a piece of Pincher Creek history and a popular local landmark.

I want to thank the first responders in the town of Pincher Creek for flawlessly executing their emergency response plan. Without their quick thinking and professionalism it is very likely that this fire could have spread to other local businesses and created a far more serious situation. It was my honour to join Pincher Creek's mayor, Don Anderberg, in the emergency services operation centre. Southern Alberta has worked hard to make sure that every town will have the support it needs should an emergency spring up, and in watching the centre operate, I got to see the benefits of this collaboration first-hand. Through the standardization of equipment and communication channels each town can now reach far beyond its neighbours to receive the support they need in an emergency. Emergency services have co-ordinated emergency response vehicles so that there are no duplicate vehicle numbers, allowing operators to speak to specific responders from Medicine Hat to the Crownsnest Pass on the same channels with no confusion.

I know that the current hope is to rebuild the hotel, and I hope to see that hotel rebuilt one day and resume its place as a landmark in southern Alberta.

I am so grateful for the hard work and dedication of our rural communities, their leaders, their residents, and our first responders.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader to extend the Routine.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 7(8) I am notifying the Chamber that the daily Routine may go beyond 3 p.m.

2:50

### Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

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

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices I have two reports to present this afternoon. First, I'm pleased to table the committee's report recommending the reappointment of Mr. Del Graff as the Child and Youth Advocate from this April until the end of October 2021. I also wish to table the committee's report recommending the reappointment of Mr. Glen Resler for another term as Chief Electoral Officer. Copies of both reports are available on the World Wide Web.

### Presenting Petitions

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has a petition.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to present a petition that was organized by a concerned constituent who is here in the gallery today, Mr. Kurt Isenbecker. Kurt single-handedly collected nearly 1,400 signatures from Albertans worried about their pension plans. The petition asks this Assembly to urge the government to introduce legislation that would repeal the recent changes to the governance and control of public-sector pensions.

### Introduction of Bills

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

#### Bill 2

#### Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 2, the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020.

Our government campaigned on a promise to make life better for all Albertans and to make our legislation, rules, and processes simpler for every person, whether they're businesses and job creators, local authorities, or regular Albertans. Bill 2 proposes five key amendments and represents another step forward in these efforts by modernizing aspects of the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act. If passed, this legislation would come into effect on April 1 of this year.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill 2, the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 2 read a first time]

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Service Alberta.

#### Bill 3

#### Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020

**Mr. Glubish:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce Bill 3, the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020, legislation that many Albertans have been waiting for for many years.

Under Alberta's current MHSTA the only formal way to resolve disputes between a landlord and a tenant in a mobile-home site context is through the courts. The amendments set out in Bill 3 will enable the residential tenancy dispute resolution service to hear mobile-home site tenancy disputes in addition to residential tenancy disputes. This solution is an important step forward.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a first time]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

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

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the appropriate number of copies of the 2020-21 main estimates schedule.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Edmonton-Glenora has a tabling.



**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have with me copies of the documents I referred to today in Oral Question Period that show that the government of Alberta – these are department documents – indeed cut funding to school boards by \$136 million in the current fiscal year.

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

**Mr. Schmidt:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the appropriate number of copies of an e-mail that I received from Ms Kaylyn Juchli, who expresses concerns about deindexing AISH. She says that “it is as if the [government] is bragging about their poor treatment being the least offensive.”

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

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the appropriate number of copies from dozens of my constituents who have sent me concerns around child care cuts by this UCP government. This has led to, you know, a compromise in both the budget of many, many families across the province of Alberta as well as compromising the ability of parents to enter into the workforce. So I would be happy to table these here today.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for St. Albert, as she’s on the list, followed by Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud if that’s okay.

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings. The first two just were referenced earlier today. One is a letter to Minister Wilkinson from Don Lindsay, president and chief executive officer of Teck Resources Limited, the actual letter. You all should read it.

Next is an article from the *Globe and Mail* entitled Federal Numbers Dispute [Premier’s] Oil Sands Emissions Projections, dated February 9, 2020.

And I have 129 letters from constituents from St. Albert expressing their concerns about the cuts to primary care and the changes that they are worried about.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table several letters, one from the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association in my riding and several letters from different residents in the constituency of Calgary-Mountain View objecting to cuts to child care.

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

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of 23 different letters that I received from constituents from the constituency of Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock who are concerned about the cuts to the benefit contribution grant by the Minister of Children’s Services and this government, which will affect child care fees and make child care even further unaffordable for their families.

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

**Ms Glasgo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite copies of two articles that I referred to in my comments today under 29(2)(a) on Bill 1. One is titled ‘Disappointment, Fear and Anger’: Indigenous Communities Blindsided by Teck’s Decision to Pull

Frontier Project. The other one is Teck Project Environmental Deal Reached between First Nation and Alberta Government.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West is rising, followed by Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

**Ms Phillips:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and table the requisite number of copies of a letter to the Minister of Children’s Services from the Sunny South Day Care Centre in Lethbridge expressing concerns about the removal of two grants, the staff attraction incentive and the benefit contribution grant, both of which support the delivery of high-quality, accessible, affordable child care in the city of Lethbridge.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

**Member Irwin:** Thank you. I rise today with the requisite number of copies of a letter from a constituent. I’ve received multiple letters from constituents who are quite concerned about cuts to child care; in particular, the removal of the benefit contribution grant and the staff attraction incentive. This is going to have a huge impact. She’s written it very well.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview has caught my eye.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, received a letter from a constituent regarding the cuts to the benefit contribution grant and the staff attraction incentive that licensed child care centres did get previously. I guess that April 1, 2020, is when they’ll be ending. Of course, this creates support for that sector. We know that they deliver important, high-quality child care. I have the requisite number of copies.

**The Speaker:** Are there others? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore has risen.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have the requisite number of copies of e-mails that my office has received expressing very much the concern about the contribution grant and the staff attraction incentive, which can have very severe effects on two facilities that are in Edmonton-Decore. They’re calling for the government to reverse this.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Calgary-Buffalo is rising.

**Member Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of a letter from a program manager of a daycare in my riding, Calgary-Buffalo, wherein she describes the destabilization of the child care sector as a result of the reduction and removal of the benefit contribution grant and the staff attraction incentive, that is going to take place on April 1, 2020.

3:00

### Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of hon. Mr. Panda, Minister of Infrastructure, responses to questions raised by Mr. Dang, hon. Member for Edmonton-South; Mr. Carson, hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday; Mr. Toor, hon. Member for Calgary-Falconridge; Mr. Bilous, hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview; and Mr. Stephan, hon. Member for Red Deer-South, on November 5, 2019, Ministry of Infrastructure 2019-20 main estimates debate.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, we are at points of order, and the hon. Opposition House Leader raised a point of order at approximately 1:56.

**Ms Sweet:** I have 1:49, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Sure.

### Point of Order Misleading the House

**Ms Sweet:** The first one? Okay. I just stand on a point of order under 23(h), (i), and (j), where the Premier was speaking in regard to a question asked by the Leader of the Official Opposition in regard to the relationship between Teck and the indigenous communities up where Teck was being built. At this point I just wanted to highlight the fact that it is a little bit misleading of this House to indicate that when we were in government within the NDP we did nothing in regard to supporting indigenous communities and supporting Teck.

I'll be really quick. Basically, we established a biodiversity stewardship area with indigenous, working with Teck, Cenovus, and Imperial when relinquished leases initially dropped. We added the largest boreal conservation area in the world, achieved with indigenous comanagement in 2018; moved forward with new investments and community-based indigenous-led monitoring and oil sands monitoring; forced the federal government to fund their share through doing oil sands monitoring agreements; invested funds for the economic development water infrastructure; and, importantly, getting the entire community Fort Chipewyan halfway off the diesel generation electricity and replacing it with the largest off-grid solar and storage project, which is now owned by the community.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I think that it would be disingenuous to say that there was nothing done on this side of the House when we were in government in supporting the Teck project and working with indigenous communities.

**The Speaker:** I'm sure the hon. Government House Leader will be happy to respond.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Oh, very excited to respond, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to waste too much time today. I mean, clearly, the hon. Opposition House Leader – and welcome to her new role, through you to her. I clearly see that the opposition is very defensive about their record in government. I would be defensive if I was them, too. However, let me quote Chief Adam, who she's referring to, as he comments on the new approach that the Alberta government has taken, the new Alberta government. He says, "Given the recent discussions with the Government of Alberta and their fresh and positive approach, we reconfirm our support of the Project and encourage the Canadian government" to do the same.

**Mr. Kenney:** Fresh and positive?

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Fresh and positive, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, Chief Adam liked the approach of this government better than the previous government. At the end of the day – I know the hon. member is new to the role, and I wish her the best of luck; I am a former Opposition House Leader, and it's not a fun job some days – this is clearly a matter of debate, despite the fact that the chiefs of northeastern Alberta seem to have already cast their verdict that the new government's approach was significantly better than the previous government's approach.

**The Speaker:** I think if there is one thing we can agree on this afternoon, it's that we have prolonged an issue of debate which very clearly wasn't a point of order, and I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

There were two additional points of order during question period, both of which have been withdrawn by those who have raised them. However, I would provide caution to all members of the Assembly, whether it's on the record or off the record, and the Speaker being able to hear some of those off-the-record comments. They may use caution when using strong language that may create disorder inside the House.

We are at Ordres du jour.

## Orders of the Day Government Motions Infrastructure Blockading

7. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly unequivocally denounce the illegal blockading of Canada's core infrastructure, including railways, pipelines, ports, and roadways, and call for the law to be enforced without delay.

**The Speaker:** Are there others wishing to speak to the motion? I see the hon. the Premier is rising.

**Mr. Kenney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this motion.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly unequivocally denounce the illegal blockading of Canada's core infrastructure, including [but not limited to] railways, pipelines, ports, and roadways, and call for the law to be [dutifully] enforced without delay.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Madam Speaker, I just got off a conference call with the Council of the Federation, the 13 Premiers, moments ago to discuss in part this urgent issue. It could not be more urgent as our national economy has been jeopardized by the irresponsible actions of a few militants who have decided that their extreme political views have greater value than the democratic decisions of duly elected governments, both indigenous and the governments of the Canadian state, and that their extreme political views should trump the very rule of law, which is the predicate of the democracy which we share together.

These protests have been going on now for the better part of three weeks. There have been intermittent efforts, of course, at law enforcement, yet we continue to see a deliberate and, I believe, highly co-ordinated effort to disrupt the vital infrastructure of this country, massively damage its economy, and hugely inconvenience the lives of ordinary, law-abiding Canadians, all to send a message that this country is unable to operate as a modern economy predicated on the rule of law.

Sadly – sadly, Madam Speaker – to some extent they have succeeded in sending that message. I can confirm that at multiple times in my discussions with the CEO of Teck Resources Limited over the past week he told me that his board was losing confidence in the Frontier mine proposal in part because of the disorder in this country. He told me that Teck Resources is the largest customer of Canada's railways because of the extant mines that they operate in this country, that millions of tonnes of their product was backing up, unable to get to markets, that this was affecting their share price and their broader corporate interests and was highlighting a question about Canada as a reliable place in which to invest. I can

confirm that in the last week I have spoken to major prospective investors in not just the Alberta but the Canadian economy who have decided to suspend or withdraw multibillion-dollar investments in this economy as a result of this anarchy that we have seen break out in parts of this country.

I hear the former Health minister of the NDP government, the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, expressing exasperation at my use of the word "anarchy." Anarchy's dictionary definition is: a period or place of lawlessness. That's exactly what's happened, a lawlessness. I understand why the NDP Member for Edmonton-Glenora is so exasperated to hear that word accurately applied to the situation of lawlessness in various parts of this country. I can understand entirely because much of this has been co-ordinated by extreme elements such as Extinction Rebellion and Climate Justice, organizations that that member and her party – in fact, the Member for Edmonton-Glenora attended the Extinction Rebellion and Climate Justice rally outside the Legislature late last year with several of her colleagues where those organizations called for the immediate shutdown, not just reducing or eliminating future projects but the immediate shutdown, of the entire Canadian oil and gas industry.

3:10

She stood there on the steps of the Legislature and gave the dignity of her office to those organizations even after, Madam Speaker, they had blocked the Edmonton Waltherdale Bridge. You know, some of those were the constituents of Edmonton-Glenora undoubtedly trying to get to work or get back to their homes to deal with their family, but the Member for Edmonton-Glenora didn't care about that. She went and stood on the steps of the Legislature to effectively implicitly endorse the tactics and goals of Extinction Rebellion and Climate Justice, those organizations that are behind shutting down commuter rail lines in Toronto, shutting down commuter rail lines in Vancouver, shutting down the CN railway in parts of this country, trying to shut down the CN railway just west of Edmonton last week and in dozens of other similar actions. I understand why the NDP Member for Edmonton-Glenora expresses exasperation when we describe accurately the actions of her political allies in Extinction Rebellion and Climate Justice as being anarchic. That's exactly what it is.

Now, let me say that we have growing evidence of a deep effect on jobs and our economy, and I'll just share some of those. The Alberta Wheat and Alberta Barley commission estimates that if blockades continue \$42 million will be lost each week to western Canadian farmers, a significant percentage of which will be here in Alberta. It is estimated that roughly \$340,000 per day in penalties are being charged to the weighting grain ships at the port in Vancouver. These costs will eventually be put back onto the farmers. Now, I know that this is something that the people on the green left don't care about. The Extinction Rebellion, the Climate Justice folks that the NDP freely associates with: they couldn't care less about the impact on ordinary people. They don't even understand how this works even if they did care.

You know, Madam Speaker, here's the bottom line for our farmers. They don't get paid until the grain is loaded and is on its way to the ports. They have to pay the transportation costs, and if rail cars are backing up and the ships which they are supposed to load are backing up, the costs are inflicted back on our farmers at a really tough time. I see the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, who knows what I'm talking about. It's been a couple of very tough years in terms of market access, weather, and other issues, and this is the last thing that our farmers need being created by this anarchy.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that a manufacturing member in Alberta uses steel that is shipped by rail,

and if the blockades aren't lifted, quote: the business owner told us that he can last only 30 days before being forced to lay off almost 400 employees. That's just one business in Calgary, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Canadian Fuels Association indicates that if blockades continue on the national railway system, their ability to supply critical fuels like propane and natural gas to heat homes, hospitals across the country will be seriously impaired. I just got off the phone with the Premier of Quebec, and they are reporting critical shortages in propane to heat hospitals and key elements of public infrastructure. This could end up costing lives, Madam Speaker, if it carries on much longer.

The operator of a major petrochemical facility in the Edmonton region – I won't mention the name – has indicated that the current slowdowns are costing them \$4 million a day. Multiply that by 30 days, Madam Speaker. What are the implications for jobs?

Business organizations across the country have indicated that this could not be more serious, but it's deeper than that, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's deeper than that because it's not just about some short-term economic damage, although that is grave. Let me add that this is happening at a point of economic fragility for our country and our province. The Canadian economy barely grew at all in the fourth quarter of 2019, and our own economy growth was very modest in 2019. We are still living in, now, the fifth year of a period of economic stagnation that began under the previous NDP government. The worst thing we could possibly have right now is a fundamental disruption, particularly to the shipment of commodities for a province that relies so much on commodity shipments.

[The Speaker in the chair]

But it's about more than those material questions, Mr. Speaker. It's about: what kind of a country do we live in? Why is it that people from all around the world dream of coming to Canada? Why is it that people regard Canada as something of a model of opportunity, of freedom, of prosperity? Well, if we were to identify one single factor, it is this: the rule of law. It's interesting. Sometimes when I use that phrase, I get mocked by New Democrats on social media. They think the rule of law sounds frightening. I see a lot of New Democrats on social media saying that the rule of law is a dog whistle for a far-right, hidden political agenda.

Mr. Speaker, I don't care whether you're from the left, the right, the centre, conservative, a socialist, a liberal. I don't care whether you speak English or French, if you were born here or born abroad. The grounding of our life together, the rules of the game which maintain our democratic culture is the rule of law, the laws that we make on behalf of and with a democratic mandate by the people that we represent in this place and in other Legislatures across the country, the law that is enforced professionally by our police services or should be, the laws that are interpreted by our courts. This concept of the rule of law undergirds the trust which is essential to live together, to maintain that predictability, that stability, which is essential for a prosperous economy. People will not invest in banana republics that don't have the rule of law because they don't know when some government with pure political fiat will come along and steal their property.

Mr. Speaker, the rule of law is primordial. It is essential. It must be defended, and it must be protected. It is being mocked in various parts of Canada as we speak. Some of those that are engaged in these protests claim that they are doing so to be, quote, in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en indigenous people of northern British Columbia. Well, to quote former Haisla chief councillor and current British Columbia member of the legislature Ellis Ross, when people

are blocking critical infrastructure, claiming to be in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en, as Chief Ellis has said, "What a crock." To be blunt, Mr. Speaker, what a lie. What a deception. As Chief Ellis says, this is nothing more than ecocolonialism by predominantly well off, southern, urban Canadians, who have little or no actual lived experience or contact with remote indigenous communities in Canada, who either have no understanding of or no regard for the chronic poverty and social disfunction that so many of our indigenous people in this country have had to live through; poverty, which too often breeds despair, hopelessness, and addiction; poverty, which in too many indigenous communities ends up being expressed as unacceptable levels of self-harm, including suicide; poverty, which is the great shame of modern Canada.

3:20

In those First Nation communities they don't have the luxury of walking down the street to have all of the services of urban life, to get access to jobs in the service, manufacturing, technology or other industries. These are folks who live in some of the most remote parts of Canada, where there are no service jobs available, there are no manufacturing jobs, and there is no tech industry. You know what there is proximate to those communities, Mr. Speaker? Resources, natural resources that typically lie above the ground in terms of forestry or below the ground in terms of minerals, resources that lie below the grounds of our indigenous people under the lands that their ancestors first inhabited.

This country developed itself disproportionately through the development of those resources over our long history, but sadly and to our collective shame, too seldom were those resources developed in partnership with our indigenous people. Too often they were excluded from the circle of prosperity. Because of the trap of the colonial Indian Act, First Nation governments were unable to enter into equity or ownership partnership agreements, financial agreements with mining companies, with oil and gas producers, with forestry companies and others because they could not collateralize the value of their reserve land. They could not monetize the value of their traditional lands, so they were left too often in poverty.

Happily, though, Mr. Speaker, there is an exception to that general rule of economic deprivation amongst First Nations across Canada, and the exception to that rule is called Alberta. We ought to be so proud not to claim that we've been perfect in this respect but to point out with pride that the wealthiest First Nations in Canada are right here in Alberta. The highest levels of employment amongst indigenous people are right here in Alberta. The highest incidence of business ownership amongst indigenous people: right here in Alberta. There is no First Nation in this country more prosperous than the Fort McKay First Nation, thanks to the visionary leadership of former Chief Jim Boucher, current Chief Mel Grandjamb, their councillors, their elders, and their constituents, who embraced a vision of development and prosperity. They tell us that 35 years ago, when the same crowd on the left that is now trying to shut down oil and gas succeeded in shutting down the fur industry, they were devastated. That had been their traditional industry for three centuries. The same left-wing militants that are now trying to shut down our natural resources dealt a body blow to the economic interests of northern indigenous people in Canada, so they were thrown into poverty.

Now, I know that for some parties of the left, they don't worry about that because as long as the government is sending somebody a welfare cheque, they think that somehow we're doing them a favour. They think that a welfare cheque, social assistance is an expression of compassion, but the indigenous Albertans I know: they don't want to be left in the economic dead end of dependency

on a social benefit cheque. They want, they demand, they deserve the dignity of work, and that has been the message of their leadership for the last 30 or 40 years in this province, as embraced by Fort McKay, which has virtually full employment, a nation that was living, in some cases, in third-world conditions of poverty 40 years ago, where there are now multiple millionaires and dozens of successful contractors. I see my friend the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo nodding vigorously. He knows that these are his neighbours, his co-workers, his friends, his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, happily, the experience of Fort McKay is not alone, and now they've gone bigger. They've managed to get around the barriers of the Indian Act. They recently completed a remarkable transaction to buy I think for \$1.2 billion a tank farm from Suncor, and now they have a guaranteed stream of revenue flowing from that. There are so many examples across this province of it, and we gave powerful expression to this will of First Nations for a future just this past weekend that has been now mocked and ridiculed by the socialists across the floor. We gave expression of that through agreements signed between the hon. the ministers of environment and Indigenous Relations with the Mikisew Cree First Nation and Chief Archie as well as the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation.

This government spent months working with those nations to develop agreements, to remove their outstanding objections to the prospective Frontier mine, including entirely legitimate concerns about environmental impacts on wildlife, for example, on their traditional territories. This minister next to me, Mr. Speaker, and his officials worked around the clock to find practical solutions, including co-management agreements for the Ronald Lake bison herd, including funding to support environmental monitoring to be led by those indigenous communities. The agreements we signed last week with those First Nations were a tremendous validation of the vision of this government to create the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, backstopped by a billion dollars of the faith and credit of Alberta's Crown to facilitate aboriginal co-ownership of and financial participation in major resource projects to solve the problem created by the colonial Indian Act. Thanks to that leverage we were able to work out the outlines of a deal where there would have been a permanent flow of revenue to Mikisew Cree and Athabasca Chipewyan.

Now, it is worth pointing out, Mr. Speaker, that traditionally, historically the Athabasca Chipewyan nation under Chief Adam's leadership has publicly been the most skeptical about oil sands development, yet that nation signed an agreement in which they said, "Given the recent discussions with the Government of Alberta and their fresh and positive approach, we reconfirm our support of the [Frontier] Project and encourage the Canadian government" to do the same; through collaboration and innovation I am pleased to announce that we have come to an agreement with the Alberta government.

That is the spirit of reconciliation, Mr. Speaker. We hear a lot of talk about reconciliation, but – I'm sorry. I'm just going to say it like it is. These left-wing activists raising money from Europe and the United States to block our infrastructure: what are they actually trying to do? They are trying to lock our indigenous people into perennial poverty. We will not let them get away with that.

Ostensibly, the official cause of all of this is the Coastal GasLink project in British Columbia. Let me – how much time do I have?

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Ninety minutes.

**Mr. Kenney:** Okay.

Let me – sorry, folks. I know there's a cabinet committee meeting starting. We'll just delay it.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a little story here. In 2013 I was the federal employment minister, and I was asked to go and help to deepen indigenous support for major resource projects in B.C. At the time there were multiple pipelines, multiple LNG, other projects. I started in Kitimat meeting with then Chief Councillor Ellis Ross of the Haisla, and then I went up to Houston in the heart of Wet'suwet'en territory, and they held – I was so honoured. The Wet'suwet'en elders and matriarchs held a potlatch in my honour to welcome me and to thank me for bringing an offer of additional training and support so their young people could go from poverty to prosperity. I worked my way up through Burns Lake to Prince George up to Fort St. John. I spent an entire I think eight days, meeting with indigenous leaders, with elders, with grassroots indigenous people, and every single one that I met – elected leaders, hereditary leaders, elders – were enthusiastic about the prospect of these resource projects, including the Coastal GasLink.

3:30

Here's the sad thing. Since then, 2013, project after project after project was cancelled and vetoed by the green left, with which this NDP happily affiliates itself. Petronas pulled out \$40 billion that would have gone near Kitimat on LNG, an LNG project that would have reduced global greenhouse gas emissions, created jobs and wealth and tax revenue here in Canada, employed hundreds of First Nations Canadians. Petronas, that would have been the largest direct foreign investment in the history of Canada's economy, cancelled because of regulatory uncertainty and endless delays caused by the same people who are standing on railways right now.

Northern Gateway, the terminus of which would have been Kitimat, an \$8 billion project . . .

**Mrs. Savage:** Seven point nine.

**Mr. Kenney:** Yeah. Okay; \$7.9 billion. She always corrects me to the decimal.

The Minister of Energy worked on that project for several years of her life she'll never get back, but I want to commend her for her effort to partner with indigenous people on that. This minister signed benefit agreements on behalf of Enbridge, negotiated benefit agreements with First Nations in British Columbia who saw it as a sign of hope. It was approved by the regulator, but it was immediately vetoed by Prime Minister Trudeau upon taking office. Why? Because he owed a political debt to the green left, who insisted that it be shut down, slamming the door on jobs and opportunity for indigenous people and project after project, it is estimated about \$150 billion of prospective capital investment. Just to put that in perspective, that's, like, three times the annual Alberta budget. That's what our country spends on defence in five, six years. That's the GDP of a small country, \$150 billion. Cancelled most recently: the \$20 billion from Teck. All of that: the desired, deliberate outcome of this campaign to land-lock our energy.

By the way, as I pointed out in speaking today to the Indian Resource Council – their AGM is being held in Calgary. I was honoured to be their keynote speaker this morning. I was honoured to receive a standing ovation from hundreds of indigenous leaders and chiefs from across the country for saying there what I'm saying here today, Mr. Speaker. By the way, why don't they get their voice share on the CBC and in the media? Why are they ignored? They are so frustrated with how this is happening in our country.

The point is that in 2013 a potluck was held in my honour as an expression of solidarity with the Crown, to find reconciliation through responsible resource development and infrastructure, through training and employment, through all of that. Now project by project it's being repealed. And guess what? The \$150 billion of

investment that we lost: I gather that yesterday Russia announced \$150 billion – it's just a coincidence but a remarkable one – of new capital investment in Siberian oil field development. Russia just completed a major gas pipeline to China when we haven't been able to get one built for LNG even within our own country. Mr. Speaker, none of this has happened by accident. None of it has happened by accident.

So here's my point. I was there in Wet'suwet'en territory. I was there in Houston. I met with the elders, the elected tribal councils, the matriarchs, the hereditary chiefs, and most importantly I met with the grassroots young people who wanted to stay in their ancient homeland and have a future, not a welfare cheque but the dignity of work. Now they're wondering what's left for them. Mr. Speaker, to those who claim they're acting in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en: no, you're not; you are acting to trap them in poverty. All 20 elected First Nations councils in the Wet'suwet'en territory fully support the Coastal GasLink project. [interjections] Are they heckling on this? There have been 15 tribal council elections in the five main Wet'suwet'en lodges and communities in the past six years. All 15 of them returned pro Coastal GasLink councils and chiefs.

There have been grassroots consultations by those councils, which have shown as much as 85 per cent grassroots support for these projects, in part because Coastal GasLink, which is operated by TC Energy, a great Alberta company, has committed to a billion dollars in direct economic benefits for northern B.C. First Nations, including hundreds of jobs.

Right now in Wet'suwet'en areas there are 400 indigenous workers ready to get to work on that project, mainly for indigenous-owned contractors, to get it built, and every one of the 20, from the Haisla all the way up to the Dene around Fort St. John, they all support this project. The NDP government in British Columbia supports the project. Our courts, that have placed a great emphasis on the duty of the Crown to consult and accommodate First Nations, have reaffirmed this project time and again. Our regulators have done so as well.

Mr. Speaker, you know, when I see these CBC and *Toronto Star* and other headlines, Wet'suwet'en Solidarity, what a lie, what a complete inversion of the truth. That is why we have this motion here. It's not just the economic impact although that's critical. It's not just the undermining of the rule of law, but ultimately – ultimately – one of the great moral causes of our generation and our time in this country is that of reconciliation with our indigenous people. Let me say, whether to misguided young Mohawk folk in and around Belleville, who I'm sure are not aware of these facts, or whether to those who are maliciously trying to misappropriate indigenous voices and interests for their radical green-left cause for whatever reason, whatever may motivate them: my message, our message, is this, that the path of reconciliation does not and must not lead to poverty.

Real reconciliation requires opportunity. For communities that do not have the advantages of modern economies, that opportunity lies through the development of resources. That is why we've created the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, that is why 14 of 14 northeastern Alberta First Nations supported the Teck Frontier mine, and that is why I received a standing ovation from hundreds of Indigenous leaders this morning on exactly this issue. That is why the law must be enforced. That is why I was proud to table yesterday the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act in this place to add additional, strict sanctions on those who are found guilty of purposely blocking critical public infrastructure in this province, and that is why we must see action.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased that last Friday the Prime Minister finally said that the blockades must end, and we've been pleased to

see at least some expanded enforcement efforts in Ontario. But we must collectively send a message that this law-breaking, job-killing activity that is damaging the dream of reconciliation, that is attacking the democratically expressed wishes of indigenous people, must end now. That means that our law enforcement agencies, whom we all respect, must ensure that the law is enforced, because if and when it is not, it is a validation of lawlessness, and it encourages even more. I know I speak for at least all members on the government side of the House and the vast majority of Albertans in imploring governments, police agencies across the country to ensure a path forward.

3:40

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, as Chief Ross of the Haisla reminds us, this should not be about the fashionable political views of some people from the loony left in downtown Toronto or downtown Vancouver. It shouldn't be about the extremist agenda of Extinction Rebellion and Climate Justice to shut down the entire modern economy, an agenda with which the Alberta NDP seems happy to have associated itself. No, no, no. This is about that 14-year-old indigenous person who is growing up in a community with little or no opportunity, who perhaps is being tempted to fall into the despair of addiction and hopelessness like too many have before them. This is about what kind of life those young people will have in the future, so we need to come together to ensure that there is such a future. We in Alberta are certainly prepared to do our part.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, is there anyone else wishing to speak to Government Motion 7? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View has risen.

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This motion is simply grandstanding. It has no legal force and effect on Executive Council nor the police. Of course we don't want to see core economic infrastructure undermined by illegal activities, but this motion itself is nothing but grandstanding. This is not legally binding on Executive Council, and even should they wish to follow this advice, they don't have the authority to direct the police in this matter.

We in my caucus will vote for this because we do agree with the rule of law and that economic activity should not be subject to illegal interference. But while we agree with those and while we will vote for the motion, let me be clear. It is the police who will ultimately enforce the law and keep the peace, and they will ensure that when they are enforcing the law, they are keeping the appropriate focus on preserving the safety of the public and the officers who are doing this work. That is why they get to make the decision and not us.

Since the Premier chose to raise it, Mr. Speaker, indicating his supposed reverence for the rule of law and its primordial, essential, and fundamental nature, let me be clear. I fully agree. I fully support the idea that we are a society that must uphold the rule of law. I do not and never have mocked the rule of law, as he implies. It is the Premier who has made a mockery of the rule of law in this place, and he has the audacity to invoke it after thumbing his nose at it. This is a man who has torn up contracts, taken pensions without consultation. He has fired the Election Commissioner in the midst of an active investigation into his own leadership race. For the Premier to invoke the rule of law is an insult to those who hold it dear.

The whole point of the rule of law is the application of the law to everyone. I agree that everyone includes protesters, Mr. Speaker, but everyone also includes politicians. It includes cabinet ministers,

and it includes Premiers. Where was this reverence for the rule of law when he tore up contracts with hard-working people in this province? Where was his reverence when he gave himself the power to unilaterally alter contracts with doctors, with nurses, with teachers, and with others? Where was this primordial concept when he took the pension money of teachers and others across this province? Did he so much as consider the impact of this essential and fundamental principle when he placed himself above the law and fired the Election Commissioner while he was investigating his own leadership contest?

This Premier's inflamed rhetoric is a path to failure. After presiding over the loss of 50,000 jobs since he announced his \$4.7 billion corporate handout, it's disappointing to see that this Premier has not come prepared with a forward-looking plan to help grow our economy or get people back to work. Instead, the UCP members are resorting to grandstanding and theatrics on an issue where they should choose to lead instead of shout.

As you well know, this motion will have no legal effect, and it will not get the train tracks in Ontario cleared any faster. What would get the trains moving in our Premier's friend and ally Doug Ford's area is showing some real leadership. That, Mr. Speaker is why we are here today, because the UCP government has no plan for jobs. While the UCP members love to wax philosophical about what Albertans voted for in the last election, I think that the truth is clear to every one of us. They voted for jobs. They were promised jobs by the UCP, jobs without cuts to front-line services. Instead, they got the cuts without any of the jobs. I imagine that UCP MLAs are getting the very same message on the doors that I am. People are not thrilled about that, which is why we're here today talking about a motion that will have no legal effect, another attempt to distract.

I want to be clear about another thing. Having said that we will support this motion, we also support people's right to peaceful protest, but we expect them to do so within the law. I believe that every member in this Chamber should be held to the law. I believe that every person in this province should be held to the law, and that includes protesters. But again I must emphasize that it includes politicians in this room as well. This is being sold as a rule-of-law motion. I think the rule of law is incredibly critical to our democracy. I absolutely believe that the protesters should have their say but, again, within the bounds of the law.

But I have to emphasize that it's pretty rich for the government members, who literally voted to fire the person in charge of investigating their own leader's leadership race, to suddenly care so deeply about the rule of law. The rule of law means nothing if it doesn't apply universally, if it doesn't apply to every one of us. If we apply it selectively, if we say that all those people out there, outside of this Chamber, must be governed by the same rules but we, we in this Chamber, will be above the law, which is what the Premier and the UCP members have done by voting to fire the Election Commissioner, I don't think that works. The rule of law must be universal, and that's fundamental to democracy. This UCP government and these UCP MLAs flout the law when it suits them, tearing up contracts with teachers, with nurses, with doctors, taking people's pensions, but invoke the rule of law when it suits them. Unlike the UCP, I think that it should apply at all times.

As the members opposite well know, there are injunctions in place across this country that are being enforced by police. Police have the authority to enforce the law, and we respect the work that they are doing. This, I think, is something which is fundamental to myself and to many others. Police will choose to enforce that law in a way that maximizes public safety and that maximizes officer safety. Those officers have families, too, families who expect to see them, who hope to see them come home at the end of each day, and

who wait when they are in dangerous situations. I think that it is worth emphasizing that point, that these professionals are trained to deal with this situation, and they will make the decisions. I think that we in this room, who do not necessarily have all the information that they have, ought to let them make those decisions.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I think the truth is that actions speak louder than words, and they certainly speak louder than grandstanding. This government's actions so far are a \$4.7 billion no-job corporate handout, 50,000 jobs lost since that policy was introduced, and cuts that will see Albertans pay more and get less. I expect that the UCP MLAs are hearing public opinion on that issue. I suspect that they hear it every day, and I imagine that that is why we are here today spending time talking about something which it's now clear we agree on.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will end my comments, and I will urge members in this House to support this motion.

3:50

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available, should anybody wish to make comments or questions. I see the hon. Minister of Transportation has risen.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise under 29(2)(a). I listened carefully to the NDP member. You know, it's always a tough act speaking after our Premier because he's so eloquent and constructs his arguments so well. It's much easier speaking after what we just heard in comparison.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked about theatrics. Well, to some degree theatrics is what happens in here. It's important work that we do, but it's our public expression to those Albertans that care to watch what we intend to do and how we intend to do it. But what we've seen here is a misdirection by the opposition. I'll give you an example. The hon. member in her remarks just talked about how they support peaceful protest. Well, I'm quite pleased about that. We all support peaceful protest. That's where we have no difference, and I'm not surprised that the hon. member would focus on where we have no difference because what really is important is where we do have a difference. We don't support illegal protest, and it seems that members of the other side just might. They actually line themselves up with Extinction Rebellion, people with an ambition to shut the whole country down, people that illegally block rail lines.

You know what? The opposition, the NDP and their leader, has been eerily silent about calls to take down the illegal protests across this country in the last three weeks. They have been eerily silent about calling for the federal government to take action, to get the police and the authorities to take down the illegal protests. "Why?" you might ask. Well, I'd suggest, Mr. Speaker, that they actually are very much in solidarity with some of these illegal protests, and they're close enough to the people performing these illegal protests that they don't want to disrupt their base. These are the people they're trying to attract to vote for them, the people that support the illegal protests, the people that support not the majority of our First Nations sisters and brothers but, rather, the radical fringe of our First Nations sisters and brothers.

As our Premier so eloquently pointed out, the vast majority of the Wet'suwet'en and other First Nations are in support of the Coastal GasLink line. They're in support of the responsible extraction of our resources. They are in favour of selling those resources at a profit to world markets to lift Canadians, including our First

Nations sisters and brothers, out of poverty and create good, mortgage-paying jobs where the people can be self-determined and look after their families and not have to depend upon help from somebody else. Yet the folks across the aisle won't publicly criticize those who would try to stop our First Nations from having that economic success.

When I listen to the remarks from the hon. member from the NDP side, I have to say that, yes, actions do speak louder than words. Also, inactions speak louder than words, and the inaction of that party and their leader against the illegal protests speaks very, very loudly to all Albertans and very, very loudly to all Canadians. That lack of criticism of those illegal protests that hurt the economic development of Canadians might suggest to some people: carry on with your illegal activities because we have a political party that will not criticize us when we do it. We have a political party that will not stand up for the economic welfare of First Nations. We have a political party that is so bent on their ideology that they actually don't care who gets hurt. We have a political party that will actually support people in making the railways unsafe if it supports their political ideology. Wow.

Actions do speak louder than words – I actually agree with that from the hon. member across – and so do the inactions, so does the silence, so does the refusal to stand up against illegal activities that actually end up hurting all Canadians, putting Canadians in danger and not just in the energy industry. When you block the railways, it threatens I don't know how many millions of jobs across this country that depend upon the railways, either to provide parts for them to put together or to take away what they make to sell them to someplace else. But the people on both ends, the people that the NDP will not stand up and talk against, are the ones who are getting hurt, and they won't be against it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to speak to Government Motion 7? I see the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat has risen to speak.

**Mr. Barnes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today and stand up in support of Government Motion 7 and, by extension, in support of the rule of law. Now, we know that peaceful and lawful demonstrations are a fundamental part of any democracy and can be an important and an acceptable way for people to voice their opinions and their concerns. Of course, this is not what this is about.

However, there has been some talk, since we announced our intention of Bill 1, that this government is using a bill to try and subvert people's right to protest. Mr. Speaker, let's be absolutely clear right here, right now. The right to freedom of speech and to protest does not give anyone the ability to commit illegal acts in the name of that right. Laws must be respected while exercising one's rights to demonstrate and protest. We cannot allow people to subvert the rule of law. The blockading of railroads, ports, highways is causing tremendous economic turmoil. People are losing their jobs. Families, including children and seniors, are paying the price for others' lawlessness.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier outlined well the millions of dollars of losses to the agriculture industry, to industries throughout Alberta and throughout Canada. I think of farmers in my constituency this weekend who have suffered under two to three years of not being able to get their crops off and now face the cost of demurrage charges of tens of thousands a day for tankers and freight lined up in the port, a port that may never come back to Vancouver or the St. Lawrence because the lawlessness in Canada is causing anxiety, frustration, and real fear to Albertans.

Canadians and Albertans are hard-working, law-abiding people. They want to work and live the dream of providing for themselves, their families, their communities, and their friends. This cannot happen, Mr. Speaker, without jobs. Jobs cannot happen without business. Businesses cannot run without capital and investment and the transportation flow that's so definitely required in western Canada, and investment will not come unless Canada can show that we are able to provide the confidence that hard-earned dollars need before they are placed in an economy. Even further, without an economy we have no revenue for important government programs, government programs that all Albertans depend on.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, I look around and I wonder: what economy? These environmental radicals, many of whom are foreign funded, have been holding Canada's economy hostage and causing even more pollution while they're doing it. The dozens – dozens – of cargo vessels off the coast of B.C. don't run on pixie dust. They run on oil, and they are sitting there idling or turning to a different country's port. This is not helpful for our economy or even the environment. In fact, it even stifles the economy in other countries potentially. If we cannot facilitate trade and economic ties with other countries, further consequences will ensue. There will either be entire layoffs in these countries as businesses that import from or export to Canada slow down, or again they will look to take their business elsewhere. We can open Alberta for business till the end of time, but without laws in Canada, laws that are being enforced, our province will be fenced in while Canada is clearly closed for business under this disastrous federal government.

4:00

Mr. Speaker, many Albertans have come to me, many constituents, and I, too, wonder where our Prime Minister is during all of this. I am to some measure grateful that he came back from his UN seat lobbying to be on camera during the crisis, but I hear only words while our economy goes down the drain, taking with it, alas, investor confidence and more savings of the hard work of Alberta families and communities.

Teck Frontier is gone, and I feel as though I'm just waiting for the next bad-news story to occur while Trudeau dithers. Once again he talks and talks, but he is missing the actual action part of his job. Trudeau is shown in the papers saying that the blockades must come down, that the time has come. While several blockades have now been cleared out, I'm afraid that they'll be back again, and already today they're popping up. Without legal teeth to back up the clearing of these blockades, protesters will not be deterred for long. If they can get away with it with nothing but a slap on the wrist, of course they will do it again. Mr. Speaker, clearly the inaction of Trudeau's Liberals has emboldened these protesters.

We are doing our part here in Alberta with Bill 1 to give laws already in place more teeth, teeth needed by others. Mr. Speaker, the federal government must follow. In support of this motion I, too, denounce the blocking of Canada's core infrastructure. I, too, call for the law to be enforced without delay, and may I add that the strengthening of these laws with the likes of what has been proposed here under Bill 1 is exactly the support that our communities need.

Mr. Speaker, to all the Legislatures and fellow lawmakers across the country: I call on all of us to work with law enforcement to enforce the rule of law, to support our great police and our great first responders and help this happen. The time for observation is over. Allow commerce to resume, and let all Canadians get back to work to build for their families, their future, and our social programs. But when it comes to hoping for action from our Prime Minister, I am not going to hold my breath.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

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

**Ms Rosin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to respond to the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat. He's absolutely right. In our Charter of Rights as Canadians we do have the rights to expression, association, and peaceful assembly, but the rights we do not have and that are nowhere in our Charter of Rights are the freedom to shut down economies and barricade private property, to harass private citizens, to cause mass job layoffs, food shortages. Nowhere are these rights in our Charter as Canadians.

I believe one of the prime reasons that we are an incredible society as Canadians is that we have laws and we uphold them here. Canada is a society built on laws that we uphold, and we're proud of that. As the member will know as we are both members of the Fair Deal Panel, something we've heard a lot from Albertans is the desire for a provincial police force. I know we heard this a lot from public opinion when the barricades were in Alberta. We saw the Edmonton police and some other helpful citizens take action to take those barricades down immediately because that's Alberta, and we enforce the law here.

As for the RCMP contract it would only take 24 months' notice to enforce or implement a provincial police force. Given that the law is not exactly being upheld in Canada right now under the RCMP and that we're not getting the direction we need from the federal government, I'm just wondering if the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat would like to comment, perhaps, on his opinion towards a provincial police force or even the merits of one from the public opinion we've heard at our town halls and from the research behind that.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat with about three minutes, 30 seconds remaining.

**Mr. Barnes:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for that question. Yes, clearly, at our Fair Deal Panel hundreds and hundreds of Albertans have come out and expressed their concern for a stronger Alberta, for an Alberta where we can help each other, help the rest of Canada, where we can have what used to be called the Alberta advantage of the most opportunity, the most competitive tax rates, and the best social programs. These blockades have risen the awareness of what a provincial police force may do to allow more direct safety, commerce.

We all know and with great, great empathy how rural crime has affected so many of our communities, our families, and the serious, serious consequences of what has happened, you know, after the NDP government, to the economy as that has spread. It's become a very, very big concern for Albertans. They care deeply about our place in Canada; they care deeply about our friends and our families and, of course, want us to be as safe as possible.

I'm so glad to have my hon. colleague remind us of how important it is to Albertans that we look at doing all we can to make sure that, yes, democracy is enhanced, that democracy is protected. As she so eloquently pointed out at the start, legally there are opportunities for people to always express what they think is the best direction for Alberta and Canada. But in the case where some have crossed the line, where some have gone too far, where some have affected greatly the commerce and the lives and the safety of others, Albertans are concerned about what needs to happen.

That is why I support Bill 1 so much, the protection of critical infrastructure, and what our Premier and our government is doing, and it's why I support this House so much and Motion 7, further



enhancing the protection of critical infrastructure for commerce, for Alberta, for public services, and everyone's safety.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is still available for about a minute.

Seeing none, are there any other hon. members looking to speak to the motion? I see the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon has risen to speak.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to rise today and speak in favour of this motion, a motion that is very clear in its resolution. It reads:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly unequivocally denounce the illegal blockading of Canada's core infrastructure, including railways, pipelines, ports, and roadways, and call for the law to be enforced without delay.

Mr. Speaker, the condemnation of the blockades and the call for the rule of law to be upheld comes at a critical moment in our nation's history. For weeks we've seen antienergy protesters and radical environmentalists parading around claiming to be supporting indigenous communities in this country. These radical actors are alarmingly uninformed. In reality the blockades and the continued radical protests are taking away the opportunities for skills and training and employment and revenue that many First Nations communities are putting into place.

We had an opportunity to listen to the Premier earlier this afternoon talk with great forcefulness about the vision that our government has had for trying to ensure that First Nations communities have access to the resources and the capacity to promote opportunities through those resources. These blockades, these protests are putting that in jeopardy. Since taking office, this government has worked tirelessly to establish a positive relationship with indigenous communities in this province. There have been significant efforts from all parties involved to engage in constructive dialogue and to respect the consultation process.

As a sign of reconciliation in action communities were brought to the table to negotiate with the government and private actors to ensure a fair deal for everyone involved. We knew this to be the case only a few days ago. Teck Resources withdrew its application for the Frontier oil sands mine. This withdrawal was spurred on by concerns over public safety and the potential for illegal protests to obstruct the future of that project. The consequences of this decision and the illegal blockades are steep for all Albertans, including members of the indigenous communities.

4:10

Mr. Speaker, I've had the pleasure of serving Drayton Valley-Devon as their MLA. Last week I had a constituent phone me up. He's the owner of Liquids Transloading. His name is Eldon Fandrick. He has a business that off-loads trains that service the airport. He was telling me just how many of the businesses that he does business with that come into his facility to off-load the methanes and the other materials and minerals that are used in the industries of Alberta are not getting to his business and how many other businesses across this nation are being affected in a very serious way, people being laid off. The consequences of this decision at Teck as well as the consequences that are coming from the illegal blockades: all Albertans, all Canadians, and especially indigenous communities are paying a very steep price.

Every one of the 14 indigenous communities that were approximate to the proposed mine site at Teck Frontier were consulted, and they had reached agreements to move forward. Only hours before the project was withdrawn, the Minister of Environment and Parks was able to announce that agreements had been secured

with the Mikisew Cree First Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. These communities stood to gain hundreds of good-paying jobs and tens of millions of dollars in revenue from this mine project, but a small group, a very small group, of urban left-wing zealots have undermined the hard work of community leaders. They have helped to shut down the Teck project.

This isn't a new story, Mr. Speaker. The illegal blockades that are crippling this country and scaring investors away are hurting the prosperity of many indigenous communities. In British Columbia all 20 communities along the Coastal GasLink Pipeline route were consulted, and all elected band councils supported the project, yet these radical protesters are appropriating the narratives around these projects, undermining good-faith consultations that energy projects are required by law to undertake.

It's the law of unintended consequences, Mr. Speaker, the illegal actions of radical antienergy protesters that are undermining the path to reconciliation that many First Nations are taking. The Premier put it best when he said that reconciliation does not mean locking indigenous people into permanent poverty. That is the ultimate result of illegal blockades and a tax on critical infrastructure by radical antienergy protesters. They cannot be permitted to continue.

I hope that all members of this Legislature will consider the strong negative impacts that ongoing blockades are having on our indigenous communities and that we all in this House will support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anybody wish to make comments, five minutes for questions or comments.

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to the motion? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore has risen.

**Ms Issik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to stand in this Assembly today and speak in support of this motion. I'm also proud to stand with the Alberta energy industry in the face of an increasingly radical movement of antienergy protesters. The economy is front of mind for all Albertans. In my riding of Calgary-Glenmore as well as across the province the economy has been hurting for several years. With the combination of falling oil prices and antienergy ideology in the federal government the industry has faced many challenges. This has in turn affected all Albertans.

Now, we have recently seen the unlawful means that radical protesters will take to shut down this important industry. The Premier summed it up perfectly when he called out the urban green left zealots for trying to shut down economic prosperity for indigenous communities.

This Assembly cannot be silent as the industry at the heart of this province and this country's economy is under attack. The blockades that have been put up across Canada have immediate and long-term consequences. In the short term our essential infrastructure is being held hostage. With rail lines, ferry ports, and construction sites blocked, the blockades have definitely slowed down our economy. In the last few weeks CN Rail has announced hundreds of layoffs. Via Rail announced a further 1,000 jobs lost. A recent report from RBC Economics states that the national GDP growth could actually be reduced by .2 per cent this quarter, a shocking number when we consider the size of Canada's economy. The backlogs created by the rail blockades across the country will only have a ripple effect if the blockades drag on.

But even more concerning to Albertans, Mr. Speaker, are the long-term ramifications of illegal blockades. The blockades have delivered an alarming blow to investor confidence in energy projects. This impact is not easily reversed, especially as blockades

and disruptions continue. The recent withdrawal of Teck's Frontier mine proposal is a sobering example of the damage that environmental radicals can have on our economy. The withdrawal of Teck Frontier amounts to the loss of a \$20 billion investment in this province. Teck's CEO stated that it is now evident that there's no constructive path forward for the project as he withdrew the project.

Mr. Speaker, it is no coincidence that this oil sands project was withdrawn while our economy is being held hostage by protesters. Investors in the natural resource industry cannot be confident that even after we've met all of the consultation and all of the regulatory requirements, their projects will proceed without delays from unlawful protesters. The withdrawal of the Frontier mine project is a steep cost for this province. The mine's construction alone was projected to create 7,000 good-paying jobs, and another 2,500 were expected during the mine's operations.

What can we learn from the Teck Frontier withdrawal? Is it that we must present a united face against the radical actors who are trying to undermine Alberta's industries? I say yes. We as MLAs have a duty to Albertans. We are here to stand up for Albertans and for their interests. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this motion calling for an end to illegal blockades. I hope that all Members of the Legislative Assembly will do the same.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

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

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak? I see the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont has risen.

**Mr. Rutherford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak today in favour of the motion before us. Our province's key industries are under attack. In recent weeks the blockades that are targeting the rail lines and highways across our country have revealed the lengths that radical antienergy activists are willing to go to prevent Alberta's resources from being developed. Essential infrastructure in Alberta cannot afford to be targeted and held up. Railways, pipelines, and highways are essential to our province's economy. Each day that railcars or transport trucks are slowed, Alberta's businesses will lose money, and jobs are lost as well.

Not only that, but investors are raising concerns. They are losing confidence in our natural resource projects. The ongoing illegal protests are sending the message that even when businesses follow the rules, a small group can cause costly delays and conflicts. Illegal protests in this country are having a direct and harmful impact on our industry that brings Alberta prosperity.

We saw with the Teck Frontier mine withdrawal that one of the concerns that prompted Teck to withdraw its mine proposal was the uncertainty around public safety and the ramifications of antienergy protests. The Teck Frontier project alone would have created 7,000 well-paying construction jobs. It would have created another 2,500 operational jobs upon completion. These losses are deeply felt in a province that has not yet economically recovered. The news of Teck's proposal withdrawal must serve as a wake-up call to all of us. Mr. Speaker, the targeting of our energy industry is a cause for concern. Radical, uninformed, dogmatic protests are having an outsized influence on our province's economy, and as many of my colleagues have pointed out in today's debate, the economic costs of prolonged protests are deeply concerning.

4:20

That's why I support this motion being debated this evening. This Assembly is beginning this session of the Legislature in a crucial moment. It is a moment for Alberta's Legislature to clearly signal

to the people of this province and leaders across the country that Alberta is resolved in its support of law-abiding individuals and businesses. Upholding the rule of law is one of the central tenets of our democratic society. According to this key principle, no one is above the law. I join my hon. colleagues in condemning the protests that want to pretend that the law does not apply to them. Our province's economy cannot afford to be held in a chokehold by a few lawbreakers. As the language of this motion states, the law should be enforced without delay.

That means that there is no special treatment for the groups that are targeting critical infrastructure, no special treatment for the self-righteous antienergy protesters who have consistently disrespected laws in this province. Small radical groups should not have the power to control our economy and scare investment. The rule of law must be upheld. It is a common-sense sentiment that sends a clear message: this government stands with the law-abiding individuals and businesses across our province. To those who would try to sabotage our economy: not in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, in Leduc-Beaumont, through my riding runs highway 2. We have the international airport. We have rail lines, a rail spur right next to an investment from Amazon, a million-square-foot facility. My riding depends on open transportation networks. The Edmonton International Airport has grown substantially over the last few years. That growth is coupled with the increased movement of cargo out of that airport. To have that shut down would be a huge blow to the people who are employed there and the businesses that support that, not only for the residents of Leduc-Beaumont but the residents who live in the surrounding areas who come there.

The airport has created over 13,000 jobs in the last three years, and during an economic downturn when many of the constituents in Leduc-Beaumont would have relied on oil and gas jobs in Nisku or the Leduc Industrial Park or going up north, those 13,000 jobs offered them some hope. It offered them the ability to be able to pay their bills and get through a downturn, and those jobs are long term. That's great. I hope the airport does extremely well in being able to help those individuals support themselves and their families. If those jobs are temporary, then they want that opportunity to go back to the oil and gas jobs that they had up north and around the industrial parks in my riding. They are afforded that opportunity to be able to provide for themselves and for their families, and a small minority of people do not have the right to get in the way of their quality of life, Mr. Speaker.

That's why I'm supporting this motion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

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

**Mr. Ellis:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Great to stand up and, of course, welcome everybody to this new session, my first opportunity to speak, obviously, in the new year. I would like to thank my colleague for his remarks. Obviously, as many of you know, he and I both have spent well over a decade each on the streets, both in Calgary and Edmonton, and he certainly got me thinking when he was talking about the rule of law. Of course, enforcing the rule of law, I think, is something that is – you know, I hear a lot of people talking about: the police, the police, the police. Of course, the police do have a role to play in this, but I'm certainly interested to hear his remarks or his thoughts in regard to the politicians who have been eerily silent and those who are . . .

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** The Leader of the Opposition, for example.

**Mr. Ellis:** Yeah. Exactly, right? The Leader of the Opposition, as an example.

... eerily silent. You know, they talk about the rule of law, but my question really has to do with not just the enforcement by the police of the rule of law but those who also have the courage to stand up against those protesters. I know I was very proud to see some Albertans when people were starting to protest here in Alberta, that it was good, hard-working Albertans that took those railway ties off and cleared those train tracks because they understood what was at stake. Their livelihood was at stake, and they understood the impact it was having on the economy. It's not just about the police in these situations. As I said, they do have a role to play.

But I'd like to hear his thoughts on what the perceived silence of those, whether it be the opposition benches or whether it be other politicians – we talk about our federal government, for instance. I find our federal government has been eerily silent, although it is encouraging to finally hear the Prime Minister at least say that this sort of stuff has to stop. But the gross negative impact it is having on our economy not just here in Alberta but right across Canada is, I'm going to assume, almost incalculable. I mean, the effect it's having on just everyday citizens: I don't even know how we're going to measure this sort of impact. I want to hear what the hon. member, of course, has to say about those politicians who are remaining silent on this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

**Mr. Rutherford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. I served, much like my hon. colleague here, in law enforcement. I did 10 years with the Edmonton Police Service. You know, one of the things that you have to abide by is the duty to uphold the law and the duty to act. You have a responsibility to enforce the laws.

I think what ends up happening at times is that these protests become so politically charged that, at times, law enforcement wants to act but might not believe that it has the political support to do so. When you have a Prime Minister who spends days overseas silent on an issue like this, when you have a federal government that is not speaking up and saying, "Take down these blockades," until some 20, 25 days later, it has an effect on the law enforcement community. They want to be able to act, but they also want to know that the politicians support that movement as well because they know it is politically sensitive, right?

Police officers see the news just like everybody else. They have an understanding that these types of events can have political ramifications. They are equipped and trained to act. They want to, and I think it's a real disservice to our law enforcement community when we talk about the police needing to act. I believe that they want to. They don't want to stand idly by while a crime is occurring. They want to be able to get in there. But when politicians – especially federally we're talking about mainly, because it started in Ontario – stay silent, it really gives them that moment to really pause and say, like: is this what they want me to do? That pausing can lead to inaction.

Then when the federal government takes the direction of wanting to negotiate, it changes the police or law enforcement's ability to choose action over negotiation. You have one choice or the other, and it's important to know that when the federal government chose negotiations, they slowed down the reaction of police.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak? I see the hon. Member for Camrose has risen on Government Motion 7.

**Ms Lovely:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to stand today in complete support of the motion for debate. The motion before this Assembly today is simple yet incredibly important. It condemns the blockades that are targeting critical infrastructure, disrupting businesses and individuals. The motion also calls for the law to be enforced without delay. This motion's simple premise sends an important signal to those radicals that are using fear and intimidation tactics to slow down our economy. It shows that this government will not allow a few radicals to overrule the hard-working people in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the rule of the law is one of the key foundational principles of our democratic society. Indeed, the idea that all groups in our society should be equally accountable to the law is essential to the freedom that we enjoy in this province. That is why it has become so alarming to observe the blatant law-breaking that is scaring investors, shutting down a large part of our economy, and jeopardizing public safety. No one is above the law. No radical antienergy agenda should have the power to control our economy. As courts grant injunctions against illegal protesters and trespassers, there is no option but to enforce these court orders. That is the foundation that our society is built on.

A strong condemnation of increasingly radical antienergy protesters is something that we need to improve investor confidence. Without strong statements like this motion, the radical few feel entitled to slow down the economy and put natural resource development proposals in jeopardy. Mr. Speaker, we have seen how a lack of decisive leadership can worsen the problem. At the federal level, trying to placate protesters has only led to further protests, increased entitlement by the radical few, and reduced investor confidence.

4:30

Here in Alberta we cannot be silent and allow lawbreakers to undermine the industries that help this province to thrive. This motion is showing solidarity with Alberta's businesses, infrastructure, and workers. Law-abiding people and organizations should be supported in the face of illegal protests that are hampering everyday life. I would like to send a strong message with today's motion. In Alberta if you play by the rules, your government will stand with you. Today's debate provides an important opportunity to come together in the Legislative Assembly and discuss the importance of protecting critical infrastructure and keeping the economy out of the hands of radical protesters.

I know that this is an issue of great concern to many Albertans. In my own riding of Camrose I have heard from many worried constituents. They are seeing a small group of radicals, uninformed antienergy activists, putting this province's economy recovery in jeopardy. I hope that my constituents and all Albertans recognize that their provincial representatives care about jobs and the economy. I was elected by my constituents with clear priorities: stand up for Albertans, make life better for people in this province, and help get this province back to work. Allowing the radical few to slow down the hard-working majority in this province isn't an option.

I hope my fellow MLAs will join me in standing up for Alberta and support this motion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a)? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-West has risen.

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly thank the member for her remarks on this very important issue, you know, especially denouncing the illegal blockading of Canada's core

infrastructure, including railways. Now, I know that the Member for Camrose certainly comes from a very strong community. I personally know the chief of police there, just a great guy. I actually worked with him in the Calgary Police Service and have many, many positive things to say about the positive things he's doing for your community.

Now, that being said, as a smaller municipality, a hard-working municipality no different from anywhere else in not just Alberta but, I would say, Canada – when we're seeing these illegal blockades on core infrastructure, railways and pipelines and ports and roadways, I wonder if the member could maybe just elaborate on the impact that these blockades are having on the people within the community, not just the impact but, I would almost argue, the anxiety that the people face. I mean, when I had heard from my good friend the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon about the illegal protest that was happening I believe it was just south of Edmonton, the concern, of course, was for his community and the impact that this was going to have and how people within his riding were not just upset but were facing emotional anxiety as a result of these illegal blockades that were occurring.

I'd like to hear what the member has to say just in regard to how her community is being impacted by these illegal blockades not just here in Alberta but, of course, throughout Canada. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Camrose, should she wish to speak.

**Ms Lovely:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the kind comments about my community. You know, actually, I'm very happy to have this opportunity to talk about some concerns that constituents have brought forward to me just over the past week. One in particular was from a city councillor, who stopped me and told me that they are running dangerously short of a chemical to use in the treatment of the drinking water in our community. This is something that not only affects my community of Camrose but is going to start to affect all of our communities not only in Alberta but across Canada. We need to get this situation rectified so that the health and safety and the lives of our constituents are taken care of.

There's going to be a trickle-down effect as well, and we're going to start seeing that there's going to be a disappearance of items from shelves. There's going to start to be hoarding. If we don't get this situation under control, we're going to have a big problem on our hands.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members wishing to speak to Government Motion 7? I see the hon. Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism.

**Ms Fir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to this motion, particularly in light of the events around the nation that are causing extensive economic hardship to businesses in our province. It is clear that the protesters know exactly what they are doing, having targeted key points of Canada's rail infrastructure in order to cause the maximum disruption and economic damage.

Businesses have been raising the alarm about the damage they are taking as they are unable to receive key goods but also unable to ship them to their customers. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said yesterday that 1 in 4 small businesses have been affected by the blockades, and another half say that they will be affected soon. That is three-quarters of Canada's small businesses, that make up the engine of our economy, that are or will soon be facing financial struggles because of these illegal blockades.

The average cost to those affected has been \$60,000 so far; \$60,000, Mr. Speaker, for a small business. This is unconscionable.

These protesters were also blocking the port of Vancouver, which saw more than \$10 billion in products shipped in 2018. It is a critical piece of infrastructure for our province. The illegal blockade of the port prevented things such as chlorine for treating water from getting to where it is needed.

I want to read some quotes that underscore the magnitude of the damage. One quote from an Alberta company reads: our company has two shipping containers coming from Germany with equipment worth \$750,000; this leaves uncertainty as to when the equipment will arrive in Fort Macleod so we can install and use a large overhead for a one-year-old company.

A letter from nearly 50 business groups to the Prime Minister read:

These illegal blockades inflict serious damage on the economy, leaving countless middle-class jobs at risk, many of them in industries that must get their goods, parts, and ingredients to and from market by rail.

Our Prime Minister likes to talk about the importance of the middle class and how he values the middle class. Certainly not evident in what's been happening.

In addition to disrupting domestic and global supply chains, the blockades undermine Canada's reputation as a dependable partner in international trade.

The Western Grain Elevator Association estimates that the industry is losing \$63 million per week from the blockades, and as of today there are 52 ships waiting to be filled in Vancouver and Prince Rupert, with grain elevators in western provinces at 90 per cent capacity.

Mr. Speaker, investor confidence has taken a massive blow from this. It's obvious that Teck saw the blockades and factored them into their decision to shelve their Frontier project given the massive amounts of products they ship via rail.

Ellis Ross, former Haisla chief councillor, now MLA for Skeena in B.C., said that these blockades are setting back reconciliation 20 years.

We recognize the economic freedom of Alberta's businesses, our essential infrastructure, and our workers. We need to get Canada moving again. We need to see our infrastructure cleared. We need to see trains moving so that our economy can function. The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General said yesterday that our government will not stand idly by and allow Alberta to be an economic hostage, not now, not ever.

**The Acting Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a)? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-West.

**Mr. Ellis:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank the hon. member, of course, for her remarks in regard to this. Now, I'm sorry. I'm just trying to recollect, hon. member. Your constituency is Calgary-Peigan, and I believe that there is a railway yard in your constituency if I'm not mistaken. Yes. I think it's just near the Ogden area of Calgary. You know, I was born and raised in Calgary. Certainly, this is a very large railway yard, and you can tell as you drive by just in everyday life the impact that it has on the community with the trains that are going by and the multitude of railcars all over the place.

I'd like to hear her remarks. I mean, obviously, this would be something that greatly impacts her constituency, not only the city of Calgary, the province of Alberta, or Canada but certainly, specifically her community. I would love to hear her remarks. You know, in we'll call it a horrible scenario whereby we had some illegal protesters that were causing disruption within her community in Calgary-Peigan and disrupting the train lines, which

I believe might be a CP Rail hub in that particular area, what do you believe would be the impact not just on your community, but I'd almost expand – in a hub such as that, with that sort of impact, what would be the impact not just in Calgary-Peigan but in Calgary and Alberta and, I'd almost argue to say, Canada?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

4:40

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

**Ms Fir:** Thank you. As mentioned, my riding of Calgary-Peigan is in southeast Calgary. While, of course, it's got a large residential area, it's got a huge industrial area as well. My constituency office has been flooded by concerns from local businesses expressing their concern and looking for answers as to when these blockades will stop, seeking answers on how in a country like Canada a small group of radical extremists can possibly bring the country to its knees, take the country hostage, cripple the economy, and looking for answers from me as their MLA and from me as the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. It's very difficult when we can't give them those answers on the uncertainty they face, many of them waiting for shipments to come by rail, many of whom work on the rails, wanting some sort of answers and certainty as to when this is going to end, not understanding how this can happen in a country like Canada, where the rule of law should prevail.

They've also raised concerns, as our Premier has mentioned as well: is this merely just a dress rehearsal of what we expect to see in the future? Also, many of those businesses expressed concern to me about: what does this do for investor confidence in our country when outside investors can look at the Teck Frontier example or the blockades as an example of people following the law, doing everything that they're supposed to but allowing a small group of extremists to win? This cannot continue in our province. This cannot continue in our country. The devastation for jobs, for the economy is something that we can no longer endure.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

About a minute and a half under 29(2)(a).

Seeing none, are there any other members wishing to speak to Government Motion 7? Of course, I see the hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it's an honour to be able to stand and speak, especially about our incredible industry here in Alberta, the oil and gas industry. I think what we need to also talk about is all of the ancillary businesses that happen as a result of the incredible, incredible resource development that we have in this province.

I've had the privilege of being in this House for almost five years now, and especially when it comes to talking about this industry, I was really honoured initially to be able to work on this portfolio of energy and oil and gas. One of the things that was most profound for me was the way that the industry really surrounded me with a lot of information to educate me on this file but mostly to educate me on our environmental part and what we do in this province and in this country and why it's so important that we not only acknowledge what the industry does but why these blockades create such an unbelievable premise for other countries to see that Canada has no ability, first of all, to defend its industry, let alone make sure that illegal protests don't stop us from being able to do what we need to do in this country.

What the minister of economic trade and development was talking about, too, was that there are so many things that come on these trains and these pieces of infrastructure that traverse our

country. It's not just oil and gas. We are seeing right now in Quebec that they're four days away from running out of propane. That means that they will not be able to heat their homes, that their seniors may not be able to have access to warm places. These are serious crises and consequences of a federal government that does not have the ability to be able to lay down the law where it needs to happen.

What I found very interesting was when the members opposite talked about how this was just a motion and that there's no law that we can rely on and that it's just a symbol. This is way more than a symbol. Albertans have already been seen to take these things into their own hands competently and thoughtfully, to be able to remove barriers to make sure that we have access.

I live in the riding of Chestermere-Strathmore. Carseland is in my riding. We just went through weeks and weeks of barricades in Carseland that stopped the entire southern part of the province from being able to have access to what they needed at that location of the co-op in Carseland. It was unbelievable to see, first of all, the number of RCMP and officers that were out there to try and mitigate the situation but more about the impact that it had on our community, our farmers in that community, and the southern part of Alberta, that was also impacted by that. Yet not a word from the federal government.

So I want to talk about a few things. When we look at Alberta's industry, we have the highest environmental standards, and why collectively in this House we're not celebrating that piece of information is beyond me. The more that we do not acknowledge that and the more that we decide to go down the path of giving protesters, especially blockades and people who obstruct the ability for us to function in our country, the air space to this and allow that to happen, the more we deny what is actually happening in this country and the amazing, amazing industry that we have here. We've talked a lot over the years about carbon leakage, for example. Every single time a barrel of oil or any energy product that goes through a pipeline or on a train does not leave Alberta or does not leave Canada, it comes from some other jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, some other jurisdiction that doesn't have our human rights.

On top of that, what I found profoundly interesting is that I have yet to see a blockade, a protest, or otherwise about Saudi oil or any other oil that is coming up from Quebec and stopping them from entering our country. Places where their human rights – they beat women in the streets. LGBTQ2S-plus people are hung and thrown from buildings in these jurisdictions, yet not a single protest. Where are the protests against that oil, against those products coming into our country, where we profess to stand up for women, children, and people of all diverse backgrounds? Where are those protests?

I find it highly frustrating that in Canada and especially in Alberta – and the Premier has said this on many occasions – we've had taxes on large emitters and pollution for almost 17 years now. We were the very, very first jurisdiction in Canada and, I believe, North America to actually put a price on pollution, yet there are people in this House who will not acknowledge that and continue to inflame and add a voice to protesters that don't care about indigenous people, that don't care about nonindigenous people, and that certainly don't care about the fact that these industries provide us with schools and roads and social services.

Anybody in here gone to a hospital, used a syringe lately, had a tube, gone for an MRI, used any piece of machinery in our health care system that would not exist without petroleum products, not one of them? What about the idea of our schools, for example? I wonder: if you peeled away all of the pieces within a school that are made out of petroleum products, what kind of building would you have standing right now? It wouldn't be much.

I know I drive to come here to the Legislature to be able to represent my constituency. My constituency is huge. I drive all over the constituency to meet with my constituents, and then I also have the immense privilege of being a minister in this government, and the expectation of the Premier and my colleagues is that I'm available to our constituents and to this province. I can't imagine that anybody would ever deny that that would be important, especially when the people of Alberta – I have the blessing of being here with their blessing. But somehow that's not okay. How is it, then, that we justify even these protesters? How did they get there? Did they walk? And why, on top of that, are we allowing blockades and obstruction against people who are denying that that obstruction and those blockades are in their best interests?

The Premier said this on many, many occasions: the work that is being done with our First Nations brothers and sisters has been probably one of the proudest moments of this caucus. We have had the most amazing and unbelievable discussions with these people, who are savvy and intelligent and wonderful and care so deeply about their province and their people, on the right of self-determination, on being able to pull your people out of poverty, and on all of these things that have been denied, folks who have every right and the ability to be able to find prosperity in this country, yet not one word from the opposition in standing up for the very people that they supposedly stand for more than us. At least, that's what I've heard from that side.

4:50

I wanted to bring up one other thing. The MLA for Edmonton-South had mentioned in some debate about how he cannot understand the importance of the parity between trades and a university education. Well, let me just be clear. Maybe he has an issue because women are going to go into trades and may become pipeline fitters and may be working in an industry that he himself will not stand up for. Moreover, he stands along with people who are silent when blockades are stopping us from actually creating this prosperity, let alone the incredible number of women and girls that want to go into these jobs, well-paying jobs, incredible opportunities for them to be able to work in the trades, to be able to take care of themselves, their families, and be everything that we expect women and girls to be in this province and what they want. What about what they want? I'd like to understand what that MLA thinks about what they want. Obviously, he believes he knows better than the women of this province, who have actively said that this is important. Let's make sure that we get rid of the barriers so women get into this workforce and are able to contribute in the way that they choose to contribute to the oil and gas sector.

We have several women in this caucus who worked in oil and gas, several of them rock stars, actually. Some of them sit on this front bench, and many of them are behind me. They are the ones that have paved the way for other women to be able to come into this industry. I'm quite certain, if I asked them, that if they'd had the opportunity when they were looking at oil and gas and all of the other opportunities that they had, if a government had actually had the wherewithal to think forward about the opportunities to have in this industry, they would have probably jumped on those opportunities themselves, like Women Building Futures.

Thank you to the Minister of Advanced Education for having the forethought of understanding where education needs to go in this province. While the opposition might not believe that this is important to this province, it is. Women are 51 per cent of the population in our province. They want to work in oil and gas. They want to be pipeline fitters. They want to work in an industry where they have good-paying jobs. Maybe that member needs to reconsider, when he doesn't understand the parity between trades

and a university education, that he's actually demeaning the ability for women to be able to move forward in these projects in this province, demeaning women in our province. I mean, it's really interesting. Given the opportunity to actually collaborate and work on this together, the very first words that come out is this language of knowing better. Please don't ever tell me what I'm capable of doing.

I challenge the activists, both inside this room and out, about the environmental ability in this province and whether or not they're actually going to stand with us as we go forward with the Premier with challenges on C-69 and the carbon tax and other things, keeping in mind that the carbon tax does nothing for the environmental footprint in this province or in Canada.

We talk about the TIER program. I believe there was a member opposite who said that what we were talking about in the TIER program does nothing to actually reduce emissions. I would wager that if you looked at what the carbon tax is supposed to do – I think it was five megatonnes, six megatonnes. We're looking at 58 in the TIER program, potentially, and it was given equivalence at the federal government level, which is why we were all so surprised when Teck pulled out. That equivalency was there. It tells you something about real action on environment – real action – tangible evidence to actually make a difference in the environmental changes in this province.

You look at the amount of pollution, carbon, in a barrel 16, 17 years ago. I'll use MEG Energy as an example. MEG Energy was able to create bitumen that had less diluent in it, even in the last four years, than it did 17 years ago, creating a level of product that would go into a pipeline that has 30 per cent more capacity than it did 17 years ago. That wasn't done because somebody told them to do that. That's efficiency. That's intelligence. That's better, dollar for dollar, for them and everybody else, and we don't lose our value-added when it goes to the United States. We actually get to keep those value-added pieces and use them in our province for things like – I don't know – getting propane to Quebec, for example. A pipeline would certainly help that. Maybe we'll be able to get the opposition onside with that. That would be wonderful.

What I will tell you is this. When we think about the future of our families, our children, right across the spectrum – First Nations, us, all of the beautiful people that live in this country, that I'm so proud to call home – consider that every time you decide to just fight back for the sake of fighting back, you are actually harming the very people that you believe you're helping. I tell you that because right now and this morning the Premier was with our First Nations chiefs and brothers and sisters, and they told him that this was the right move forward. This is in consultation. This is in direct conversations with people who matter in this province and who should be right beside us in prosperity, being able to create their own futures, not because we told them to or they or anybody else told them to. These are amazing, talented, gifted human beings that deserve to be beside us in prosperity.

Every time that negative rhetoric comes across, all that happens is division and an absolute destruction of the relationships that we're trying so hard to build in this province. I can't imagine, for the life of me, what possible reason there would be to divide so deeply. That rhetoric is dangerous, it's hurtful, and does nothing to help out the folks in this province.

I would also like to add that – I think it was the member who was talking earlier in question period about electricity. I would just like to bring this up, a slightly different subject but along the same lines and along the same vein as what we're talking about. We need to make sure that we create the environment for jobs and the economy in this province. We're very blessed to be here, but we have to be able to tell the truth and the story about our industry.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

I see the hon. Member for Calgary-West has risen under 29(2)(a).

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank that member for the wonderful remarks that she made. You know, she had talked briefly about what the Premier was talking about in regard to the positive impact, you know, certainly, of economic development such as pipelines, and they were talking about the west coast – I know the Premier went on at length talking about the west coast – just the positive economic impact that it would have on the indigenous communities in those areas. As well, the support, of course, that we have from other indigenous groups within Alberta I think is also phenomenal.

I know that the hon. member has an East Indian heritage, and, you know, when we're talking about pipelines, in this particular case we're actually not talking about oil pipelines; we're talking about natural gas pipelines. One thing, again, that I notice the far left has been eerily silent on if they really, really care about improving the environment, and that's supporting countries such as India, supporting countries such as China and other countries that could use natural gas to get them off their reliance on coal. I would love to hear her comments on that.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much, and thank you for the opportunity to speak about that. Actually, this is such an important discussion. India, for example, has a burgeoning middle class right now. One of the biggest issues they have is, actually, energy poverty. If we're talking about pulling people out of poverty, if you can consider the human rights piece of it and the global responsibility that we have to make sure that other people benefit from the same sort of very, very cheap energy that we are so honoured to have here, it's actually our responsibility to be able to get that energy to global markets.

In places like India we have hundreds of thousands, actually, young females especially, who are sick or die every year because they burn dung patties inside on cold days. The methane can actually kill them. We have an absolute global responsibility to make sure that these countries have access to our responsibly resourced development, and they want it.

5:00

That's the thing. The Prime Minister and folks who would advocate against this are actually stopping our ability to be able to take our resources to countries where we could actually change their environmental footprint overnight, absolutely overnight. In fact, exporting that technology and our LNG to those countries I believe is a moral imperative. Anything that stops us from being able to do that actually stops those global economies from also becoming successful. If we think about women and children in countries like that who are in extreme, extreme poverty and the ability to be able to get a microloan and to be able to have access to energy, that is a game changer for the hundreds of millions of people in abject poverty in these countries. We have an absolute responsibility.

More than that, I was in Hyderabad at Christmastime, and the particulate in the air there and the pollution on certain days is actually overwhelming. Can you imagine if we were able to get our natural resources to them and to be able to help them out with that for their air quality? That would be unbelievable. Literally, I have to say that when I come home to Canada, to our beautiful air and where the water tastes literally like sugar, I can't even begin to tell you how grateful I am to live in a country not only that cares so much about its people but has the environmental protections to

make sure that we continue on a path to be able to use fossil fuels and to be able to contribute to other economies. More than that, they care so, so, so deeply about their earth, air, and water. If that is not the message that we're passing on, we're adding to a rhetoric of misinformation about our industry, which is unacceptable.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

With 40 seconds left, any 29(2)(a) takers?

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to Government Motion 7?

Seeing none, I'm prepared to ask the question.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 7 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:02 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Issik	Rosin
Allard	Loewen	Rowswell
Amery	Lovely	Rutherford
Barnes	Luan	Schulz
Dreeshen	Madu	Sigurdson, L.
Eggen	McIver	Sigurdson, R.J.
Ellis	Milliken	Smith
Fir	Neudorf	Stephan
Ganley	Nicolaides	Sweet
Glasgo	Nielsen	Toor
Glubish	Orr	van Dijken
Goehring	Phillips	Walker
Gotfried	Pon	Yao
Hanson	Rehn	Yaseen
Hunter	Reid	

Totals: For – 44 Against – 0

[Government Motion 7 carried unanimously]

### 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.

[Adjourned debate February 26: Mr. Jason Nixon]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, anyone wishing to join in the debate this evening in consideration of the throne speech? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview has some comments to make.

**Ms Sigurdson:** That's right, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's my pleasure to stand today to give my response to the Speech from the Throne. Of course, it's also very good to see many of my colleagues back from our time in our constituencies, where we were serving constituents, doing committee work, doing various things in our communities. It's good to be back and see everyone looking so good. I just want to acknowledge that.

5:20

Of course, I'm very grateful for this opportunity to speak about what we heard yesterday in the throne speech as delivered by the Lieutenant Governor. One of the things this government likes to discuss is how they are champions for job creation. This, of course, was echoed in the throne speech, but the actual fact is that we've lost 50,000 jobs since this Conservative government was elected, so, you know, their words are pretty weak because there hasn't actually been much manifestation of job creation in this province. Certainly, we know about the \$4.7 billion corporate handout that was supposed to create those jobs, but again that has not created a single job.

Then also we see cuts to capital investment in this speech. One of my colleagues spoke about this earlier: \$200 million cut. That also flies in the face of job creation. That's on page 3 of the throne speech. That doesn't make much sense. You know, really, that was something that our government took great pride in, that we invested significantly in our capital budget. In Seniors and Housing alone we invested \$1.2 billion, and that created jobs plus the affordable housing that was much-needed in this province and continues to be because of the neglect of many, many years of Conservative government. We did this all in the face of a very difficult time fiscally, when the price of oil, even though now it's under \$50, was for a time \$26 a barrel. That showed very much our government's commitment to supporting Albertans even in a time of fiscal difficulty.

I just want to also really emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that jobs are not a panacea. Just because you create jobs – I mean, of course, job creation is important, but that's not the only thing governments need to be able to do to support people, Albertans. Even though the throne speech says that they're going to create lots of jobs, which is great, they said that, you know, during the campaign, after they were elected, and we're still struggling so significantly in that area in Alberta.

Jobs are not the only thing a government needs to do. What they need to also do is support people through public programs. Some people maybe cannot work. You know, when I think about a certain population, I think of seniors. Seniors have worked their whole lives, contributed, built this province that we call Alberta, and have come to an age when it's time to retire. It's oftentimes at that age, when people become seniors, that they can rely on public programs to support them, things in our community to support them to be able to still live well, live in dignity. For them to get a job, it doesn't make sense. I mean, seniors do oftentimes work after age 65. Some of it's a choice – they're happy to continue working – but for others it's just not a feasible thing. What kind of a society stops supporting seniors because they can't get a job? Just to be very clear, for some of our citizens, that get-a-job idea, that oftentimes is touted as a panacea by Conservative governments, is not true at all.

What does the throne speech say regarding seniors? Well, I read it cover to cover, highlighted the sections that I thought were significant, read it again. Nothing. There's not even one word about seniors in this throne speech. Well, let me just correct myself a little bit. There's one comment. It doesn't say anything about seniors, but it does say that almost 3 per cent is going to be cut from all programs except Community and Social Services, Health, and Children's Services. It doesn't say anything about Seniors and Housing, you know, which I think the Minister of Seniors and Housing must be concerned about because those programs within Seniors and Housing are certainly social services. They support vulnerable Albertans. That's on page 5 of the throne speech. It talks about: there's going to be a cut of almost 3 per cent. Okay. So seniors aren't actually spoken of at all in the throne speech, but we do know

that programs are going to be cut by 3 per cent, which is a significant cut. Already the programs are inadequate in our province, and much more needs to be done to support seniors.

Certainly, we know that any kind of government that purports to lead and support its people really needs to be measured on how it treats its most vulnerable citizens. Of course, this government is showing, sadly, that they don't even make it into the throne speech, and what we do hear about them is that there's going to be an almost 3 per cent cut in the programs that they rely on. You know, that's certainly a concern to me. Certainly, the UCP government is forgetting about Alberta seniors, and I think that is a travesty.

Another thing that I think, you know, this government maybe needs to be reminded of is that in a modern society we should be moving forward. We should be asking: how can we create more fairness and justice in our society? But, really, what the UCP government is doing and has articulated in the throne speech is greater unfairness and increased inequality in our province and, sadly, on the backs of the most vulnerable. In this case, specifically, I'm speaking about seniors in Alberta.

We already know the record of this government, certainly, since they were elected and the first two sessions of their mandate. They've reduced funding to the Alberta seniors' benefit. It used to be indexed to the cost of inflation. Now they've deindexed it. We know that people on a fixed income are scrimping to get by. They're having trouble making it, so that bit of an increase in the cost of living on an annual basis makes a significant difference for them to be able to buy nutritional food, pay for housing, maybe take transportation, be able to be connected to other people in the community. We know that that already has been done by this government.

Also, the funding for the special needs assistance program has been cut. The special needs assistance program supports seniors with sort of extraordinary costs. You know, sometimes a senior may need a new fridge, a new microwave, something like that, so the government does have a provision. Certainly, I remember, when I was the Minister of Seniors and Housing, that seniors could apply for a new stove if they needed something like that and various things. Plus, it also helps with some health expenses that can be extraordinary; for example, funding for orthotics or lift chairs. We know that both of those areas have been cut. Again, this is another way this UCP government is taking money out of some of our most vulnerable citizens, out of seniors' pockets, by deindexing the Alberta seniors' benefit, by cutting the funding of the special needs assistance.

Here are some more ways that this government has decided to take money out of seniors' pockets. Drivers' medical exams now must be paid for out of pocket by seniors. We know also that this government has taken 46,000 Albertans off the seniors' drug plan. Certainly, I have a constituent who spoke up about this. You know, she's undergoing cancer treatment. She's 62, her partner is 65, and they had planned when she retired from teaching what they would do, like: how are we going to manage our health care? Part of the plan was set up so that dependants of seniors, even though they're not seniors themselves, could be covered in this program. Not anymore. So 46,000. Of course, she's experiencing some significant challenges right now with her health. What's that going to mean for her in terms of having to pay for other insurance or having to pay directly for that medicine that she's getting on a regular basis?

It is causing some really significant hardship, and really it has happened in such a quick fashion that people can't even plan for it. It's sort of done in a very – I don't know – kind of almost cruel manner. I know that my constituent is only one of the many, many thousands across our province.



5:30

Indeed, you know, this government does speak in the throne speech about wanting to make things more affordable, make things better for Albertans, yet, as I've already identified, there are so many things they've already done and they continue to do to create more hardship for Albertans and specifically seniors, in this case, who, really, have perhaps the least stability sometimes to be able to mitigate those conditions because they just can't get a job. They can't sometimes work longer hours so that they have more money to pay for these things. I think it is a really disturbing move by this government, you know, especially when it flies in the face of – happily, right away after the election, \$4.7 billion was given to wealthy corporations in a tax giveaway, but regular Albertans, regular seniors: it's on their backs that this is happening. I think it's certainly a significant problem with this government, that they put corporations ahead of seniors.

Also, I think that another important point is that, you know, oftentimes as we age, we have increased health issues, and sometimes we have more than one challenge. Sometimes this is referred to as being complex, complex patients. We know that moves by the Minister of Health, under the direction of the Premier, have been that now physicians are no longer able to bill for that additional time that it takes to serve complex patients. Of course, this is unfair. People need the additional time to make sure that they are getting the services they need and that the physician understands what actually is going on for that patient, because things are complex. Who's this hurting when this money is being taken from physicians? It's hurting patients.

Certainly, that's not the only thing. With the complex patients certainly there are the individual physicians who are serving them – they may go to their doc's office and have a time to see their doctor – but there also was a very innovative program that was at Sage, which is a seniors association here in Edmonton that serves seniors in the greater Edmonton area. Despite much consultation with the Ministry of Health and Alberta Health Services, that clinic that serves complex patients is in jeopardy of closing because the government will not fund the program grant for that. I mean, this is extremely short sighted.

The people that that clinic served were complex patients, the patients that I've been speaking about. Nurse practitioners worked with them. Social workers worked with them. People helped them with navigation of many systems that they had trouble with. We know that a lot of health concerns are actually maybe not about acute care but are due to the social determinants of health. Perhaps they don't have good social networks, they don't have housing that's safe and appropriate for them. They may feel isolated or be isolated in their own homes and have trouble with mobility and can't get out, and this can create mental health issues.

This clinic worked with seniors who had these complex health needs, and now funding looks like it may not be continuing. March 31, 2020, is the last time of the grant. I'm happy to table this, Mr. Speaker, too. I have a letter that Sage had to send out to all of their participants who attend the program.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

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

Seeing none, are there any other members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has risen.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise and respond to the Speech from the Throne. It's been my honour to represent the good people of Edmonton-Gold Bar for the past five

years. The people of Gold Bar come from many different backgrounds and walks of life, but, whether they're now raising their own children in the same houses where they themselves grew up or whether they moved to the neighbourhood from somewhere halfway around the world, every resident of Gold Bar wants the same things from life: a good job, the things necessary to live and raise their families in prosperity, and the ability to retire in dignity. As their member of the Legislature it's been my mission to work on behalf of my constituents to make sure that they have those things, and that will continue to be my mission as long as I have the privilege to stand in this place and continue this work.

Good jobs are the number one concern on the minds of my constituents. Let me just define what I mean when I talk about a good job. A good job is one that pays well enough for a person to not only put a roof over their head, clothes on their backs, food on their tables, but it also pays enough to allow people to be able to afford some of the finer things in life: maybe a winter getaway, a few fun toys, or the occasional night on the town with friends. A good job also provides more than just material things, though. It also provides a sense of worth, a sense of contributing to one's community, contributing to making things better.

For a very long time many of Gold Bar's residents have enjoyed these kinds of jobs, but not all of them have. Many residents have jobs that don't pay well enough to meet even their basic needs for shelter, food, and clothing, much less those other things that make life enjoyable. That's why, when we were government, we worked hard to lift up those people that the system had left behind for so long. We raised the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, which lifted the earnings of hundreds of thousands of Alberta workers, including many in my riding. We created income tax credits that lifted 44,000 children out of poverty, including many kids in my riding. And we changed labour laws to allow for working people in this province to organize themselves into unions, which I must remind people is the single best way for working people to fight for and win those good jobs that we all want.

When this UCP regime was elected, the first thing that they did was attack the legal protections that we introduced for good jobs. They lowered the minimum wage, and they made it harder for workers to unionize. They've reduced the income tax credits for working families, and they're letting children fall back into poverty. To date the only action that they've even attempted at creating jobs was to legislate a \$4.7 billion corporate handout, which has only made people like Brett Wilson richer and even more obnoxious while doing nothing to create jobs. The unemployment rate in Edmonton now stands at close to 9 per cent, which is the highest in my memory, and people in my riding are desperate for good jobs.

I fully expected, like most residents in Edmonton-Gold Bar, that this Speech from the Throne would contain some good news for my constituents when it came to jobs, but I, along with many of my residents, was sorely disappointed. We heard nothing about job creation in this throne speech. What we did hear was a commitment to continue to destroy jobs by announcing a \$200 million cut to the Infrastructure budget – my constituents, who were looking forward to those resulting construction jobs, were very disappointed – and by committing to another 3 per cent decrease in the government budget. My constituents who work in the public sector are now afraid that they'll join the thousands of public-sector workers who've already been forced into the unemployment lines by this regime. As the voice of working people in Gold Bar in this Legislature I will continue to press for an economy that is more diversified and that creates good jobs for everyone.

As I mentioned at the outset, my constituents also want the things they need to be able to live and raise their families in prosperity. What my constituents tell me over and over again that they need

from this provincial government in order to achieve this are three things: health care, education, and child care. Under our government we made excellent progress on all three of these fronts. We protected public health care, and we made historic investments in mental health care in particular. We kept class sizes down by hiring thousands of new teachers, and we built and renewed hundreds of schools in every corner of the province, including St. Brendan school and Vimy Ridge high school, both in my riding. We were revitalizing the curriculum so that our students would be prepared to graduate high school with the skills that they needed to be successful and happy people. We froze tuition and increased funding to postsecondary schools so that more students could get the credentials that they needed for good jobs. We created thousands of affordable daycare spaces that provided the parents in my constituency the ability to raise their families while going back to school or going back to work.

5:40

The things that we heard in this throne speech sent chills up the spines of my constituents who rely on public health care, public education, and affordable child care. Talking about increasing patient choice and covering only medically necessary care has my constituents worried that we'll soon see an American-style health care system, where the type of care you get is based on the size of your wallet rather than on your medical need. Choice in education has many in my constituency worried that public education will be sold off, leaving the wealthy beneficiaries of the \$4.7 billion handout able to choose the best education that money can buy for their kids while leaving everyday Albertans to let their children languish in neglected and underfunded public schools. These kinds of moves are wrong. Health care is a right. Education is a right. The best way to guarantee these rights is by having strong public systems that deliver them to everybody regardless of need. I will work every day to make sure that my residents will be able to enjoy these rights.

My residents also want to be able to retire in dignity. This means having secure pensions, affordable housing, adequate long-term care, and affordable drugs. Retired folks have been hit hard by this government. Hundreds of my residents have been kicked off their spouse's drug plans. Seniors are on extended wait-lists for affordable housing or adequate long-term care, and seniors who rely on their Canada pension plan are afraid that this government will take it away, following their moves to seize control of teachers' pensions and move them into AIMCo, which the Premier has explicitly stated he wants to invest in economically risky projects that can't attract private-sector investment. As the voice of the retired folks in Edmonton-Gold Bar I will continue to speak up for more affordable housing, more long-term care, more affordable drugs, and for safe and secure pensions.

On the pension front, I urge anyone listening who shares concerns about this government's moves to take their pensions away to go to [yourpensionisyours.ca](http://yourpensionisyours.ca) and add your name to the list of thousands of Albertans who want this Premier to keep his hands off their pensions.

As I said, the residents of Gold Bar want good jobs, the things necessary to lead a happy and prosperous life and a dignified retirement. This throne speech clearly shows that this government is not interested in providing those things to everyday Albertans and instead continues to make life better for the wealthiest Albertans while working to make life harder for the rest of us. The citizens of Gold Bar will not passively allow this to happen. As we speak, citizens in every corner of my riding are organizing themselves to fight for good jobs, to fight for public health care, to fight for public education, and to fight for their pensions. As their MLA I will stand

with them in that fight, and if I were a betting man, I'd be all in on the residents of Edmonton-Gold Bar winning that fight.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anybody wish to take advantage of five minutes for questions or comments.

Seeing none, are there any other hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has risen to speak.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and for the opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I want to begin by taking a bit of a trip down memory lane just to about this time last year. This time last year we heard a lot of talk about three words: jobs, the economy, and pipelines. This is pretty much all we heard from one of the candidates running for Premier this time last year. His message resonated, and he was given a job to deliver on the words that he campaigned for. But now here we are, a year later, and, boy, has a lot changed.

We have seen that this now Premier and his party are leaving a lot of Albertans behind. It's because we haven't seen the kind of impact that people expected around jobs. That's probably the biggest disappointment from people who reach out to me. They say, "You know, I thought that there would be more jobs. I didn't think that they'd be coming after my job." or "I thought that I would get a job. I didn't think that I would actually lose my job."

There are a few people that I'm thinking about, especially as we reflect on what was said in yesterday's throne speech, to which I'm responding. One is somebody I know who works in the construction industry and immigrated to this province a number of years ago, is now a Canadian citizen living in Alberta, and who was very busy in the construction industry right until he was laid off about a month ago. So, of course, the news that there's going to be \$200 million less invested in infrastructure construction – that's what the number was yesterday in the throne speech – is probably not going to bring a lot of hope or optimism to him or his family.

It doesn't need to be this way. I want to take a minute to reflect on some of the decisions that led to what is clearly a signal of austerity times. One is the fact that there was a very early decision to eliminate all things that were focused on energy efficiency or expanding renewables or even investing in expanding petrochemical diversification, which is something that I didn't think was going to be at threat for sure, but it was. There were opportunities to maintain and increase jobs in those areas. Those were lost and investment was taken.

Then there was, of course, the \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout, that's actually resulted in 50,000 fewer full-time jobs than when it was implemented. The first hit on Canada Day this last year. Those 50,000 full-time jobs are people in all of our ridings. I don't think that people thought that they were voting to give billions of dollars to billionaires; I think they thought they were voting for jobs. Almost every shot that had the now Premier in it during the election had the word "jobs" behind him, but the jobs are certainly behind him. He is far from the target that he set, and it's something that I think is very frustrating for many Albertans.

Another one that I don't think a lot of people thought they would see is seeing more school fees, seeing significant hikes to school fees. I know that many MLAs in this Chamber talked about: you know, it's going to be so much cheaper for your kid to ride the bus if we don't have a price on carbon. But then what happened is that funding got cut and fees went up. You know, more than \$300 a year is not an inconsequential amount for Alberta families, and that's

what a lot have seen for an increase, \$300 per child to ride the bus, in many of our ridings.

Then, of course, there's insurance. We just saw earlier this week that the Premier was asked about insurance rate hikes in the range of 20 per cent. You know, he turned to a member of cabinet and said: well, there's a cap on that, isn't there? There used to be a cap on that under the former government, and this government came in and removed that cap. We've seen a lot of folks writing in and expressing concern about their insurance fees going up so significantly.

I also want to tell you about somebody I met last night for the first time. He works at Finning. He moved here from New Jersey, he said, about three years ago, so I asked him why. He said that he was going to pursue an MBA in international business, thought he'd look internationally at schools to do that. When he was doing his research around Canadian universities, he was really excited about the economic development that was happening here, the economic diversification, and the tech sector. He said that there were a lot of things about what was happening in Alberta that reminded him of Austin and what had happened in Austin. He thought that if he could get here before the curve, if he could get here, if he could study here, if he could maybe buy property here, he would see the same kind of economic opportunities that he thought he'd see if he would have done the same in Austin about a decade ago. But Alberta also had strong public health care and education and other social services that he valued.

Economic diversification, though, was top of mind for him. That was a big attraction. Of course, around the time he completed, we were seeing that economic diversification was not a priority for this government, and he's nervous about what the future is of his current position and his current employer and what's going to be happening there and, of course, our economy overall. That's a look back three years ago.

We also have seen that we have lost significant jobs in other sectors as well, including arts and technology – I mentioned petrochemical diversification – and oil and gas itself, Mr. Speaker. We see cuts to health care and education as well. Those are jobs that we had. A lot of people wrongfully, I guess, assumed that when the Premier signed his big promise saying that these were two big pillars and that he could be trusted on education and on health care, that meant education jobs and health care jobs would be seeing a net increase.

5:50

Instead, we've seen the opposite. We've seen \$136 million cut from the net dollars that went to schools. That's, of course, not even accounting for the growth that we saw in students and in demographic needs, but it's \$136 million less, and government documents show that. So I really find it frustrating, when we use facts and numbers that are printed in government documents, like \$4.7 billion on page 144 of the fiscal plan, or when we used the FOIP that was received from the Department of Education showing the \$136 million, that we keep getting talking points back instead of acknowledging reality and a commitment to actually implement the things that were campaigned on. We've seen doctors, teachers, nurses, lab techs all feel the brunt of the \$4.7 billion giveaway.

Of course, we have also seen levels of arrogance and disrespect towards parents who were advocating for their children because they know what the impacts are of these cuts – and they want to be able to advocate for their children and for all Alberta children – who were referred to in not lovely terms by the minister responsible that they were trying to connect with and that they were trying to reach out to, so it's been very frustrating for them.

They were hoping that they would have heard something in the throne speech to acknowledge the realities that their kids are facing in school and the realities of the next generation of kids. They were hoping that they'd see some kind of commitment to not just say that PUF is important but to actually say what you were going to do to ensure that kids in those early years who rely on that program unit funding, or PUF, are actually going to be a priority and not just receive lip service. They were very frustrated when there was no reference to them or their children. The only references were dog whistles around choice. They choose to have their kids in a strong, supported public education system that's fully inclusive, and they fear that that isn't reflected in the values of this throne speech or this government.

There is also, as was mentioned, the \$200 million cut to the capital budget, which, of course, is going to put construction crews out of work. I know that there was again mention of trades training being valued, and I have to say that on this side of the House we also value trades training. That's why we increased funding for institutions that actually train people in the trades instead of cutting it but also why we made sure that there were jobs for people when they were leaving, by investing in things like capital projects, capital projects that are good, mortgage-paying jobs but that also, of course, provide those essential services like the building of much-needed hospitals and schools and roadways in our province.

Some people might say that rebranding the economic development department is, you know, a step in the right direction, and I would say that I don't think that people voted for a name change for a department or an area within a ministry. I think that investors and Albertans are looking for real action, and all they've seen is a failed corporate handout.

Even this week we heard the Calgary Chamber say that our tech sector tax credit of the past was far more effective than the current government's corporate handout when it comes to attracting companies to Alberta. Then, of course, the Calgary Chamber was discredited by this government.

The Premier cancelled partial upgrading initiatives introduced by our government because he claimed that they were too risky. Now we see him openly talking about investing directly in projects that the investment community has walked away from. So a lot of Albertans are feeling very confused by what was in that speech and don't feel like they heard the same kind of excitement and passion, that was once articulated about a year ago on the campaign trail, around jobs, the economy, and pipelines and also a commitment to core public services. They see this government try to take down credible folks in our community like doctors and nurses who are speaking up on behalf of their patients.

We entered the spring session yesterday, and I was looking for a real plan, a real plan that would create jobs, and instead what I saw were deeper cuts into job-creating capital investments and risky bets being made with public dollars and no plan to reverse the 50,000 job losses that are already under this Premier's belt, 19,000 in January alone. I have to say that Albertans deserve better.

As my colleagues have said, the people that I talk to in my community talk about how they want an investment in health care. They talk about how disappointed they are in the cancellation of essential lab services here for Edmonton, that they're nervous about delays in the south Edmonton hospital, and that they are deeply concerned about the direction that this government is taking us in because, of course, they all want good, strong public health care, good, strong public education, and good jobs for themselves and for their friends and family.

That was what I was hoping to hear in the throne speech. It's also what I'm hoping to hear about in the budget speech. Of course, the

throne speech is an introduction to the budget, so it seems highly unlikely that those will be priorities in tomorrow's budget.

I want to say that when I was door-knocking over the break, I heard Albertans tell me that they wanted good, long-term, mortgage-paying jobs. They wanted to be able to afford to send their kids to postsecondary institutions, whatever institutions those might be. They wanted to have reasonable class sizes and for their kids to be able to walk to school when they were young. They want mental health supports. They want their children with addictions to live. They want seniors and their family members to get the drugs and supplemental supports that they need. And they want a government that will actually govern around the things that they pretended to campaign for.

While we once heard "jobs, economy, and pipeline," what we are getting a lot of right now is cuts and corruption. I have to say that Albertans deserve better, and that's why we're working for an Alberta that serves all on this side of the House, and we'll be championing that in debate around bills to come, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

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

Seeing none, I see the hon. Minister of Transportation has risen.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all members of the House for their good work this afternoon. There's been some excellent debate on all sides of the issue. I would like to move that the Assembly be adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Thursday, February 27, please.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:57 p.m.]





## Table of Contents

Statement by the Speaker	
Amendments to Standing Orders .....	19
Introduction of Guests .....	19
Ministerial Statements	
Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 .....	19
Members' Statements	
Private Members of the Legislative Assembly .....	20
Support for Postsecondary Students .....	20
Pink Shirt Day .....	20
Opioid Addiction .....	21
Energy Industry Opposition.....	28
Lent .....	29
Energy Industries and Economic Diversification .....	29
Climate Change Strategy and Economic Development .....	29
King Edward Hotel in Pincher Creek .....	30
Oral Question Period	
Job Creation.....	21
Climate Change Strategy and Investment in Alberta.....	22
Family Physician Compensation .....	22
Energy Policies.....	23
Skilled Trades.....	23
Education Funding.....	24
Municipal Funding .....	24
Rail Blockades and Teck Frontier Mine Cancellation .....	25
Capital Plan .....	25
Electric Power Prices.....	26
Physician Funding Framework .....	26
AISH and Income Support Payment Schedule .....	27
Public Service Pensions.....	27
Rail Blockades.....	28
Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees .....	30
Presenting Petitions .....	30
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 2 Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020.....	30
Bill 3 Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020 .....	30
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	30
Tablings to the Clerk .....	31
Orders of the Day .....	32
Government Motions	
Infrastructure Blockading .....	32
Division .....	45
Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech .....	45

*Alberta Hansard* is available online at [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

For inquiries contact:

Editor

*Alberta Hansard*

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875