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The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

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Day 19

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature

Second Session

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New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m.

Thursday, May 7, 2020

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Please be seated.

Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 3

Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020

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

Mr. Glubish: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on and move third reading of Bill 3, Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said before and as we've discussed here a lot over the last while, this bill will broaden the dispute resolution options for both landlords and tenants of mobile-home sites by extending the residential tenancy dispute resolution service to address mobile-home site tenancy issues. The access to the RTDRS being provided by our government through this bill is in answer to ongoing requests from residents of mobile-home communities but also from their landlords.

Mobile-home community residents and landlords have been required to resolve their disputes in the courts, which is a more costly avenue and which takes a longer time to be heard before receiving a ruling. While they've been required to go through the courts, landlords and tenants of apartments, condos, and traditional houses have had the benefit of bringing their disputes to the RTDRS instead. The amendments proposed in this legislation will change that, Mr. Speaker, and bring all landlords and tenants in Alberta in line with each other by opening up the RTDRS to those in mobile-home communities. I believe that these amendments will benefit Albertans by lowering the cost required to resolve some mobile-home site disputes, enabling a less formal process which is more accessible and diverting cases from the courts that would be better heard elsewhere.

We've made it clear, Mr. Speaker, that there are still some cases that will need to be heard by the courts, but with the passage of Bill 3 the rules will be the same for landlords and tenants regardless of which type of dwelling they live in. Whether someone lives in an apartment, a condo, a traditional house, or a mobile-home community, disputes over infrastructure in those involving complex legal issues as well as those where the claims are greater than \$50,000 will still be heard by the courts. That is not changing. The real difference here is that landlords and tenants can bring their disputes around rent payments, breaches of legislation or rental agreement, improper evictions or unauthorized entrance of the premises by the landlord to the quasi-judicial RTDRS.

This is a big win, Mr. Speaker, and will lead, I think, to better landlord-tenant relationships as a whole in mobile-home communities. In an earlier stage of this debate I quoted a few times from Ms Brenda Neville, a resident from a mobile-home community in Parkland Village. She's got great insight on this as she lives this every day. So I thought it would be fitting to quote her one more time as we wrap up debate on this very important bill. She said: "It's very important to allow community owners like Parkbridge and ourselves as tenants to be able to sit down and have a conversation instead of getting all frustrated with each other and just taking it to court instead."

Those words were echoed by the vice-president of Parkbridge Communities, one of the largest owners and operators of mobile-home communities in Alberta. They said: "We support this move to enable access to dispute resolution services as a way to help all parties clarify and resolve issues of responsibility in manufactured home communities."

Mr. Speaker, this seems pretty straightforward. We have tenants and we have landlords who are asking for this.

On another note, you know, Mr. Speaker, you've heard us talk about the importance of red tape reduction and the benefits of access to the RTDRS to make this bill a strong example of the work that this government is doing to reduce red tape to make life better for Albertans. While he didn't use the words "red tape," Edmonton city councillor Mike Nickel said that this bill "is not just about fairness. This is also about making the system more efficient. This is about reducing court costs. This is about allowing the residents a chance to air their grievances before they have to go through our costly court process. And to be quite frank, that's just all good news all around."

Red tape comes in many forms, and this is an example of a pretty common-sense piece of red tape to cut. From the outside looking in, maybe it seems insignificant, but believe me, Mr. Speaker, when I tell you that this little piece of red tape means a lot to residents of mobile-home communities.

As I mentioned earlier, I started hearing from mobile-home residents very early after being asked to serve as Minister of Service Alberta. That's a big reason why I toured the province last summer, to hear from Albertans from mobile-home communities all across the province, and that's why I'm acting with this bill to bring this forward. Residents in mobile-home communities have been waiting years for this access to the RTDRS, and I look forward to being able to tell them that their wait is finally over.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you to the minister for moving third reading of Bill 8. I also believe that the – oh, correction; Bill 13.

Some Hon. Members: Bill 3.

The Speaker: Bills 3, 8, 13: sometimes they're all the same.

For clarity's sake, thank you to the hon. Minister of Service Alberta for moving third reading of Bill 3.

The Deputy Government House Leader has a unanimous consent motion, I believe, to – it's my first day. He'd like to ask for unanimous consent for something. The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent of the Assembly that members be able to sit, speak, and vote from any chair within the Assembly for today's sitting.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: Is there anyone else wishing to speak to third reading? The hon. the Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I can empathize with perhaps getting a slow start to one's full cognitive functions. It's kind of like starting a chainsaw, right? You've got to give it a couple of pulls, and then away you go.

I appreciate the minister's comments in regard to Bill 3, Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020, here in third reading. Certainly, our side here in the New Democrat Official Opposition was that we had been advocating and canvassing for this very thing for quite some time, so it's good to see this in a position where we can move forward potentially on this bill.

The first thing I just want to talk about, though, I guess, you know, by way of introduction – again, I want to, on behalf of the Official Opposition and on behalf of this Chamber and all Albertans, express our condolences to the families and to the loved ones and friends of the now 112 Albertans that have lost their lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Certainly, it is a very disturbing time for all of us, but for those who have lost loved ones, I can only begin to imagine the pain and suffering that you have been enduring. On behalf of all of us here in the Official Opposition I just wanted to offer our condolences to the family members and friends of the 112 Albertans that have been lost to the pandemic thus far.

I would also like to express our appreciation for essential service workers, who have been quite frankly putting in heroic efforts in regard to ensuring that we continue with essential services in health care, food services, police protection, and a whole range of things to just not only keep the lights on here in Alberta but help us to remain safe and secure as much as we can be during this very difficult time.

I guess in regard to the mobile-home sites service issue, you know, by empowering the RTDRS to hear cases in a wider context, I think that it's important to make sure that we do so in a timely manner. That's my first comment around this.

9:10

We did put forward an amendment to ensure that this comes into effect as soon as possible. Now, that amendment was defeated, but I would suggest that the government would consider that by proclaiming and enacting this bill once it does pass here as soon as possible, then we can begin to actually see the positive benefits of Bill 3 for people living on mobile-home sites, communities and the landlords that are working with those same communities. I think that the intention originally for bringing this bill back was because we considered it to be something that needed to be done as soon as possible, so we did make an amendment to that effect. I think it's incumbent upon the government to ensure that this does come into effect as soon as possible.

We know that even during the pandemic we have, you know, capacity for this RTDRS to have hearings remotely, right? They can still use technology. I believe that one of my colleagues said that they, in fact, are doing so, having remote capacity. Time is of the essence. The mechanism by which this group can start to have hearings is there, and it's functioning. We can empower them more fully by the swift implementation of this bill as soon as possible, so I'm just asking, quite emphatically but politely, that we do do that. I believe that that would send a good message in terms of intention and practice to all parties affected.

We know that making sure that we have a fair application of the law to all different forms of housing here in the province of Alberta is absolutely essential. People need to know that they would be protected by law and protected by due process regardless of whether they're living in condos or in rental apartments and mobile-home communities or whatever circumstance people happen to be living in. To ensure that there is due process and a sense of justice and fair

play, I think that this bill will help to achieve that. In the spirit of this bill as well, I hope that we do employ those same principles to all forms of rental accommodation, of lease agreements and condominium arrangements as well and just look to make sure that people have access to due process regardless of where they're living, regardless of their ability to pay and that it is done in a timely – timely – manner.

We know that the lessons that we've learned thus far from the COVID-19 pandemic are that if people are compromised in the place where they live, then all other forms of our ability to provide service, to provide medical service, to provide other forms of social assistance, are compromised, too. So when we make laws and rules around evictions, say, for example, we need to make sure, again, that we are extending support to people past the original amnesty on eviction notices that, I think, came due here at the beginning of the month. I think it's very important, regardless of if someone is living in a mobile-home community or if they're living in a rental apartment, for example, that we keep people in place and keep them safe with a roof over their heads and triage the other issues that they might be facing based on that foundational principle, that someone can be in their home, they can be in a place where they live, and they can feel secure around that thing.

Now, this bill can help people in a mobile-home community site potentially by having a dispute resolution mechanism, but let's take the best practices and the principles that are embedded in Bill 3 and make application to that to people in all forms of accommodation that they might be living in here in the province of Alberta. Now is not the time to build divisions or to have any differentiation of the application of justice to Albertans. Now is the time for us to take a long, hard look at all of our rules and regulations around accommodation and around rental properties and mobile-home communities and whatever, however people might be living, and to make sure that people are treated fairly and in a just manner regardless of their circumstance.

We know that sometimes difficult circumstances test all of us, but I think that difficult circumstances can bring out the very best in who we are as human beings, as community members, and as Albertans. I believe that this is a small opportunity for us to reflect on that by building, you know, progressive legislation that does provide protection and provides due process for people in mobile-home communities. It's an example of a way by which I believe we can cast a wider analysis of laws that keep people safe, that keep people with a right to a place to live, an affordable place to live, and a right to access due process regardless of their ability to pay.

Certainly, we did bring forward some amendments in the last few days that perhaps could have made things stronger. As I would suggest, you know, good ideas are not exclusive to just amendments or the process that takes place here in this Legislature. If it's a good idea, like making sure that this gets proclaimed straight away and that it's put into law straight away, then certainly that can happen outside of the amendment process with the judicious and expeditious application of that by this government once this bill gets passed.

That's pretty much it. I think I've canvassed this bill fairly well, and I certainly appreciate the opportunity to have a few final comments before, hopefully, each member does find it acceptable to vote in favour of Bill 3 here this morning.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon. members, is there anyone else wishing to speak to third reading of Bill 3? The hon. Member for St. Albert has risen.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 3, Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act,

2020. Very much like my colleague, I of course support this legislation. I think that any sort of protection is important. But I did want to talk a little bit about the amendments that have been proposed during the time that we've been debating this bill, because I think it's really important to summarize some of the things, some of the holes or things that we thought could be better, and to talk about: why? What is the hesitation to make things better? You know, it's interesting that government members repeatedly will say: "We want to do the best for Albertans. We want to protect." We're continuously suggesting ways to make it better. Just like government members, we speak to our constituents. We have spoken to our constituents for years. We have heard about this issue for a very long time and have some suggestions for them.

The one that I want to focus on first is the change to the coming-into-force date. It's my understanding that the government plans to do that in the fall of 2020. Well, Mr. Speaker, with the fact that we are assembled here in this place during a global pandemic and that we're doing our best to meet public health orders to be able to do our jobs, which is great, I would suggest that if it is so pressing that we all assemble here this morning to discuss this important piece of legislation to protect Albertans, we would want to do everything in our power to ensure that it comes into force as soon as possible to provide that protection for people as soon as possible.

It stands to reason that this amendment makes sense. Why not do everything that we can right now to provide as much protection as possible? The only stats that I've seen for the number of people that potentially would be impacted by this legislation was available in 2016, and it noted that there are about 48,000 people in Alberta that live in mobile homes. So although it's not a massive number when you compare it to the overall population of the province, I think it's significant, and I think it, again, stands to reason why we're here. We know it's urgent. We want to protect every single person possible. Like my colleague said, preventing eviction or stress about housing is always important, and it's vitally important now. So I would really question it. I hope that there is a member that will stand up and explain to us, Mr. Speaker, why it is that this should wait. If it's so urgent, why should this wait?

9:20

I was curious to see what was going on with the residential tenancy dispute resolution service given that we are all dealing with some quite challenging public health orders because of a global pandemic, and the update that was available on their website sort of led me to believe that they had the capacity to do this. Now, I could be incorrect – I would be happy to hear from any government members that have information otherwise – but posted on their site was an update, and they said that they are conducting all hearings by phone during this pandemic. The RTDRS, which is a mouthful, continues to accept applications through online e-filing services. Again, they have created a platform for people to be able to continue on that process, which is great. Also, during this period, when we're all, well, struggling in trying to meet these public health orders, they're giving priority in the hearing schedule to applications for possession or termination of tenancy agreements. Makes sense. There's also been a very significant change in document service. Again, they have been quite proactive to create a platform so that they can support all Albertans during this stressful time. Good for them.

We know that using this particular service is an alternative to the courts in resolving landlord-tenant disputes, which is great. I'm sure we can speak for hours about some of the things we could do to improve that process when people do have to go to court in terms of cost and access and timing and all of those things. This is a good move. This is a good move that has the potential to stop problems

from getting worse, and that is always a good thing. Prevention is always a good thing. I think that if we didn't understand that before, we certainly understand it now. We are all doing everything possible to prevent ourselves from making other people sick, if indeed we have an infection, or from getting it ourselves. I think that we understand the value of prevention in terms of further stress and additional problems that we can't even anticipate.

Again, I would put to the government members that if indeed this is urgent – we're here during a really challenging time, where we are dealing with some really important public health orders. We are doing our best to meet those orders. To be here to debate important legislation: great. But then I would ask: why is it that we're delaying implementation of this if it's that urgent? I'm hoping that a government member will shed some light on that particular issue. That would be great.

The other amendments that I thought – well, they were all actually quite good: the removing of the \$50,000 cap for cases to be heard in the dispute resolution service; obviously, the change to the coming-into-force date; the waiving of fees. I think we've talked at length about that, and there are a number of other ones.

I just wanted to backtrack a little bit. You know, I was talking about preventing future problems in terms of possible eviction or even stress. I mean, moving a mobile home, I imagine, is an undertaking that is quite expensive and stressful, particularly if the home is older. I don't know how a home like that would manage being moved after years and years of being on the same place. I'm sure it's possible. I'm sure it's costly. I know that in one of my previous jobs we actually had someone donate a house to us, and then we purchased a piece of land and moved this older home. Not only was it incredibly expensive, but it was also expensive to build a foundation to move the house onto. I imagine there's a lot of cost. So anything that we can do to prevent stress, to prevent eviction, and to save Albertans time and effort right now would be important.

I would like to touch a little bit on – you know, according to stats in 2016, although there are only, like, 48,000 Albertans that potentially live in mobile homes, they're still vitally important. I think that if you look at the continuum of housing, it's actually an important piece for home ownership. Now, I'm not talking about homeless supports or homelessness and affordable housing, accessible housing that is perhaps supported by government or other programs. I'm talking about home ownership. Home ownership is, I think, a goal for many Albertans. For most of us, it is likely something that we're comfortable with, that we've had access to, or we own our own homes, but a lot of Albertans do not. One of the big life goals is home ownership. Owning a home like a mobile home, which includes some rent payments about lots, is an important step for people.

I know a number of people – I always go back to this – with disabilities, not necessarily a physical disability, and accessibility of a mobile home, if it's older, is quite a bit more challenging. But owning a mobile home is a reality for some people with disabilities that have saved and worked hard and perhaps, you know, bought it with somebody that they live with. Some individuals with disabilities have families that are able to support them to buy a home. That is not the case for everybody. As you know, people with disabilities are unemployed far more frequently than nondisabled peers and tend to earn not very much money. So home ownership is important, and owning a mobile home or a manufactured home is a way to make that happen.

I think it is important that we recognize that home ownership is important, and this particular legislation is obviously important so that we provide people a mechanism to resolve disputes, very serious disputes, sometimes very expensive disputes, in a way that is affordable and accessible. It sounds to me that even during this

very difficult time the RTDRS, the residential tenancy dispute resolution service, is open and able to deal with issues as they arise. Again to the government: it would be very nice to hear a little bit more about that.

Again, one of the things that I did want to reference quickly is that earlier – actually, I believe it was last month; I’m just checking the date here; I believe it was April 6 – a letter was sent from our caucus for the opposition critic that was tasked with this particular piece of legislation. I really appreciated that the letter talked about the support for this piece of legislation but then talked about why these amendments were so important and then gave some information as to how to achieve that or how it would positively impact Albertans. I would just like to say that some of us have been in this place for several years and some of us on the other side, and we were able to hear arguments from the opposition for many, many hours for years. One of the things that I did hear repeatedly and that did stick with me was that the job of the opposition is to look at legislation, not just to oppose but to do what we can to make things better.

I have found a pattern that I think we should be changing or looking at changing. It is that no matter what we propose in terms of amendment, we hear the same thing: “Well, no, that’s not true. No, that’s not necessary. No, we don’t need to do that.” I would submit that you don’t have all the answers, so sometimes it is important to listen to other folks with other perspectives to get things right. It doesn’t always feel great to admit that perhaps you made a mistake or that maybe you overlooked something or didn’t go far enough or that maybe you didn’t think about that. But you know what? A little humility and a little openness to change things to make it better go a long way.

I would submit that these propositions or proposals for amendments really do make it better. The one that I have been focusing on, obviously, is the dates. If we have the capacity to make the changes sooner, why not? Even if you prevent one person from being evicted or going through the stress of potentially having to go through a process that is not the one proposed in the legislation, I personally would think that’s a win.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I go back to that I am happy to support Bill 3, this piece of legislation. I think anything that we can do to make the process more accessible and affordable and speedy is a good thing. Any time we can protect homeowners, Albertans: that’s a good thing, too. Again, for probably the fourth time, I look forward to hearing from the government as to why, precisely, these amendments were rejected when indeed they’re actually pretty good ideas. They make sense. They would make this piece of legislation better.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker. With that, I will take my seat.

9:30

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the Member for St. Albert.

Seeing none, is there anyone else wishing to speak on the third reading of Bill 3? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-East has risen.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to provide my support for Bill 3, Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020. This is as well a great chance for me to bring into this Chamber the concerns of my constituents in Calgary-East. Before going into that, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the Minister of Service Alberta for introducing this amendment to the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act, or MHSTA. It is needed legislation in this time as we’re facing a huge economic impact brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the landowners

and the mobile-home site tenants will benefit from this amendment to the MHSTA. It will not only benefit the mobile-home site residents in my riding but, as well, all other mobile-home site residents in Alberta. This is a great help to them in addition to the amendments that were introduced by Bill 11, Tenancies Statutes (Emergency Provisions) Amendment Act, 2020, prohibiting rent increases and late fees or penalties in this public health emergency.

Mr. Speaker, it was not quite so long ago – that is, summer last year – when the minister had reached out to my constituency and sat on a round-table discussion with mobile-home residents of Calgary-East. Calgary-East is the home of four mobile-home sites: the Calgary Village, Mountview, Chateau Estates, and Oasis mobile homes. Each has their own distinct managing organization, and two are located beside each other while the other two are almost from end to end of the constituency. As we all know, mobile-home ownership is a great option for affordable housing.

Before I was elected into public service, I got a chance to talk and interact with residents of mobile homes in Calgary-East. I was able to hear their concerns in the community and in their dealings with their everyday life living in mobile homes. The common concerns raised were the sharp climb of rental fees, poor maintenance services coupled with the unbearable state of park roads and difficulty selling their homes. The only option available is to settle disputes in the courts. We shared the same ideas on how to deal with their struggles, but with these just being ideas, Mr. Speaker, nothing will change their situation. Nobody will see the true light apart from the fast resolution of this disagreement. I was told that they had made efforts to have their concerns heard by the authorities but to no avail.

This common scenario in mobile homes in Alberta has led the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to support the motion from the town of Okotoks in recommending to the provincial government, in 2016, to allow mobile-home owners to access the residential tenancy dispute resolution service. In late 2018 the previous Member for Calgary-East had raised the concerns and the issue to amend the MHSTA, but it appeared that the then Minister of Service Alberta was not satisfied with the information or wanted to be released from the obligations, suggesting that mobile-home owners reach out to his office or their local municipality.

In a separate instance during question period on November 26, 2018, the then Member for Highwood had raised a similar apprehension but had particularly brought out the response from the Service Alberta minister to the letter sent from the town of Okotoks, stating, “I’ll table it later [and] he has no additional information for them.” In the response to both instances, Mr. Speaker, the then minister expressed with similar actuations, stating, “In cases where the provincial government under the current Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act, or MHSTA, is unable to intervene, these matters can be pursued through the courts or . . . local municipalities.”

This clearly shows the intention of the previous government to ignore legitimate issues and not to make changes or introduce amendments despite the overwhelming problems the mobile-home owners are confronting with great struggle, not to mention the economic hardships of the policies implemented by the previous provincial government and the current federal government, which have brought devastation to mobile-home owners. It seemed that they were left to suffer and had to endure the unpleasant situation in a place where they expected to live a prosperous life and could build their family healthier and happy.

Accordingly, the situation was one of the factors that made me decide to run for office. During my door-knocking, Mr. Speaker, a lot of mobile-home owners had continued to express their disappointment with the then sitting provincial government, which gave the impression that residents of mobile homes are not given

significant attention despite numerous attempts to have their concerns acted upon. This sentiment did not run away but instead stayed in my mind and in my heart. I told them that this will be surely acted upon and that I will be fighting for it and that I will have their voices heard. I was confident that the UCP will definitely address their concerns, which have been continuously ignored by the NDP. That is why, as everybody can see, Albertans did strongly vote for their rejection to serve last April.

Several months after being elected to office, I was so happy and delighted that the Minister of Service Alberta informed me that he was interested in having a round-table conversation with my mobile-home constituents. The minister has taken a great step in looking at the issues and has wanted to get it directly, in person, from the very ones that were experiencing it and for which he – the previous government did not act upon it except for a promise to table it later.

It is kind of strange as well, Mr. Speaker, that during the First Session of the 30th Legislature the Member for Edmonton-West Henday stood up in this Chamber and expressed lamentation about the similar state of his constituents but failed to realize that during their term in the government they had disregarded the very same action that he had voiced out for the UCP government to act. This is just so sad to hear, that the hon. member now is asking for the UCP government to act immediately on it but has forgotten that an identical sentiment previously raised before their government was just kept on the shelves.

Going back to the round-table discussion with the minister, my constituents were pleased to hear that they will be able to have an avenue to voice out their struggles which they did not have for a long period of time. I have reached out to the site owners and managing firm of the mobile-home owners to have them get apprised of the issue and to have the opportunity as well to act on any issues that will be easily resolved by them without resorting to the courts.

During the round-table meeting, Mr. Speaker, an overwhelming attendance from Calgary's mobile-home constituents was present, new residents and old residents alike. Again they expressed gladness to have the special opportunity to personally speak with the minister about their difficulties. They expect to have an end result that is beneficial to both residents and site or lot owners. As I had previously mentioned, they also relayed to the minister that whatever they have been facing was brought out to the previous government but that they had not heard anything from them. Of course, the mobile-home residents understood that this work cannot be done overnight. Nevertheless, they have manifested their joy in looking forward to a better tomorrow. This could not stop the expression of happiness in their hearts in knowing that from then on the government is making steps and introducing changes that they will have been waiting for a long time.

9:40

It did not end there, Mr. Speaker. Since mobile-home sites can be seen throughout the province, the minister had conducted and organized similar discussion with mobile-home residents across Alberta for him to be able to take into consideration every issue that they may have, and I know the minister was well placed to hear them all.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Bill 3 seeks to include mobile-home disputes to be heard and resolved by the residential tenancy dispute resolution service, or the RTDRS. Access to the RTDRS creates much-needed relief for all mobile-home residents. It provides a more affordable and alternative avenue for the resolution of issues between the site owner and the mobile-home owner. It will also unclog our courts from hearing these disputes in the first instance.

With the RTDRS access, effective, faster resolutions of disagreements can be experienced by mobile-home residents and site owners, which have currently been enjoyed by tenants of apartments and their landlords.

It is not a new practice here in Canada, Mr. Speaker. All other provinces have been practising the inclusion of mobile-home sites within their respective tenancy dispute tribunals. I am very amazed with the immediate response of the minister to the needs of all mobile-home residents in Alberta. It may not be able to address all the issues that have been brought forward to him by mobile-home site residents in Alberta but is a big help that will be extended to them, which had been rejected by the previous government. To state that they could access the courts or local municipalities is very unsatisfying, and it is as if you are admitting your unwillingness to provide assistance to them when they need it most. The RTDRS will enable their dispute to be resolved in a timely manner, therefore limiting cases of eviction of the mobile-home residents or loss of profit to the site owners.

Like I said in the beginning, mobile homes are a great selection for affordable housing, and it is a much-needed option for Albertans who are affected by the ongoing economic instability. Having said that, most people who are living in mobile homes are the ones that are defenceless when it comes to unexpected changes or hikes in their site rent. Moreover, issues like poor park or road conditions and the like may be easily set into an understanding between the parties with the guidance of the RTDRS. Either the landlord or the tenant can file applications regarding disputes involving an amount of up to \$50,000 to the RTDRS. This is in consonance with the current jurisdiction amount that can be applied to the RTDRS.

If we compare to the courts, the maximum amount that can be recoverable in Alberta Provincial Court is \$50,000 while a claim involving an amount of \$50,000 is heard in the Court of Queen's Bench. This amendment seeks to provide a less formal and less expensive way to settle mobile-home site disputes. At the same time, it respects the exclusive authority of the Court of Queen's Bench to receive applications as laid out in the MHSTA, particularly section 59.3 of the proposed amendments, the right to apply to the dispute resolution service. If we were to make the jurisdictional amount for a mobile-home site dispute that can be applied to the RTDRS more than \$50,000, then we are vesting the same jurisdictional amount that the Court of Queen's Bench has original jurisdiction over. It could make it more cumbersome for the applicants to file it first to the RTDRS and later on, if not satisfied, appeal it to the Court of Queen's Bench rather than file it directly to the court. By this, the applicant would have spent more and have waited longer.

We have to take note as well that the disputes that we seek to provide to the RTDRS are completely being applied or to be heard by the Provincial Court, civil, often called the people's court or the small claims court. Claims involving a large amount of money could be better resolved in the Court of Queen's Bench as any party can only be represented by a lawyer in the Court of Queen's Bench while the tenant or landlord can be represented by a nonlawyer in the RTDRS.

Appeals from the RTDRS orders can be filed at the Court of Queen's Bench, and the same procedure is observed if the dispute has been originally applied to the Provincial Court. Hence, it is more prudent to respect the jurisdiction amount of claims that have been heard by the courts rather than providing RTDRS a concurrent jurisdiction with the Court of Queen's Bench. Also, the RTDRS application fee is less expensive – it is at \$75 – compared to court fees, which range from \$100 to \$200. Without this affordable and effective avenue to resolve their grievances, mobile-home residents could be left in a situation that is confined with uncertainty. This

new development will also make the courts concentrate on resolving complicated matters, which, as we know, is a much more formal process. There is a possibility that the set application fee can be waived if the applicant is in financial hardship, like the situation that many of my constituents are in. They have expressed that they are on a break even from month to month and sometimes in a deficit. That is why they cannot afford to pay any rental rate increases that have been imposed drastically by the landowners.

In a 2018-2019 report from Service Alberta, Mr. Speaker, RTDRS received 10,754 applications.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the hon. member.

Seeing none, thank you for your comments.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore on third reading of Bill 3.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to add some final thoughts and comment on Bill 3, the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020. I'll start, of course, by thanking the minister for opening up third reading and providing some final thoughts on this. My hope is that the minister will take some of my comments in a positive manner so that as we move forward with this legislation, we provide the best possible outcomes for Albertans, especially for owners of mobile-home sites.

You know, as I've said time and time again, I'm always the one that gets hung up on the language, what's in there, what's also potentially lacking. So while I do feel that Bill 3 is a good piece of legislation – there's some really good, solid language contained within that – I do feel a little bit like the small character out of *Oliver Twist* saying, "Please, sir, may I have some more?" because it is good, and I think we have the ability to add a few more helpings to be able to make it that much better.

I know that the Official Opposition, Mr. Speaker, brought in several amendments that we thought could take this legislation up to the next level, providing the best outcomes for those owners. One of the comments that I did notice that the minister made in opening up third reading here was around red tape reduction. Of course, I do get the opportunity as the critic for red tape reduction to look at these things, and as I've seen some of our amendments come forward, by moving from the court system to the disputes resolution, we're absolutely reducing red tape. We're taking up less court time. We're taking up fewer court resources that can then be dedicated to more important issues within that system. I think that when the amendment was rejected, though, we missed out on an opportunity to be as effective as we possibly can. Certainly, I've seen over the course of the past year, you know, a mandate to reduce red tape by this government. I have seen a lot of it being created out of that, so I think that this could have been an opportunity to reduce even more the red tape that exists here. Hopefully, we haven't missed out on an opportunity to be able to make that as efficient as possible.

As we know, mobile homes are sometimes the only ability for people to gain ownership of their home. It tends to be something that seniors find as a financially viable opportunity rather than getting into a condo system or even just a smaller house. You know, as they say, there's always one out there that, unfortunately, will spoil it for the rest. Where we could have potentially kept something out of the court system, the landowner will simply try to outfinance the mobile-home owner. That's just one example of, you know, maybe some red tape that we could have kept out of the court system and kept within the disputes resolution process.

9:50

I know the minister stated earlier in debate that resources definitely will be dedicated to this. I know that as we start to get through this pandemic, as we start to get through this economic downturn and, rightly so – you know, this was expressed by the government – look at expenses, I can't help but wonder if that could, unfortunately, maybe find itself as one of the things that could end up on the chopping block. I know there was a commitment from the minister to make sure that the resources are there, both in funding and in personnel, to make sure that the dispute resolution process can handle the new caseloads. I'm hoping that there will be diligent advocacy on the part of the minister to make sure that that's not an area that could be potentially cut back, again, as we come through on the other side of these very difficult times that Alberta and Albertans find themselves in.

The other thing that I would hope I can convince the minister of would be around the coming into force of this legislation. You know, as we've seen throughout this pandemic and the steps that Alberta has had to take to keep Albertans safe, our court system is one that has found itself in a diminished capacity. As we come out on the other side of this and we start to try to catch up on that caseload that was not able to be heard during this time, again, with the resources being in place, coming into force sooner rather than potentially later will provide mobile-home owners access to dispute resolution. My hope is that the minister will advocate very aggressively to get that moved into force so that those owners have the ability to access that system as soon as possible.

Like I said, I'm a little, I guess, disappointed that the amendments weren't considered for this, things like removing the \$50,000 cap. It's just the reality of the economy that we're in. It's possible for that \$50,000 cap to be reached very, very quickly depending on the circumstances. Again, thinking back to the red tape, we could have had an opportunity to reduce some of the red tape that could be created. Once we reach that cap, you know, we'll be saying: oh, well, sorry; that exceeds the mandate here, so now we have to move it there. Again, as the critic for red tape reduction I think this would've been an opportunity for the government to reduce a piece of red tape that we feel exists within the legislation. That could have made it a little bit more efficient. Hopefully, as we move forward and we see how the system works, maybe there will be an opportunity to revisit that in the future.

I'm also concerned about fees. Generally speaking, when we have owners of mobile homes, they just simply don't have the finances available to them should it actually have to enter the court system. Again, this could have been a little bit of an opportunity to reduce some red tape that would prevent mobile-home owners from being able to access that. Hopefully, you know, these comments are being taken in the spirit that they are intended. It is an opportunity to reduce more red tape than what you've already potentially done here.

With that, I think that my other colleagues have said very eloquently the other things that exist within the legislation. I am happy to support this. Again, my hope is that mobile-home owners will be able to access it right away rather than waiting later on. Unfortunately, I have seen some instances where the government seems to, I don't know, be waiting on something to happen, somebody else to do something, but here is an opportunity to move right ahead on this and give Alberta mobile-home owners timely access to a system that I think will make their lives better and allow fairness to proceed for these owners. Hopefully, we will see this get passed, and owners will get access to it right away.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the hon. gentleman.

Seeing none, we are on Bill 3, third reading. Would anyone else like to add to the debate this morning?

Seeing none, I'm prepared to ask the Minister of Service Alberta to close debate.

Mr. Glubish: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start by thanking everyone on both sides of the House for participating in debate on this bill. It sounds as though we're moving towards unanimous support for this bill. I'm hoping that's where we land, and if so, I just want to thank everyone for their support for this bill. This is a very important step forward to improve life for Albertans who live in mobile-home communities.

I want to also just thank especially my colleagues the Member for Lethbridge-East, the Member for West Yellowhead, the Member for Calgary-East, and the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, each of whom really went above and beyond to organize meetings for me with their constituents from mobile-home communities in their community and in their ridings. Those meetings were very helpful to me to inform the work that went into this bill, and I just wanted to recognize them for their contributions to this important piece of legislation.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we've talked about this a lot, but at the end of the day this is a bill that will open up the residential tenancy dispute resolution service, or the RTDRS, to residents and landlords of mobile-home communities. In its simplest form that's what this bill will do, and it's very important. It's something that we've heard ever since I became an MLA and especially since I became the Minister of Service of Alberta. This is something that residents and landlords of mobile-home communities have been asking for for a very long time, so I'm very pleased to be in the final stages of debate on this bill and looking forward to making this a reality and making life better for these Albertans.

You know, before I wrap up, I thought it would just be important to maybe circle back to some of the comments from the members opposite. I respect that they are trying to make this better. I know there was some reference made to the letter from the opposition critic on my file, the Member for Edmonton-West Henday, back on April 6 that outlined a number of proposed amendments. I want to assure all the members opposite that I did receive and read that letter. I carefully considered that letter. As the opposition have said many times, the proposed amendments, in their view, were reasonable and practical. Certainly, I would agree that they were well-intentioned. But as they well know, I spent a significant amount of time in this Chamber during Committee of the Whole as we continued to debate those amendments to outline the reasons why we couldn't and wouldn't support those amendments. At the end of the day, the reality was that in practice many of those amendments were impractical, and I'll just speak to one of them as we wrap up here.

You know, in terms of the \$50,000 cap on matters that can be decided by the RTDRS, I mean, this is important. I know the opposition has spoken about this a lot, saying: well, we could have just made this better; we could have just increased the cap. Well, here are the facts. The division of powers between the Provincial Court and the Court of Queen's Bench is based on the Constitution Act and based on the types of decisions being made by each court. The Provincial Court limit is set at \$50,000, which is well above the \$5,000 constitutional limit, but we had set that in Alberta in order to reduce the caseload in the superior courts. The fact is that increasing the threshold of the RTDRS beyond that of the Provincial Court would likely result in a constitutional challenge that such authority would interfere with the jurisdiction of the Court

of Queen's Bench. This is the reason why I did not support that amendment, because it doesn't make sense.

10:00

This is not a case of the government just saying, "We know better," or "We don't like your amendments," or "We don't like them just because they came from the opposition." This is a case of where the amendment didn't make sense based on the facts. You know, I agree that this Chamber is an important place for us to debate with one another and to consider feedback from all sides of the House. I did consider the feedback provided by the other side of the House, and I just wanted to make it clear that I was not just outright rejecting amendments simply because they came from the other side. I hope the members from the other side, even if they don't like where we landed on this related to their amendments, felt like I dedicated a significant amount of time to listen to them during Committee of the Whole and to address our response to that in the spirit of debate.

You know, one of the final things I will just say is that I know there's been a lot of talk from the members opposite about how they've been advocating for this and working on this for a very long time. Certainly, they've been working on this this year since I brought this forward, and I want to thank them for the work they've done this year to add to the debate. But I think it's important that we not rewrite history. Let us remember that they were in government for four years. They had an opportunity to do this a long time ago, and they didn't. I don't know why.

It's also important to remember that they had a private member who wrote a letter to the *National Post* on November 6, 2018, after having become an independent MLA, having had to leave the government caucus at that time over this issue of mobile homes. I'll just quote what this former member said. She said:

There are issues that are important to folks in my riding that I have been advocating for, that I have been told are not priorities at this time. But that I have also not been allowed to speak about publicly. One of these things is a critical review of the Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act.

She went on to say:

Every time I bring it up I am told it's not on the to do list and that I can't ask questions about it in QP.

Which we all know is question period. She closed by saying:

This is a tragedy of epic proportions.

That was former member Robyn Luff.

You know, I'm grateful for the support of the members opposite on this bill. It is an important bill, and I'm grateful for the attention they've put on this to try and help contribute to the debate, but it is important that we recognize that they had four years to focus on this if it really was such a priority. They didn't. But the past is the past. Here we are now, today. We're all working together to get this done, and I'm very proud to be a part of the government caucus that is leading the way to bring this bill forward, to make it a reality for Albertans who live in mobile-home communities to give them access to the RTDRS. This will make their lives better. It's a great step in the right direction.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to move to close debate. Thank you very much.

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a third time]

Bill 8

Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act

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

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move third reading of Bill 8, the Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act.

Human trafficking is a dehumanizing and predatory crime that violates a person's basic human rights and dignity. Traffickers prey upon people of all ages, ethnicities, and genders. They coerce their victims into providing labour or sexual services against their will. Traffickers often use threats and violence against the survivor and their loved ones that trap them in a cycle of exploitation. This crime is also often unconsciously ignored by the general public. Albertans think that human trafficking is something that happens somewhere else, but it happens right here in our home. The truth is that it happens in our communities, and sometimes it's happening at the business or house next door. Reported incidents of this horrible crime have skyrocketed in recent years, and it's time for Alberta to take real action to fight it.

I'm proud to stand with a government that refuses to sit idly by and allow this abuse to go unchecked in Alberta. This legislation will strengthen a survivor's ability to get away from this abuse physically, emotionally, and financially. By passing this legislation, it would allow us to create an annual day of awareness for human trafficking, a standard definition of human trafficking, a standard definition of sexual exploitation, a statutory tort allowing survivors of trafficking to sue their traffickers, a statutory remedy allowing survivors to secure a protection order from their traffickers, and a warrant permitting a police officer entry.

This made-in-Alberta legislation will strengthen a survivor's ability to get away from this physical, emotional, and financially damaging abuse and will empower them to hold those who prey upon them accountable. This legislation will also allow us to deliver an important platform commitment. It will make us a leader in Canada's approach to protecting and empowering survivors.

I expect members on both sides of this House to support this legislation, and I've been thankful for the debate so far. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General has moved third reading of Bill 8. Is there anyone else that would like to join in the debate this morning? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've certainly spoken to this bill a lot, so I'll keep my comments relatively brief, I think, at this time. We absolutely support this bill. We've had the opportunity now to speak to a number of different stakeholder groups that work in this area, and they have generally expressed support for this bill, so I think that that is a really good reason to be in favour of it.

Again, as I've said before, I think it's worth noting that this is a horrendous crime. It is one which is occurring right now all around us in this province. Many people don't see it or don't hear about it or don't experience it, but like many things that are going on in our society, not everyone is necessarily aware of the crimes that go on around us. So despite the fact that we may not have seen it or interacted with it, it is happening right here and now in Alberta.

I think it's worth discussing a little bit. In Alberta in terms of trafficking, a little bit over half is usually related in some way to sex trafficking, and then almost half, so not quite half, is related to labour trafficking. That makes it a complex area because the labour trafficking almost always, not always but frequently involves individuals who are in the country who are not citizens. That makes it a really complicated area of law because, you know, the person who is doing the trafficking may remove their passport, therefore removing their ability to return to their home country.

They may be here on a temporary work permit, and the problem is that that renders them vulnerable in certain ways because that work permit often only applies to a specific employer. Sometimes it can apply to sort of a class of employers, but often it applies only to a specific employer, so that means that once the person has arrived here, they're often in a position where the employer decides to make them work very long hours, work in poor conditions, doesn't pay them what they ought to have been paid or at all, makes them live in terrible conditions. Many of those things are very difficult to remedy because they know that they have hanging over their head that ability of the employer to essentially terminate their employment, and that means that either they're stuck in Canada with no way to support themselves or they have to go back to the country they came from, and often these individuals are here trying to work to make money to support their families because there's no work available to them where they came from.

Now, I'm not saying that those types of work permits are never useful because sometimes, especially with respect to sort of skilled trades – we have a shortage of those individuals in this country – they certainly make sense. But I think sort of my view has always been that historically – and this is certainly how my family came here – the sort of deal has been that you kind of come here and you work very hard and you bring your family, and that's how it goes. My grandfather came here, lived at the YMCA, worked a job while building a house to bring his family over, and I think that's a pretty common story.

10:10

Returning to the subject matter, I think, at hand, this is a crime that's going on around us, and that is the reason why it's important to move this legislation forward. I was incredibly pleased to see, though somewhat surprised, that the government actually accepted an amendment from the opposition. The in-force date on these orders was originally set to be December 31 of this year, so about eight or nine months from now, and we have now moved that up so that it comes into force in July. That's right away.

I think that that is incredibly important because this bill was introduced – and we heard over and over again from government members, some with quite a lot of anger, honestly, Mr. Speaker, that this needed to go through right away. I think our response to that was, "You know, this is a problem that's happening right now, but if it's so critical to pass a bill in under 48 hours that we can't even have time to consult with stakeholders to see what their view on the bill is, then perhaps we ought to bring the in-force date up a little bit," and the government has accepted that. So I would like to applaud the minister for that because we haven't actually seen a lot of that in the 30th Legislature here. That is a very, very good thing.

That being said, this bill is important. It's urgent. Stakeholders are supportive. I think that certainly our caucus is very supportive of this bill moving forward.

I did want to raise a couple of points that I got in my conversations with stakeholders, and those are simply that they're looking for a few extra things. This bill, when it was announced, was coming with a committee, and that committee has various folks who are working in this area on it, or it's supposed to. The committee itself is not referenced in the bill at all, so that was a bit of a source of concern because a lot of the answers to a lot of the outstanding questions on this issue have been: well, the committee will deal with that. So the fact that the committee itself is not in the bill – it's not legislatively mandated – is a bit of a concern.

I had actually hoped to hear the minister, because we've asked this question repeatedly, respond and tell us who was going to be on the committee, when the committee was going to be called, when the committee would be expected to report back, and, you know, whether the recommendations of that committee would be made

public. I do think that while this helps and while this deals very positively with the issue, there are a number of outstanding issues that need to be dealt with, so the work of that committee is going to be critical. This is a really, really positive and good first step, but it is just that, a first step. So I think we need to know that the recommendations of that committee will be public so that the government can be held accountable.

The other two big things had to do with funding both for support agencies and for legal advice. That sort of earlier digression was about the fact that this a legally complex area, so allowing legal advice is really, really important because people don't necessarily know what rises to the level of human trafficking. So that's a pretty important step.

The other thing that has been asked for by the community is a sort of dedicated secure shelter for individuals, particularly individuals who are victims of sex trafficking because they're very, very traumatized, and people who are very, very traumatized require a lot of support. Sometimes when you're dealing with trauma, the average sort of everyday things that you and I – the ways in which we behave and interact – respond to one another become challenging, so that support and that ability to have a safe place to go is absolutely critical. Those are the asks.

I hope that even though we haven't heard directly from the minister on this point, those things are being considered and that they will come forward in the fullness of time. I certainly hope we see that, but I do want to reiterate that our caucus, myself and my colleagues, are absolutely supportive of this bill. We're supportive of it moving forward. We're very glad to see that the government has taken these steps, and we're very glad to see – even the change in this bill between the platform and now has been significant. It's clear that the government and the minister are listening to the stakeholders out there, which is a really, really good thing, so I would just like to urge all members to vote in favour of this bill.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Is there anyone else wishing to speak to third reading? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs has the call.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise today to speak to Bill 8, Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act. I believe that this is an essential piece of legislation, and it's really nice to see that the government has accepted our amendment to change the date from July as opposed to December. But like my hon. colleague was talking about, the legislation as it is needs to go a little bit further.

I can speak to first-hand experience as a social worker working with many who have been sexually exploited and knowing that there's a process from identifying that this individual has been sexually exploited to doing the legal action that needs to occur to the final step, perhaps, in supporting that individual, and what does that look like? So while it's been identified that supports are necessary, I would really hope that government is looking at what that looks like. Through the committee that they've established – I agree with the hon. member about making that public, because when we're looking at supporting individuals who have been sexually exploited or human trafficked, it doesn't end at the court process. There's trauma that's occurred. There's healing that needs to occur. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the bad guys are known to the individual. This is someone that they have grown to trust, someone that they sometimes love, so there's that relationship there through this entire process. So when we're looking at the importance of healing and not being sexually exploited again, there need to be strong systems in place. Sometimes that's second-stage housing. When we look at those who are exiting human trafficking,

they need to have supports. I can speak to some of the youth that I've worked with over the years, and sometimes it takes a few times having them come into the system, working through the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act, through PSECA, and getting them to a place where they believe in themselves, and healing that trauma. It can take years of supports and ongoing assistance and being connected with these individuals.

I am one hundred per cent supportive of this piece of legislation and believe that it is essential and that it will save lives, but the trauma has occurred. If we're at this stage in this person's life, they have been exposed. It's been confirmed. They need support, and they need resources, so looking at what that looks like and how we can best transition individuals into a healthy lifestyle and healing some of that trauma.

When I did my first piece of legislation as a private member, I did the Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Day Act, and I know that talking to individuals who had been exploited, it's likely that someone who has been human trafficked will experience PTSD. So acknowledging that it's a different kind of treatment when we're looking at this relationship because of the connection with the bad guy, it's not as black and white sometimes as other forces of trauma. Other perpetrators aren't known to the individual, so it takes a special type of intervention and support that's required for these individuals. Just having that understanding and awareness that the legislation is fantastic, but there needs to be the next phase. How do we support people that are exiting human trafficking?

The other piece that I would like to briefly touch on, that I've spoken about in this House, is the PSECA legislation and how there are different explanations and definitions of what sexual exploitation is. I would hate to see that there's a loophole, if you will, when we have two pieces of legislation that are in conflict with each other. I really hope that when government moves forward with this piece of legislation, they're also looking at the PSECA legislation to ensure that the definitions match, so that when you're working with youth, children there isn't some sort of legal loophole that allows the bad guy to get away with this. We need to make sure that everything that we're providing for supports and resources to the police, to Children's Services, to judges when they're making decisions is consistent, it makes sense, and the legislation supports each other. I would really hope that government looks at CYFEA, the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, as well as PSECA and ensures that there's that consistency, that similarity between the two pieces of legislation that are absolutely essential when we're looking at protecting children from being sexually exploited.

10:20

I think this is a strong message to individuals that have been human trafficked, to those that work tirelessly day after day to support and identify, whether it's the police, whether it's social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, medical health professionals that perhaps come into contact with these individuals. It's an incredible first step, but we're hearing from the community, from stakeholders, from individuals that there's definitely more that's needed. We need to make sure that people that are being traumatized, being human trafficked have that transition in place, they have that support. So having some sort of reporting system to what the committee that's being established looks at and recommends would be incredibly helpful.

I know that many members on this side of the House have a background in social work and have first-hand experience of working with individuals who have experienced this kind of trauma, and it would be nice to be able to see some of that and to be able to report to our communities and our stakeholders about what the process has been and where things are at and what the

recommendations are. I know, personally, I'm quite invested in the outcome of this and seeing some of the supports that are going to be available. I think it's an incredible step.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to close my comments and just say that I support this piece of legislation going forward. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or comment for the hon. member.

Seeing none, is there anyone else wishing to speak to third reading of Bill 8?

Mr. Yao: Question.

The Speaker: I appreciate the support from the hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche, but I think that the Speaker will

determine when the question is going to be called – or Wood Buffalo. Whichever you are.

Is there anyone else wishing to speak other than the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo?

[Motion carried; Bill 8 read a third time]

The Speaker: I see the hon. chief government whip has risen.

Mr. Ellis: Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I know we've made some great progress this morning, and I'm sure we'll make some great progress later on this afternoon. I'd like to rise and move that the Assembly adjourn until 1:30 p.m. today.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:23 a.m.]

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