



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, May 28, 2020

Day 22

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, QC, Edmonton-South West (UCP)  
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UCP),  
Deputy Government House Leader

Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UCP)  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UCP)  
Nicolaides, 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, QC, Calgary-Elbow (UCP),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, QC, 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, QC, Clerk	Philip Massolin, Clerk of Committees and Research Services	Amanda LeBlanc, Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>
Teri Cherkewich, Law Clerk	Nancy Robert, Research Officer	Chris Caughell, Sergeant-at-Arms
Stephanie LeBlanc, Clerk Assistant and Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Janet Schwegel, Director of Parliamentary Programs	Tom Bell, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Trafton Koenig, Parliamentary Counsel		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 and Electricity
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
Jeremy Nixon	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Community and Social Services
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.

Thursday, May 28, 2020

[The Speaker in the chair]

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

### Members' Statements

#### Arts and Community Grant Programs

**Ms Goehring:** Mr. Speaker, at the eleventh hour organizations who were working on completing applications for grants for community initiative projects suddenly realized the money they were applying for had been removed. Not only is it disappointing that these organizations who provide art, serve seniors, and support communities will not be able to contribute in the same way; they went through a thoughtful and time-consuming process that ended up for nothing. Heather Inglis, artistic producer of Workshop West Playwrights', said: we have been working on the grant on and off since January only to discover that the funding wasn't available.

This is shameful and is only one of the many attacks the UCP has taken on the arts industry. They have cut \$2.4 million from the Foundation for the Arts since forming government. Furthermore, they recently and quietly changed funding so that artists cannot access many different grants for the summer. While we called on them to do the opposite, to make funding more flexible and accessible, just like municipalities have, the government has taken steps to take funding away. Vern Thiessen, an award-winning playwright, has described this as a blind side.

Then when we made the call to ensure that artists were represented in Alberta's economic recovery, the Premier's office laughed at the idea. They laughed at the value the arts bring to our province. Over 60,000 are employed in the arts and generate over \$5 billion annually to our economy. The UCP's words and lack of support are insulting. There are many things I could say about this insult, but I will quote Andrew Phung, an actor from Calgary and recent winner of a Canadian screen award, yesterday in fact, for his role in *Kim's Convenience*. Congrats, Andrew. "I'm an actor, comedian, writer, and emcee. I am an artist and proud Calgarian. I'm also a business owner, with a degree in Economics from @UCalgary. Artists have value. Thank you @RachelNotley and @AlbertaNDP for recognizing our worth."

Mr. Speaker, sure, the government can laugh at the comedy that artists like Andrew contribute, but do not laugh at the value that they contribute to our province.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika has a statement to make.

#### Legislative Assembly Debate on COVID-19

**Mr. Schow:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This House stands as part of a centuries-old democratic tradition, where legislators assemble to effect the will of the public and where we ensure the proper, responsible function of government. The democratic traditions of this House predate the very existence of democracy in some other nations. The operation of our democracy rests on every member of this House conducting themselves in an honourable way. While I'm not calling into question the honour of any particular member, I am very concerned about the conduct of the Official Opposition.

Yesterday due to the unprecedented nature of the pandemic we held a special debate on COVID-19, allowing members to question the Premier and the ministers. This debate was organized and

agreed upon by House leaders from the government and opposition sides. The government asked the opposition which ministers they wished to question, and those ministers were made available. The government even accepted an amendment from the opposition specifying the four ministers the NDP wanted present for questions: Health, Finance, Labour, and Education. Then last night the opposition told the public and the media that ministers they didn't request to be present were avoiding the House and not doing their jobs. [interjections]

Now, I will make an exception . . .

**The Speaker:** Order.

Hon. members, everyone in the Chamber will know that there is a long-standing tradition of members' statements being able to be delivered uninterrupted even if you may or may not be cheering on your own team.

The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika can continue.

**Mr. Schow:** I thank my colleagues.

Now, I will not make an accusation against any individual member, but this was deceptive, it was dishonest, and it was dishonourable. The conduct was unacceptable for any member of this House. Did the Opposition House Leader not review the amendments before she submitted them? Did she not inform her caucus colleagues of what the amendments meant before the opposition, by way of Twitter, took to social media? Were they acting in bad faith the entire time?

Unfortunately, in recent months these kinds of uncivil and unfounded attacks have become increasingly commonplace. I should also point out that the opposition was initially concerned about too many ministers being present in the Chamber. I guess they can't seem to make up their minds.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, next week they'll be given the opportunity to question any number of ministers on the subject of COVID-19. We are finished playing these childish games.

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

#### HALO Medical Rescue Helicopter Funding

**Ms Glasgo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is National Paramedic Services Week. In many situations timely access to critical care is the dividing line between life and death, and over 9,000 heroic men and women answer this call in Alberta. In southern Alberta the spotlight has most recently and rightfully been on air ambulance services in remote and rural areas. This crucial service ensures that the most critically ill patients can get the care that they need as quickly as possible to the highest standard. I have stood up in this House on several occasions to speak about rural health services and consider it a great privilege to bring attention to a topic that is of great importance to me and also the constituents of Brooks-Medicine Hat.

HALO air ambulance proudly serves southern Alberta in a timely manner, taking care to efficiently and without hesitation respond to people in need. Due to the pandemic this service, which operates almost entirely on donations, has found itself in jeopardy. One of my first actions after being elected was to sit down with our Minister of Health and advocate for HALO. Before the COVID-19 pandemic AHS began its review of the helicopter emergency medical services in order to examine how best to ensure remote and rural Albertans have access to high-quality and equitable emergency care. I was pleased to hear that once government became aware of the financial hardship of HALO, our Health minister expedited the HEMS review to provide government recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents need assurance that should they run into hardship, help will be there. Time and time again small local businesses and citizens have fund raised and given their time and talent to support HALO, and they are making their voices heard right now. They're donating and working diligently when many would have given up, even in the midst of multiple global crises. My constituents deserve timely access to air ambulance services, just like every other taxpayer in this province. This has been a priority for me in the past and will continue to be a priority for me in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia

**Mr. Dang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, notwithstanding the completely untrue statements from the Member for Cardston-Siksika, what is true is that this government needs to do more because May is ending, which means that Asian Heritage Month is coming to a close. Now, rather than spending this month with good friends, families, and our communities reflecting on the contributions that Asian Canadians have made and continue to make, communities have had to resort to going online to advocate on a different topic.

Diversity has always been one of Alberta's greatest strengths, and it's this government's duty to ensure that all Albertans have safety, respect, and dignity, which is clearly outlined as something that every Albertan deserves. Now, over the last two centuries immigrants from all over Asia have continued to make contributions to the growth and prosperity in our country. This month was founded to help celebrate the advocacy and the history of Asian Canadians and their contributions to the prosperity of Canada. However, instead, this month has seen Asian Canadians targeted, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Just yesterday we saw graffiti placed on the Chinese consulate right there in Calgary. This government has been vocally criticized by that very consulate for stroking comments that have stoked xenophobia directly across this province. Yesterday morning's racist slurs were painted on the brick walls of their building, and this is the second such attack on the Chinese consulate. This pandemic has led to a lot of political debate and strong opinions; however, this should not be a cover for targeting Asians. This government has a duty to get involved and stand in solidarity with our Asian community. This has led to racism and xenophobia that has been undocumented. This government's comments have led to things like shouts against strangers in parking lots, service refusals, and other discrimination.

Asian Heritage Month was supposed to remind us that it's as important as ever to honour Asians' contributions to our province as doctors, teachers, and so much more. Now is not the time for empty platitudes. Now is a time for this government to speak out. The community has done their part in raising awareness and advocating. Now it's this government's turn. I would like to use this moment to directly call on the Premier of this province to condemn the xenophobic attack on the Chinese consulate. This government must act and condemn xenophobia.

### Beekeeping Industry Concerns

**Mr. Loewen:** This year has been particularly hard for Albertans, with the perfect storm of a pandemic and an oil price crash. The agriculture sector of our economy has been hit by even more factors out of their control. Wet weather the last few autumns has forced

farmers to leave crops in the field over the winter, causing in some instances total crop loss from winter damage and wildlife damage.

Sadly, Alberta beekeepers have even suffered more. The last couple of summers have been cold and wet in some parts of Alberta, and the smoke from other parts drastically reduced honey production. Low honey prices have also hit the industry. In addition, this past winter has resulted in higher than normal winter loss of hives, some beekeepers losing as much as 90 per cent of their hives. Then to top it all off, the cancellation of flights due to COVID has drastically reduced the supply of replacement bee packages that would normally replace the winter lost hives. Last year there were over 300,000 hives across Alberta. The loss this year could be about 60,000 hives. That would put our numbers back a decade.

The Alberta Beekeepers Commission, that represents Alberta beekeepers, voted unanimously to allow bee packages to come in from northern California to help alleviate these huge losses. Unfortunately, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency continues to block this supply of bee packages even though they allow queen bees and their attendant bees to be imported from the same location. This is a lifeline that would make an enormous difference to the viability of many Alberta businesses.

**1:40**

Last week I received a call about a traveller who had stopped in my hometown of Valleyview and had a bee swarm enter his vehicle through the sunroof while he was stopped. I was able to help out and remove the bees so he could resume his travel. Swarming is a natural process, though beekeepers try to prevent it as it is a loss to their business, and swarms that are not caught and brought into hives rarely survive long. Swarms tend not to be aggressive, but you still need to be careful.

The town of Falher in the Central Peace-Notley constituency, the one I represent, is considered the honey capital of Canada. The bee industry is so important to our Alberta economy, from the pollination of the \$25 billion hybrid canola seed production and other crops, fruits, berries, and gardens to honey and honey-based products. Bees and their keepers are an essential part of Alberta life that we as their elected representatives must stand up for.

### Conversion Therapy

**Member Irwin:** "I contemplated taking my own life on many occasions, chiefly because I felt so unworthy. I was told that I was loved unconditionally by those around me and by God but then heard constant messages about how much I needed to change to be truly welcomed into my faith community." Those are just some of the words from Lauren, who shared with me her painful experiences with conversion therapy. Her story might just be one story, but it's the story of many. Since hearing her story last year, I've heard from so many other survivors who've endured this torturous practice.

It's clear that conversion therapy is wrong and it is abusive. Yet there are people out there who deny this fact, those who would want to expose others to abuse that leads to depression, anxiety, self-hatred, and thoughts of suicide. Fortunately, those people are in the minority, and we've seen more and more municipalities step up and pass motions that would end this harmful practice in their cities and towns, including the city of Calgary which passed a bylaw this week. I'm so proud of the leadership in these communities and the voices of so many individuals, not just elected officials, who've stepped up to say that, unequivocally, conversion therapy is not welcome here. Thanks to their hard work, two-thirds of Albertans now live in a municipality with a ban in place or under way.

But what about that remaining one-third? What about the powers that fall under provincial responsibility? It's clear that Albertans

want conversion therapy banned, but we need more. We need all levels of government to take this issue seriously and to end the abuse being inflicted on members of the LGBTQ2S-plus community. What governments do and the signals that they send matter. This is why it was so disheartening when the UCP ended our conversion therapy working group, which had been tasked with providing recommendations on ways to effectively ban the practice here in Alberta. We see other provincial governments acting, and the federal government is also taking action, yet silence from this Premier.

I'm moved by Lauren's story and the stories that so many others have bravely shared, but I can't help thinking about the stories that we won't hear because those folks aren't here to share them. This isn't about partisanship. This is about real people, which means we need real leadership. What are you waiting for, Mr. Premier?

### Paradise Valley Flooding

**Mr. Rowswell:** Mr. Speaker, with the tragic situation in Fort McMurray fresh in our minds and the winter melt well under way, there is much talk about flooding in Alberta. Water mitigation and water issues in particular are important issues, nowhere more than in rural Alberta and my constituency of Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

The water concern currently plaguing my constituency is the flooding in the town of Paradise Valley. Paradise Valley is known for its rich agricultural history, ranching, and friendly people, but to residents of the area it is also known as a place that has the potential for flooding, specifically the Paradise Valley lagoon, which sits on the edge of Briker Lake. I personally visited the site last summer as the lagoon was almost overflowing. The town council raised the berm nine feet, and flooding was prevented.

However, the town of Paradise Valley and surrounding areas live with the spectre of flooding year in and year out. This year even the new, higher berm is now in jeopardy of failing, and an emergency trench had to be dug in order to divert the water to prevent property damage. This is not a new issue. In 1975 an engineer employed by the Alberta government surveyed the area and made a recommendation to relocate the lagoon; however, this solution was deemed at the time as being impractical. Mr. Speaker, the exact cause of the flooding is being investigated at the moment. This survey using modern technology and expertise will identify the source and a proposal to correct the course of action in order to alleviate issues in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank both the Ministry of Environment and Parks as well as the Ministry of Transportation for the attention they have given this issue. This once again shows that the concerns of rural Alberta do not go unnoticed by this government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

### COVID-19 Response and Economic Relaunch Strategy

**Mr. Turton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last few months have been incredibly hard for Albertans all across our beautiful province. Our routines have been disrupted more than any of us have seen in any part of our lives. Yet despite this disruption Albertans have rallied together. To quote columnist David Staples: "Albertans haven't just flattened the curve, we have steamrolled it and chucked it down a [large] hill."

On May 14 our government began our plan to relaunch Alberta, with retail stores, hair salons, of which I'm a regular customer, museums, art galleries, and more opening up in most areas of the province. While Calgary and Brooks saw their reopening plans

paused until just this past weekend, the entire province is now able to reap the rewards of Albertans' hard work and commitment in battling COVID-19.

Now, there was some concern that we would see a bump in COVID-19 cases as we reopen. Today, two weeks after the reopening of much of the province, that has not been the case. Cases have slowly but surely gone down, and I'm pleased to say that hospitalizations have been cut in half since the peak of this crisis. Now, in my riding of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain there are currently zero active cases and, as a result, businesses and parks have reopened.

Albertans have taken the advice of the chief medical officer of health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, seriously. This is what let us open originally and what has prevented us from seeing a bump in cases. Over the next couple of weeks Albertans will have to continue in this attitude as we wait for further stages of our relaunch strategy. As they always have, I believe Albertans will rally together and take care of each other, this time by keeping just a little extra distance between themselves. We have sacrificed too much to risk it all at this point.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

### High School Graduation 2020

**Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to address the class of 2020. COVID-19 has impacted your high school experience. Our thoughts and prayers have been with you as you've adapted to the teacher-led, home-based learning. I, too, have a daughter graduating this year, and our family has been experiencing all these changes along with you.

Many of you did not know that high school as you knew it would end so abruptly and that you would not see your fellow students and teachers again. For every other grade in the K to 12 system there will be more time to build lasting memories in school with these friends. For you, our grade 12 graduates, this chapter is closed, and this is disappointing not only for you but for your parents, teachers, support staff, and administrators.

School trips, sports, plays, and even in some cases the grad ceremonies have been cancelled. Many schools are still weighing out options of just postponing final grad ceremonies. Other schools and organizations are finding new ways to celebrate grad during COVID, like a drive-in ceremony that St. Mary's in Vegreville had, which my daughter took part in.

Students, I know this isn't the ending you were expecting, but I want you to all be encouraged. High school graduation marks the end of your K to 12 journey and accomplishments, but it also marks the beginning of what lies ahead. You are our next wave of innovators, entrepreneurs, creators, and strategic thinkers. Your future is bright. To our graduating students: you have all come so far. Please do not allow COVID-19 to undervalue your achievements. I am truly excited for all of you and cannot wait to see what you achieve in the future.

Congratulations to the class of 2020.

### Notices of Motions

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I see the hon. Official Opposition House Leader has risen.

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On appropriate notice that was provided to your office and to the office of the Government House Leader, I now rise to inform the House that I plan to rise in this Assembly later today, at the end of the daily Routine, to request the

opportunity to make a brief statement on why a media briefing on Bill 15 that took place this morning breached the rights of this Assembly and my rights as a member of this Assembly.

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

### Oral Question Period

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

#### 1:50 Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This Premier has piled costs onto Albertans when they can least afford it and lectured them on living with less. He's forcing schools to fire staff, raised fees on parents, and cancelled critical programs for vulnerable special-needs students. He's forcing tuition hikes onto students who just lost their summer jobs, and he's still dragging his feet over paid sick leave for vulnerable Alberta workers. So tell me: why is it that everyone else has to live with less while this Premier's cash-strapped, spend-happy political party gets a giant taxpayer-funded bailout from Ottawa?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I don't even know how to respond. When the Leader of the Opposition stands up and throws out about a dozen falsehoods, where do you even begin? This is the Leader of the Opposition, who, when we offered to put up 11 ministers for a full-day report on COVID and open questions from the opposition, came back and asked for four ministers specifically to do that. We adopted the NDP motion as an expression of our magnanimity and our accountability to the Official Opposition. Then the NDP attacked us for only allowing the four ministers which were embedded in their motion. I don't even know how to deal with an opposition that makes things up and twists the facts hour by hour.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that it was always clear that we wanted to ask other ministers questions, too.

But that's not the issue. The wage subsidy is meant for businesses that have lost revenue due to the pandemic. The UCP's revenue dropped because it's not an election year. That's a different reason. They are exploiting a loophole to get their hands on federal cash while thousands of Alberta businesses get left out in the cold. Will the Premier stop distracting and, instead, direct his party to give the money back and step up to make sure that the federal money can get to the struggling Alberta businesses it's meant for?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I have the motion that the NDP brought forward yesterday, which, in the spirit of magnanimity, the government accepted, striking out "any other member of the Executive Council." We adopted the NDP's requested approach. Then they attacked us for it on the matter that she's now addressing. You know, unlike the NDP, the UCP suspended partisan fundraising for weeks following the beginning of the pandemic out of respect for Albertans. But on March 17, the day a public health emergency was declared, the NDP sent out a begging letter trying to monetize the pandemic. Shame on them.

**Ms Notley:** Quote: this guy is an empty trust fund millionaire who has the political depth of a finger bowl. End quote. That's the Premier describing his new biggest donor, the Prime Minister. "Political parties should be funded by their supporters voluntarily, not by forcing all taxpayers to pay their bills." That's the Premier again. This is a question of government policy because Albertans are overwhelmed by this hypocrisy, and they need their government

to be consistent. Will the Premier take his own advice and pay back the money to Canada's overburdened taxpayers?

**Mr. Kenney:** Imagine that crew talking about consistency. At 10 in the morning they asked the government to limit us to four ministers for the COVID debate. Then at 5 in the afternoon – I don't know what happened in the intervening few hours; it must have been an entertaining time up at the leader's office, Mr. Speaker – they attacked us for adopting their approach. Unlike the NDP, we the UCP are not trying to squeeze money out of supporters by monetizing the pandemic. Shame on them. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has the call.

**Ms Notley:** Again, Mr. Speaker, those facts are absolutely incorrect.

#### Public Health Emergency Declaration and End Date

**Ms Notley:** Yesterday in question period the Premier let it slip that he intends to lift Alberta's public health emergency on June 15. But when the media asked the chief medical officer of health about this decision, she said, quote, I haven't had the opportunity to have that conversation, so I think that might be a question best addressed to the Premier in terms of that particular information. End quote. Why was this fundamentally serious public health decision made by the Premier without Dr. Hinshaw's knowledge?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, the Public Health Act allows for an emergency to be declared for limited purposes. The stated purpose, the explicit purpose, was to allow for extraordinary measures to be taken to manage health care human resources at the height of the pandemic to ensure that we were not overwhelmed. That was now weeks ago. We have a thousand acute-care beds set aside for COVID patients, occupied by about 45 of those patients. We no longer require those extraordinary authorities, which were the entire premise of the invocation of a public health emergency in the middle of March.

**Ms Notley:** Well, yesterday the B.C. government extended their state of emergency by another two weeks and said that there is likely no end in sight. The Horgan government also noted that, quote, the extension of the provincial state of emergency is based on recommendations from B.C.'s health and emergency management officials. When other provinces are still working closely with their public health officials, why does the Premier of Alberta believe he can decide the end of a public health emergency without even the knowledge of Alberta's chief medical officer of health?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, we have not made a final decision, and of course if there's a sudden spike in infections or hospitalizations that are unforeseen at this point, we'll have to correct course. That's the sort of environment in which we will be until there is widespread access to a safe vaccine. Having said that, if current trends continue, there are none of the conditions that apply today which applied in mid-March, which required the invocation of a public health emergency. I know that the NDP leader is taking orders from her taskmaster over at the AFL, who wants to shut down the entire Alberta economy indefinitely, but we won't let them do that.

**Ms Notley:** That was a very weird little rabbit hole.

Nonetheless, there are many areas where Alberta's pandemic response has been excellent, Mr. Speaker. However, this government delayed their response in continuing care and failed



entirely in meat packing. Up to now the Premier has refused to take responsibility for these mistakes and, instead, has hidden behind the chief medical officer of health. The Premier can't have it both ways. Premier, are you now prepared to accept responsibility for the delayed response in continuing care and the largest outbreak on the continent at Cargill?

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, every jurisdiction on the face of the Earth, at least in the western world – I think this excludes some Asian countries that closed their borders to hot spots immediately. But, with that exception, every jurisdiction, sadly, has seen the novel coronavirus infect congregate seniors' living facilities. Thankfully, here in Alberta we have had much less tragic experience in that respect than other jurisdictions like Quebec, Ontario, New York, and many others, thanks in part to the quick action of the government, our public health officials, and the staff at our continuing care facilities.

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

### Support for Persons and Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions about how we're helping people through this recession. We need folks over there to spend more time helping ordinary people and less time finding underhanded loopholes for the UCP to help themselves to Justin Trudeau's money. Now, on this side we have proposed serious policies like direct grants to small business and cutting business insurance costs. Yesterday the Minister of Finance said no to all of this, but maybe now that his party is taking Ottawa's money while he does very little in his province – and that looks pretty bad – I will ask again: will the minister give at least some of the same support to small business that the UCP is giving to themselves?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to reach out to small businesses. We are continuing to respond to small businesses. That's why we rolled out a series of deferrals. On top of the deferrals was premium abatement for small and medium-sized businesses of their WCB premiums. That is \$350 million of relief. We also are participating in the commercial rent relief program. We are open to hearing of additional need, and we're prepared to roll out additional programs.

**Ms Phillips:** Now, during this recession, Mr. Speaker, the NDP caucus has been listening to Albertans struggling with skyrocketing car insurance. So far the Premier's only response to these concerns has been to boast about the money he is saving on his own car insurance. I'm sensing a theme here: worry about yourself first even if it means making Justin Trudeau the UCP's sugar daddy, but do nothing for working people. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Finance if he would bring down people's car insurance during the pandemic. He said: no, probably not. Does the minister consider the job done now that the Premier got his 200 bucks back, or is he actually going to help people and bring down their car insurance?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, we're aware that premiums have been high in the automobile insurance sector. In fact, we have appointed a panel to look into the underlying causes for the high cost of insurance premiums. The previous government put a Band-Aid on that problem. They did not have the courage to deal with that problem. This government will deal with the issue of auto insurance. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The Member for Lethbridge-West is the one with the call.

2:00

**Ms Phillips:** Well, during this recession, Mr. Speaker, there's been an emerging consensus among economists from left to right that we need child care as one of the recovery pillars because the kids are at home, not just the zero- to five-year-olds but all of them. It's pretty darn hard to go back to work with school-aged kids. I'm not sure what the Minister of Finance's experience with children is, but it is generally frowned upon to leave an eight-year-old by themselves all day. But when I asked the Minister of Finance if he's thought about this issue as part of the economic recovery, his answer was: nah, not really. So will the Minister of Finance take child care seriously as part of our economic stimulus and recovery, or is the only economic stimulus . . .

**The Speaker:** I see the hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP's behaviour in this place is ridiculous. They want to talk about what they're doing for Albertans? Again, on March 17, 2020, the very day the state of emergency was declared in this province, their deputy leader, their acting leader inside this Legislature, by her own words, sent out a fundraising letter to fund raise to Albertans to pay the NDP's bills, using COVID-19 for political purposes, signing with her MLA title, and that member wants to stand in this House and lecture on the process. Shame on them. Shame on that member for not standing up to her deputy leader. Shame on . . . [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Ms Ganley:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** Ah. Hon. members, at 2:01 a point of order has been called.

### COVID-19 and Seniors

**Ms Sigurdson:** "Give gramma a hug": that's the takeaway from the *Calgary Herald* columnist Don Braid after what can only be described as a very cold-hearted assessment of who is at risk of COVID-19 by the Premier. The Premier seemed to imply that we're out of the woods because the average age of victims of COVID-19 is 83. It's this same callous attitude towards seniors that led to this government's abject failure to manage the pandemic in seniors' care facilities. To the Premier: will you apologize to all Albertans for your callous, heartless, and tone-deaf comments? The floor is yours.

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

**Mr. Shandro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel for the families who have lost a loved one during this pandemic, but our continuing care operators in this province have done a good job of protecting residents during this unprecedented crisis with the support of AHS and the support of this government. We've had 106 deaths in our continuing care facilities, but it's important to compare that to Ontario: 1,600 deaths there in Ontario in their facilities. In Quebec that's 2,700 deaths that they've seen. We'll expand the review that we announced earlier, the review of our continuing care legislation, to have a review of the response throughout the whole pandemic.

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

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government promised a wage subsidy and increased staffing levels for folks working in continuing care weeks ago. In Alberta 104 out of 139

COVID-19 related deaths are seniors in continuing care. This is a massive tragedy. It took the Minister of Health seven full weeks to announce surge funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. The money still hasn't gone out the front door. Can the Premier please take charge and show some leadership in this?

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

**Mr. Shandro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. None of that is true. Over a month ago, on April 20, I announced \$7 million a month to increase the health care aides' staffing and to top up their wages by \$2 an hour. In addition, along with the hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing, I recently announced \$170 million in new funding for continuing care facilities and the seniors' lodges; \$14.5 million will be allocated per month, and the funding is retroactive to March 15. That earlier announcement also included an advance of \$24.5 million for 1,000 new aide positions, which has been received by the facilities.

**Ms Sigurdson:** The money isn't in the workers' pockets, for sure. This government promised that PPE would be provided to seniors' care facilities months ago. Front-line workers are reporting dangerous levels of shortage. This has to stop before more lives are lost. Will the Premier show leadership, admit that mistakes were made, and agree to immediately provide a full complement of PPE to all continuing care homes? Will he also commit to taking part in a national investigation into our failure to protect seniors in continuing care during this COVID-19 pandemic?

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

**Mr. Shandro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the more than 400 continuing care facilities throughout the province – some of them in the beginning of the pandemic did procure their own PPE. AHS has also helped them throughout the pandemic response to provide them with their PPE. That includes our seniors' lodges in the province. I'm very happy to be able to report to the Assembly that AHS has done an amazing job to make sure that the PPE is getting out the door and getting into the hands of our front-line workers in those continuing care facilities, including the designated supportive living facilities in the province and the seniors' lodges.

As I said, the continuing care review that we announced in 2019 will include our pandemic response.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-East.

#### **Economic Relaunch Strategy and Small Boutique Gyms**

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Physical fitness and exercise are an important part of our health and well-being. Small boutique gyms offer services that allow people to continue exercising safely during COVID-19 and offer some routine in a world tossed around and upside down. To the Minister of Health: will you consider advocating on behalf of small boutique gyms to open during phase 2 of Alberta's relaunch?

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

**Mr. Shandro:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are following the advice of the chief medical officer of health, who is acting on the best evidence that's available to our public health officials to protect Albertans. Restrictions are in place to minimize risk of transmission of COVID as we relaunch and as the relaunch continues. Now, we have heard the concerns, as the hon. member mentions, and the opinions expressed of Albertans who are concerned about exploring whether we can support some of the sporting and indoor fitness

activities, to safely allow them at stage 3. No decision has been made, but we will be considering that at the next EMCC meeting.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie-East.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that small boutique gyms have a lower capacity than the big box gyms that are included in phase 3 and given that there are major differences between the big box gyms and small boutique gyms and further given that these gyms operate in a controlled environment with set class times where only active members that have preregistered can attend, Minister, what steps can small gyms take to shift them into phase 2 of the relaunch instead of phase 3?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Shandro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. member makes a fantastic point. We know that gym operators are committed to health and safety and protecting the well-being of their clients and their patrons, who attend their gyms. Whenever they are allowed to open, the gyms will need to commit to following certain guidance provided by Alberta Health as well as taking all of the appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of transmission in their facilities as relaunch continues.

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

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many small gym and fitness boutique owners are willing to commit to specific safety standards for their fitness studios and given that over 13,000 people have signed an online petition to shift these small businesses into phase 2 of the relaunch, Minister, can small gyms gain an industry-wide commitment to abide by specific protocols and standards to protect the safety of their customers? Can they be considered for phase 2 of Alberta's relaunch?

**The Speaker:** The minister.

**Mr. Shandro:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The chief medical officer of health is exploring whether gyms and other indoor fitness centres can be included in phase 2, and that recommendation will be coming to EMCC from her for consideration next week. Whenever the decision is made, the gyms will need to follow the public health guidance from her and her office and take all appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of transmission in their facilities. I look forward to that recommendation coming to EMCC next week.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View has the call.

#### **Victims of Crime Fund**

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today this government will introduce legislation that presumably follows through on their throne speech promise to reallocate millions from the victims of crime fund to other purposes. I know victim-serving agencies are extremely concerned about this proposal. Can the minister tell us which agencies serving victims he consulted with and why he is proceeding despite their objections?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, last year we met with thousands upon thousands of Albertans that had been victimized by crime. From communities from Valleyview to Coaldale to Drayton Valley we heard from Albertans that are living in fear. We invited all of the members opposite to come hear about their record on crime, and

you know what they did? They refused to show up. They refused to listen. This government will not do the same thing that they did and put their head in the sand. We are listening to people right now that are living in fear. We have people that literally sleep with an axe under their bed. We're going to take action.

2:10

**Ms Ganley:** Given that the question was about listening to those who serve victims of crime, I'll try again. Given that the victims of crime fund has supported the training of thousands of dedicated Alberta volunteers, volunteers who are available day and night to support their neighbours, what does the Minister of Justice have to say to these dedicated volunteers after cutting their training?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, nothing shocks me anymore in this House. They refused to listen to actual victims that came out by the thousands. Thousands upon thousands came out to voice their concerns about NDP justice, yet here they are again questioning the very people asking for help. That is what this is doing. We're expanding the scope to include public safety. This is about – and I tried to explain this concept before – more pie. More pie is a good thing. It's not an either/or; it's about improving the system. That's what we're going to do.

**Ms Ganley:** Given that one of the programs that was meant to launch last year in order to spend money on victims of crime was supports for survivors of domestic violence, which was based on the incredibly successful HomeFront model in Calgary, can the minister explain to Albertans why he doesn't think that this program is needed?

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Mr. Speaker, we went through this in estimates. Again, I look forward to introducing legislation here, hopefully later today. This government is focused on public safety, making sure people are not victimized. We commend the good work that's being done to combat domestic violence and other issues. This legislation is about more. It's going to expand the scope. It's going to provide additional resources to keep people safe and to make sure we stop people being victimized and living in fear in their communities.

It's a shame that they didn't come and hear about their record. I commend them – again, hopefully at some point we'll do town halls. I'll invite them again to hear about their record.

### **Economic Relaunch Strategy and Small Businesses**

**Member Ceci:** Less than 24 hours before Alberta businesses were about to open their doors on May 14, the Premier announced that Calgary and Brooks would not be reopening with the rest of the province. Now, we aren't arguing with that decision itself. The issue is the costs incurred by these businesses due to the Premier's lack of notice. We've been told by restaurant owners that they spent on average \$10,000 getting ready to open, only to have much of that food spoil. Will this government be reimbursing these small businesses after the government pulled the rug out from under them?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**Mr. Toews:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we are in constant communication with small businesses across the province. I want to acknowledge the incredible hardship that so many of our business owners and job creators, employers have faced over the last couple of months. We have rolled out a series of measures, but we're certainly prepared to do more as again we consult with small-

business owners and understand what measure would be the most appropriate.

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

**Member Ceci:** Thank you. Given that this government has not offered any help to small businesses other than kicking the can down the road through deferrals and partial WCB and given that this government would rather let other levels of government take the lead on supporting business, including their new friend and donor Justin Trudeau, and given that small businesses are desperate for direct financial support, will this government finally listen to the small-business community and provide financial support in the form of grants to help with reopening and increased operating costs?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, we have already rolled out a series of programs to help small businesses, including, again, a \$350 million measure that puts money directly in business owners. I find it pretty rich coming from the members of the opposition who were in government, who didn't seem to care about business owners and job creators. We are listening to job creators and businesspeople in this province.

**Member Ceci:** Given that June rent is only four days away and given that the Premier let his party's biggest donor, Justin Trudeau, take the lead on designing a rent subsidy program that doesn't work for the majority of Alberta businesses and given that this UCP government has refused to go back to the table to renegotiate the program and given that members of the business community recently sent a letter to this government asking for a commercial eviction ban, will this government finally step up and help small businesses and implement a commercial eviction ban?

**Mr. Toews:** Mr. Speaker, we are participating in the commercial rent assistance program, and we have made recommendations to the federal minister to make improvements in the way that program could be administered. We have brought forward a number of supports for small businesses. On a per capita basis Alberta ranks amongst the top provinces with measures directly supporting small businesses. We will continue to listen to the business community to understand what more might be required.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East has a question.

### **Services for Children with Special and Complex Needs**

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government believes in the value of inclusive education. This province truly believes in the importance of meeting the needs of every child. That is why we have kept our promise to maintain education funding. Many parents have questions about our changes to the program unit funding and whether that significantly decreases the access children have to the supports they need to ensure their children do well upon entering school. To the Minister of Education: how do you plan on ensuring every child's success, even those with developmental and cognitive disabilities in our school system?

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

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Despite the rhetoric coming from the other side of the House, school authorities continue to receive the funding they require to support their students. Program unit funding continues to provide supports for pre-K students, and students in kindergarten receive support

through our new specialized learning supports grant. We continue to recognize the importance of early intervention, and Alberta continues to have the earliest intervention program for children in Canada, ages two years, eight months.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Our government acknowledges that learning begins long before a child enters a classroom. Given that many children with complex behaviours or disabilities require extra focus to prepare them for school and given that many early childhood learning and development centres are well-positioned to provide this level of assistance, to the Minister of Children's Services: what do the recent funding changes to these programs mean to these facilities?

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

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last summer I actually had the opportunity to visit the riding of my colleague from Lethbridge-East and tour a child care centre that specializes in providing care for children with disabilities, so I know that this is an issue that is very close to him as well as myself. Our government has maintained child care funding, specifically also for inclusive child care. Inclusion can mean a variety of things from supporting children with disabilities to ensuring that children have access to culturally appropriate child care. My ministry works hard to ensure that children across this province are able to meaningfully participate regardless of their circumstances.

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

**Mr. Neudorf:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that our government cares deeply about this issue and that the ministers are working hard to address the concerns of parents and given that there is clearly a lot of misinformation being spread to the public about these changes and given that parents who have children with complex needs already struggle to find and source the support needed, again to the Minister of Children's Services: how do you plan on making supports more accessible and easier to navigate for these families?

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you to the member for this very important question and for his advocacy on this issue. We are currently renegotiating the bilateral agreements on child care with the federal government, and inclusion funding is a hugely critical part of these discussions. We have to ensure that educators have the skills and tools that they need to ensure that every child feels accepted, valued, and safe. Mr. Speaker, the former government's pilot project – and we've heard a lot about this in the last couple of weeks – spent \$45 million on 2 per cent of children and 4 per cent of centres in Alberta. We'll take those dollars and make sure they go further, are invested more equitably, including to ensure inclusive daycare is available to all who need it.

#### Arts and Community Grant Programs

**Ms Goehring:** Mr. Speaker, in one way or another everyone is hurting during this pandemic, but this government is intent on making a bad situation even worse. Just three days before the final applications were due, they put out a news release saying that they are cutting access to the community initiatives project-based grants, or CIP. The arts generate over \$5 billion for our economy and support nearly 60,000 jobs. Can the minister explain how they are going to include the arts in our economic recovery if they insist on cutting their supports?

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

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our top priority in this government, especially right now, is the health and safety of artists and performers and audience members all across Alberta. I'm sad to see the NDP using divisive politics. Their agenda hurts the arts industry, creating fear in the sector and misleading the public. It's shameful. They choose to destroy, debilitate, and fearmonger to achieve their ideological bent while on this side we're going to uplift, restart, and relaunch.

2:20

**Ms Goehring:** Given that the government cut the program three days before the deadline through a notice on the government website and given that workers in the industry have said that this move leaves them with no certainty on where any government program sits now, can the minister explain how she is in a position to deliver vital supports to these communities now?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The opposition continues to twist this narrative, and I just don't even really know how to answer these questions or how quite to participate. The change to project-based funding is temporary. We've said this. In fact, that member has had regular meetings directly with my chief of staff with respect to this information. I find it really, really important that on top of having that information and then going to the media and spreading misinformation, actually hurting the organizations – right now project funding is what these organizations told us they needed. It's temporary. We will move back into programs when it's safe to do so.

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

**Ms Goehring:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your ministry hasn't provided answers or a response to the actors and actresses and artists that are asking for these answers.

Given that by cutting access to the CIP program, the government doesn't feel that the groups of Albertans who generate \$5 billion for the GDP of Alberta and create over 60,000 jobs need to be part of our economy and given that the Minister of Finance has said that diversification is a luxury, can the minister tell the House if she shares the views that artists, of whom she is one, don't have anything to contribute to an economic discussion?

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs, if you're ever curious to know what a preamble is, that was a very good example of one.

The hon. minister of culture and multiculturalism.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find this line of questioning really rich. Here is a member who allowed herself and her friends to attack Paul Brandt, a gem of this province, an amazing musician, who was actually brought on to the Human Trafficking Task Force to bring his expertise. She stands there and wants to defend artists, yet is willing to attack a person who is coming onboard to use his talent and his art to actually help and forward information on human trafficking. Further to that, the member could have avoided yet another embarrassing public situation simply because she chooses not to listen to the truth: \$26.9 million will continue to fund the arts. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

### COVID-19 and Child Care

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to spending millions of dollars on an embarrassing war room or accepting donations from Justin Trudeau, the UCP is all in, but when it comes to finding monies for the reopening of child care centres, they can only give out penny change. Child care operators have called the one-time \$66 per space funding from this government an insult, a slap in the face, and utterly meaningless. It's a few thousand dollars when centres have been closed for months and many will continue to be for many more months to come. As child care centres struggle to reopen, can the minister explain why she hasn't been able to offer actual, substantive support for child care operators and educators?

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

**Ms Schulz:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Child care is an important part of getting Albertans back to work. As a working mom I know this first-hand. I'm so glad we were able to redirect and provide \$18 million to support child care centres through this pandemic, which on a number of the five town hall sessions that we hosted with operators is exactly what they asked for, to redirect those funds that would typically be going to child care centres so that they could reopen for parents. We're working with the federal government. I know those centres had access to hundreds of millions of dollars in programming, and we'll continue to work with them on this.

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

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many child care programs still have not reopened or will be operating at reduced capacity for the foreseeable future and given that the minister is going to continue to find savings in the coming months as there are fewer families accessing subsidy and far fewer educators who are receiving top-ups, can the minister tell the House what she's doing with all the money in the child care budget if she's not using it to prevent our child care system from going under?

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

**Ms Schulz:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. In my last response I wasn't able to get to what we are actually hearing from child care centres, and I'd like to quote Anil from Kids U: this is a meaningful commitment to child care in Alberta and will help us prepare to reopen safely; while we have been open in a few locations for essential workers, our staff all over Calgary can't wait to see our kids and families again soon and navigate this new normal together.

Mr. Speaker, we've taken a prudent approach. We continue to gather feedback from centres on where the gaps are with the federal and provincial programming. We're working on what those supports may look like, but rest assured that we are working with centre directors and front-line workers to support families.

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

**Ms Pancholi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given that that approach is actually betting on the demise of our child care system and given that the UCP government will be receiving another \$45 million from the federal government in a transfer as part of the early learning and child care centre bilateral agreement and given that affordable, accessible, and reliable child care should be a key pillar for the economic recovery of this province, will this minister commit to using this money to actually develop a long-term strategy, not a Band-Aid solution, to help rebuild and strengthen our child care system?

**Ms Schulz:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. This is what I've been saying time and time again. We are incredibly committed to accessibility, affordability, high-quality child care for parents who need it. We are working with the federal government. What we won't do, though, is redirect \$46 million of a bilateral agreement to support 4 per cent of child care centres across the province. We've heard that in this pandemic that has created an even disproportionate amount of struggle for those centres who were not the chosen winners of the NDP's pilot program. We will continue to work with the federal minister and listen to feedback of operators to reopen for parents.

### Cattle Industry Concerns

**Ms Rosin:** Mr. Speaker, we are beginning to realize the repercussions of the safety measures that were put in place for COVID-19. These repercussions are felt strongly in our agrifood industry. Cattle farmers have been devastated by the limited production capacity of JBS and Cargill processing facilities. Production was backed up 130,000 head, and beef prices plummeted 40 per cent as a result, all while ranchers had to pay extra to hold their calves for a longer period of time until the backlog cleared. To the minister of agriculture: can you please tell this House what we've already done to help protect the cattle industry?

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think everybody in this Chamber and Albertans across the province know that Alberta beef is the best in the world and produced in the most sustainable way, better than anywhere else. COVID-19 did have significant disruptions to our cattle processing. Nearly three months ago there was the first case of COVID at Harmony meats. Since then a tremendous amount of work from crossdepartmental agencies has been done to make sure that our cattle industry can do what they do best, and that is to feed the world. Since then we have created a cattle set-aside program that will help the price fluctuations that we're seeing due to those processing disruptions.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

**Ms Rosin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. As mentioned, given that our government recently committed \$17 million to fund the extended holding of fed, slaughter-ready cattle but that 90 per cent of these eligible cattle are not held on family ranches, so supports don't help them, and given that the small, family ranch is the vital beginning of our food chain and given that many family ranches are in dire need of support, to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry: if these backlogs continue into the fall, what can you offer the ranchers of Bragg Creek, Jumping Pound, Millarville and beyond so they can continue feeding our world as all the existing supports are funnelled directly to large feedlots and processing facilities?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to monitor the cow-calf prices going into this fall and winter. The fed-cattle producers right now are in the most urgent need, so that's why we have created a set-aside program for them, but later on this year if conditions warrant, we will make sure that there is a set-aside program in place for them. When it comes to March calf prices, there was a decrease of 7 per cent, roughly \$88 per head, but we have seen in the past month a rebound of about 5 per cent, which is about \$63 a head. So it is something where there is a strengthening

in the market, but we will continue to monitor and help out our cattle producers.

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

**Ms Rosin:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Well, insurance premiums on cattle have also continued to rise since the creation of the WLPPIP calf insurance in 2012. Given the uncertainty of the post COVID-19 world and the aforementioned industry crisis within our processing facilities and given that many of the cattlemen in the foothills raise calves for sale rather than for feeder calves and given that the window of opportunity to sell these calves is small, in the fall and in the spring, to the same minister: how does the Alberta government plan on maintaining affordable insurance solutions for our cattle industry?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Dreeshen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have seen in the western livestock price insurance program that insurance premiums did go up about 250 per cent compared to last year. Insurance is the best way and the best kind of business risk management for our agriculture sector, so we are looking at improvements, possibly creating a new cattle price insurance program, but ultimately we want to make sure that actually works for our ranchers. Our agriculture sector is so important to our economic recovery, and we want to make sure that we are there to support them every step along the way.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows is rising.

#### Human Trafficking Task Force

**Mr. Deol:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Human trafficking is a scourge that is critical that we tackle. Our caucus supported the creation of the task force, and we look forward to reviewing the work that it shall do. I'm hearing concerns from multicultural communities that their voices and experiences are not represented on this panel. Can the Minister of Justice explain why there is not a single person from the East Asian, South Asian, or Filipino communities on this task force, and will he rectify this by appointing a member of these communities as soon as possible?

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

2:30

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for his question. We'll continue to make sure that we engage with all Albertans with this task force. If the member has community members that have ideas, suggestions of how we can improve policy, we'll gladly facilitate those introductions to make sure that they can bring those ideas forward to the task force. It's there to help provide advice to our government to make sure that we take this really critical issue seriously and find ways that will improve lives for Albertans.

**Mr. Deol:** Given that these communities have been impacted by human trafficking and given that their experience and voices could contribute greatly to the work of the panel and only add to the panel's work and improve its outcomes, will the Minister of Justice release the criteria they used to make these appointments so Albertans can see why these communities were excluded from the task force, and will he commit to reviewing these criteria to avoid such an oversight in the future?

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

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, like I was mentioning earlier on, if the hon. member has suggestions of people that the task force should be speaking with or suggestions of different community leaders that should be engaged in this matter, we gladly welcome those suggestions and ideas. We don't see this as a partisan issue. This is about how we can make lives better for Albertans. We welcome their suggestions.

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

**Mr. Deol:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that tackling human trafficking needs to involve all Albertans, no voices should be excluded from participating with the task force. But given the concern that I have heard from the East and South Asian and Filipino communities about their lack of representation on this task force, will the Minister of Justice apologize to these communities for failing to include a single member of the communities on the panel and commit to rectifying it immediately? Will he report back to this House once this glaring oversight is resolved?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I've provided an olive branch to find different ways to work together on this and provide different feedback to the community. I'd also invite the hon. member and all the members opposite to join us in condemning how Paul Brandt was attacked when he was appointed to this task force. This is an individual who has given countless hours, time, resources to combat human trafficking with his #notinmycity initiative. This is somebody of the highest regard who's going to help elevate the profile of this issue. We ask the NDP to join us in condemning the attacks on Paul Brandt.

#### Support for Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19

**Mr. Nielsen:** When it comes to small businesses asking for support, this government's only response is to delay and defer. Businesses have been asking this government to provide commercial eviction protections. We know that half of small businesses are not able to pay June's rent without help, so our caucus asked the government to step up and introduce a commercial eviction ban. This government's response? An online survey to businesses to provide feedback on commercial rent. Mr. Speaker, if they had been listening, they'd know that small businesses had already given their feedback. So will the government commit to a commercial rent ban immediately? Yes or no?

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

**Ms Fir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with every single other province and territory we have signed onto the Canada emergency commercial rent assistance program. It is a federal program that all provinces are taking part in. The Premier and my colleague the Minister of Finance are continuing to raise the concerns Albertans have about the program with the federal government. We have recently launched an online engagement tool that will allow us to gauge the depth of the problem facing commercial tenants and landlords so that we're making informed decisions. The members opposite may not believe in engaging with tenants and landlords as they act based on ideology, not fact.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, given that the UCP failed to listen to businesses when they asked for guidance on relaunch and left them waiting hours before the relaunch occurred and given, again, that this government pulled the rug out from under Calgary businesses by waiting until the last possible moment to cancel their relaunch, costing them thousands, and given that now rather than supporting small businesses, this government is trying to tie them up in red tape with a survey to gather information they'd already have if they'd bothered to listen, will the minister of red tape explain why during an economic crisis he's allowing red tape rather than listening to businesses?

**Mr. Hunter:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I find it rich that this member all of a sudden has a deep interest in red tape reduction. This is the party that had zero interest in reducing even one-for-one red tape when we introduced it in opposition. What our government is doing is we're getting rid of one-third of the regulatory burden against our job creators and everyday Albertans.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, given that this government is spending \$13 million on the department of red tape reduction and given that this government has cost businesses in Calgary thousands of dollars because of this government's failure to plan and given that this department apparently can't be bothered to engage with businesses and hear their concerns that they're raising, choosing instead to have struggling business owners fill out surveys, will the minister of red tape just admit his department has failed the constituents it was created to serve? Rather than wasting money on redundant surveys, how about you donate your entire department budget to help support those small businesses?

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

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that this government has said that we will have a major focus on red tape reduction. This is because we understand that in order for Albertans to get back to work, we need to get off the backs of our job creators, and this is what this government will do over the next three years, for sure, to be able to make sure that we have a one-third reduction. We'll also make sure that we reduce the compliance costs as well so that Albertans know that their job creators will not have the government on their backs.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

### Supervised Drug Consumption Sites

**Mr. Stephan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The panel's report on supervised consumption sites is public to Albertans. The fixation of the prior government on harm reduction was a failure. They failed to begin with the end in mind, supporting those seeking to become free from addictions. The aftermath is this: tragic human loss, destruction to businesses, and tearing the social fabric in our communities. To the minister: what were the consequences to Albertans in the panel's findings from the NDP consumption sites?

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

**Mr. Luan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for raising such a great question. When the supervised consumption services review panel concluded their report after consulting over 19,000 Albertans, the evidence is very strong. It left the community with increased needle debris everywhere, increased

deaths and crime, and a lack of transparency and accountability for the site of operation. Let me tell you, it was a big disappointment. The conclusion is that the current system is in chaos. That is the record left by the NDP government.

**Mr. Stephan:** Given that the NDP imposed a drug consumption site on the city of Red Deer, disregarding civic leaders, businesses, and families, and given that the NDP drug consumption site lacked focus on supporting individuals seeking to become free from addictions and given that there has been an exodus of businesses from our downtown due to the consequences from the NDP drug consumption site, to the minister: will this government provide hope for the harms caused to our community by the NDP drug consumption site?

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

**Mr. Luan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the one-term, failed, one-pillar NDP government we are developing a full continuum of care for addiction recovery. We're focusing on helping Albertans get out of addiction and live a life that is healthy and constructive as positively engaged citizens. We're going to take every chance and every opportunity to take a community-by-community, city-by-city approach to clean up the mess the NDP left for us.

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

**Mr. Stephan:** Thank you. Given that the best thing we can do for our neighbours with addictions is to love and support them becoming free from addictions, given that the result of the NDP policy encouraged and supported individuals to live with their addictions and given this government's focus on supporting and encouraging individuals to become free from addictions, to the minister: how will the panel report inform a principled course correction towards loving and supporting our neighbours seeking to become free from addictions?

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

**Mr. Luan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't be more agreeable to the hon. member's conclusion. Yes, we are going to be laser focused on helping people get out of addiction, focus on treatment, focus on recovery. This government has set a goal. We're going to create 4,000 additional new spaces for people to access treatment. As of today we've accomplished 3,000 of the 4,000 target already. Today in Alberta, as it's never been before, for Albertans who want access to treatment, within three to seven days we can offer that.

2:40

### Introduction of Bills

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

### Bill 15 Choice in Education Act, 2020

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 15, the Choice in Education Act, 2020.

This legislation, if passed, will protect and strengthen choice within a vibrant and diversified education system through amendments to the Education Act. This proposed legislation will affirm that parents, not politicians, have the right to choose the kind of education they feel will be best for their children. This bill shows our government's commitment to offering education options that allow parents to select the path they feel will best help their children

reach their full potential. With this legislation we are protecting Alberta's long history of education choice, including public and separate schools, francophone schools, charter schools, independent schools, early childhood education, and home education.

I look forward to discussing and debating this important bill in the Legislature in the near future. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 15 read a first time]

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

**Bill 16**  
**Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety)**  
**Amendment Act, 2020**

**Mr. Schweitzer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 16, the Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020.

If passed, this bill will ensure victims have the support they need, promote public safety, and prevent crime. We heard time and time again at our town halls, Mr. Speaker, the fact that victims felt as though they weren't fully served in this province, people that were living in fear in communities. These amendments will help strengthen the ability of us to provide public safety in the province of Alberta.

Again, I ask that we move first reading of Bill 16, the Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020.

[Motion carried; Bill 16 read a first time]

**Tabling Returns and Reports**

**The Speaker:** I see the hon. Government House Leader has a tabling.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to submit the appropriate number of reports to the table of the letter that I provided to the Opposition House Leader that outlines the requirements of the current government caucus and my office to communicate in writing between us and the opposition from this point forward.

**The Speaker:** Are there other tablings? Not sure. No other tablings.

Hon. members, we are at points of order. At 2:01 the hon. the Member for Calgary-Mountain View raised a point of order, and I believe the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods will be arguing it on her behalf.

**Point of Order**  
**Remarks off the Record**

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Calgary-Mountain View the point of order is under 23(j): "uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." During debate the Member for Cardston-Siksika yelled at the Member for Lethbridge-West: simmer down, kitty cat. The Member for Lethbridge-West has assured me that she is nobody's kitty cat and certainly not his. This language is completely inappropriate in this House, and we request that the member apologize and withdraw.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not have the benefit of the Blues at that time that the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West was speaking. I was actually answering the question, I believe, at that moment, and I can tell you that I certainly couldn't hear anything over top of the opposition screaming – that's how I would

describe it – at me while I was attempting to speak inside the Chamber. So I'm at a disadvantage. I don't sit near the Member for Lethbridge-West. I'm not on that side of the House, so I don't know what may or may not have been said. At this point I'd have to refer to you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the Blues. I don't know how you do a point of order on something that wasn't in *Hansard*.

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

Is there anyone else wishing to provide an interjection?

Seeing none, I would say that I did not hear that interjection. I would, though, say that if in fact the Member for Cardston-Siksika said what is reportedly said, it would be reasonable for him to withdraw and apologize. However, it's impossible for me to know whether in fact that is what he said as I myself did not hear that. I will leave it in the hon. member's hands to apologize and withdraw if he did. I consider that point of order dealt with and concluded.

We are at a point of privilege. The hon. Official Opposition House Leader has raised one.

**Privilege**  
**Bill 15 Media Briefing**

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Standing Order 15(2) this morning I provided written notice to the Speaker, to your office, of my intention to raise a point of privilege here today of the issue of media receiving technical briefings ahead of opposition members and staff. Last night we were informed that effective immediately opposition briefings in advance of a bill being tabled were cancelled until further notice. Briefings on upcoming legislation were then cancelled by the ministers, including the opposition briefing on Bill 15, the Choice in Education Act, which would have occurred shortly after the Assembly met this morning.

However, at 10:15 this morning the media received an embargoed technical briefing on the bill followed by a news conference with Alberta Education representatives. As a result, the first opportunity for the members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to view Bill 15 as well as Bill 16 was after the bill was introduced just a few minutes ago. This means that the members of the media had an additional four hours with the legislation than nongovernment members of this Assembly and also will have the opportunity to have asked questions.

Now, this is the first opportunity to raise this matter as per section 115 in *Beauchesne's*. We were aware of the media briefing that was occurring this morning, though until the notification the government would be cancelling opposition briefings and cancellation notices began in our inbox, the privilege of the members as ruled by Speaker Kowalski in 2003 was being upheld at the time: information would be shared with members of the opposition at 9:30 this morning. However, the cancellation of the opposition briefings changed that and led us to where we are now.

As there was no cancellation of the media briefing, it is clear that members of the media had the opportunity to access the contents of the bill prior to members of the Assembly. We would therefore submit that our privilege as members of the Assembly and indeed the privilege of the Assembly as a whole was, in fact, breached.

Mr. Speaker, the concept of privilege as it applies to the Members of Parliament throughout the Commonwealth is one of the fundamental tenets of parliamentary democracy. Section 24 of *Beauchesne's*, sixth edition, on page 11 states:

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals.



In section 24 it goes on to quote Sir Erskine May, stating:

The privileges of Parliament are rights which are “absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers”. They are enjoyed by individual Members, because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its Members; and by each House for the protection of its members and the vindication of its own authority and dignity.

This is the critical nature of the concept of privilege. It has been a consistent finding of Speakers past throughout the Commonwealth that breaches of privilege are among the most serious contraventions of our processes and practices. Privilege is important. In fact, at the commencement of every Parliament the new elected Speaker in the name of and on behalf of the members lays claim by humble petition to the members’ ancient and undoubted rights and privileges. These are more than just words, more than ceremony, tradition, and formality. Through those words that have been uttered over the centuries, the importance of privilege is reinforced.

In this specific case, Mr. Speaker, the abilities of the members of the opposition to conduct their duties were obstructed. Therefore, I would submit that important democratic functions of the Assembly were impaired. I believe that the government has committed a contempt of the Assembly by providing information about legislation being read in the House without offering the opposition members a similar opportunity.

2:50

Mr. Speaker, the breaches committed by the government extend beyond the realm of breach of privilege to the very serious issue of contempt. Chapter 15 on page 251 of *Erskine May* opens with these words:

Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results, may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.

Further, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* on page 60 makes it clear that

Contempt may be an act or an omission. It does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a Member; it merely has to have the tendency to [provide] such results.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that failing to provide briefings on legislation to the members of the opposition yet offering that opportunity to media, in fact, in advance of the introduction of the said legislation to the House has impeded members of this House in the discharge of our duties. It is not unreasonable to assume that the members of the media will ask members of the opposition for their opinion on legislation today, but we will be unable to answer. We will be unable to answer to the people of Alberta in advance of the media. We will be playing catch-up. The government’s failure to provide us with the information directly impairs our ability to discharge our duties as members of the opposition.

This situation we are currently finding ourselves in is virtually identical to the scenario described as unacceptable by the House of Commons Speaker Peter Milliken on pages 1840 and 1841 of the House of Commons debate on March 19, 2001, when he said:

To deny to members information concerning business that is about to come before the House, while at the same time providing such information to media that will likely be questioning members about that business, is a situation that the Chair cannot condone.

Speaker Milliken further ruled on March 22, 2011, on page 9113 of the House of Commons debate.

The member . . . is certainly not misguided in his expectation that members of the House, individually and collectively, must

receive from the government particular types of information required for the fulfillment of their parliamentary duties before it is shared elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, this issue has come up in our Assembly as well. On March 4, 2003, the leader of the NDP opposition raised a point of privilege under circumstances identical to this one we are dealing with today. In his ruling Speaker Kowalski, on page 304 of *Hansard*, agreed with Speaker Milliken’s conclusions and ruled that the disclosure of the contents of a bill to the media prior to the same information being shared with members of the opposition constitute a prima facie contempt of the Assembly and is treated in the same way as a breach of privilege. The ruling ought to stand as a precedent in this House as a basis for how the government ought to conduct itself. The constituents that we represent demand it.

Particularly in this situation that we currently have in the House, the opposition is the only thing standing in the way of government passing legislation without scrutiny. Currently in the House there is only one opposition, yet this government, who holds a significant majority, continues to attempt to obstruct the abilities of the opposition to do their job. Whether it’s withholding briefings, having government staff stand watch over budget lock-ups, limiting access to officials during lock-ups, taking away 30 hours of estimates, or ramming through legislation in short periods of time, this government continuously impedes the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of sharing government information publicly or with the media before members of the opposition has come up before both in this Assembly and elsewhere. Over and over again governments try to find ways to forward their agenda, and this government has been inventive indeed in doing so. The tradition of this House demands that the privilege of the members of the loyal opposition be upheld and be protected.

It is incumbent on the Speaker to provide clear direction to this House. I believe I have provided compelling arguments that the actions of this government are in contempt of this House and that the events outlined constitute a prima facie case of privilege, and I ask that you, in keeping with Speaker Kowalski’s ruling, rule accordingly.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Official Opposition House Leader, for your submissions.

As all members know, accusations of a contempt of the Legislature and a point of privilege are matters that this House takes seriously, and it has been the tradition of our Assembly to provide the Government House Leader or others the opportunity to respond to the point of privilege. Typically speaking, they can choose to defer their response or make a response on the day of the submission as well. I will leave that up to the Government House Leader. Are you prepared to respond at this time? The hon. the Government House Leader.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to respond today. I have a couple points that I would like to address in regard to the Official Opposition House Leader’s points. First, where I’d like to start off is that my office received notice of this point of privilege today at 11:32 a.m. Now, I will note that it’s four minutes after your office received notice of it. However, I’ve also been informed that the media notice was sent out by the Official Opposition a full hour in advance of informing your office.

Now, I’m disappointed, of course, first of all, Mr. Speaker, that once again they would choose to share their intentions with the media before either your office or mine and disrespect, particularly from my perspective, the Speaker’s office as well as this Chamber. In fact, I have to say that I may consider raising a point of privilege myself next week as to whether this amounts to contempt of this

Assembly since I question if the Official Opposition House Leader, by providing notice to your office at 11:28, did in fact provide notice at the earliest opportunity to this Assembly and to your office if she was able to provide notice to the media a full 60 minutes prior to that.

This I think is important and important to this point of privilege because the New Democrats have a pattern of disrespecting independent officers of the Legislature such as the Ethics Commissioner and the Chief Electoral Officer and, Mr. Speaker, have had a pattern of disrespecting, from my perspective, you and your role inside this Chamber with tweets and different things that I could refer to and may next week.

I quote the Ethics Commissioner report from October 23, 2018, that she provided the Assembly. She said, "In the future, it would be appreciated if those requesting an investigation did not post the request to social media before I have the courtesy of receiving the request." She also says, "I want to make it clear that I do not want Members filing complaints against other Members for the purpose of scoring political points." Sound familiar, Mr. Speaker?

The NDP have also questioned the integrity of the Chief Electoral Officer. As noted by the Ethics Commissioner in her April 27, 2020, report, she says:

It is suggested that this transfer has the potential of impacting investigations. These are serious, unfounded allegations against the Chief Electoral Officer who is an independent Officer of the Legislature and has sworn to carry out his statutory duties.

Clearly condemning the NDP's behaviour of using independent officers of this Chamber for political purposes.

My second point, Mr. Speaker, is I notice that the notice that was provided does not make clear which privilege is alleged to have been breached. I listened to the hon. member's remarks, and it's still not fully clear what privilege she says has been breached, so hopefully my remarks do remain on point. For the benefit of those at home, though, page 89 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* lists the following privileges for members, that each of us members have as individuals of this Chamber. We each have freedom of speech. That is our right. We each have freedom from arrest in civil matters. We have exemption from jury duty, so if any of you get a notice in the mail, call Parliamentary Counsel. You have exemption from being subpoenaed to attend court as a witness, and you have the freedom from obstruction, interference, and intimidation.

Now, I assume that the member is alleging that by cancelling opposition bill briefings, the government is breaching a member's right to be free from interference. I should note that nowhere, absolutely nowhere, in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* does it note that a member has a right – a right – to a bill briefing. What members have a right to do is to be the first to see the final form of a bill, which is on notice when it is introduced in the Assembly. They do not have a right to demand to see the final form of a bill before first reading. They certainly have no right or privilege to receive a bill briefing before the media or with the media or, frankly, after the media.

The government has on occasion seen value in offering technical bill briefings to the opposition. If the government chooses to withdraw a technical briefing, which they were under no obligation to provide in the first place, they can do so. In fact, if the MLA for Edmonton-Manning is arguing that by withdrawing technical briefings we have caused hardship for the Official Opposition, then I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that they should perhaps reflect on how we ended up in this situation because this isn't the first time that technical briefings have been refused to the Official Opposition in the 30th Legislature.

Back in the fall sitting the MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona intentionally chose to break confidential information she had received on a bill briefing for Bill 22 prior to its introduction in the Assembly by using that information in question period before that bill was even placed inside this House. After that outrageous breach of convention by the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona the government withdrew technical briefings for the remainder of the fall sitting. At a later meeting with the Official Opposition they requested that I reinstate those technical bill briefings, and I did agree.

Fast forward now to Monday and Tuesday of this week. The Official Opposition approached my office about securing the government's support for an amendment to Government Motion 19. We had originally offered 11 ministers to participate in a COVID-19 debate, and the opposition told us they only had questions for four ministers and asked instead that we would increase the time for ministers to be questioned up to 50 minutes after their opening statements instead of 15 minutes.

3:00

Let me read from yesterday's Votes and Proceedings the amendment moved by the Member for Edmonton-Manning, who's moved the point of privilege today. It's hard to follow unless you have the motion with you, Mr. Speaker, but I do know that you will follow because you were in the chair when it was moved. It says:

- (a) in clause (d) by striking out "any other member of the Executive Council may" and substituting "the Minister of Health, the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour and Immigration, and the Minister of Education may each then".

This demonstrates that the government accepted an increase in the amount of time that was allowed for the questions answered, as requested by the Official Opposition, and agreed to the ministers that they requested at that time.

Also of interest, I do believe, are the remarks made by the Member for Edmonton-Manning where she made no reference to expecting other ministers to participate. A portion of those remarks you can find on page 799 of yesterday's *Alberta Hansard*. "We identified four ministries that have definitely been taking a lead in regard to addressing the pandemic, so we wanted to give an opportunity for those ministers to be able to have a little bit more time to respond." At no time in her remarks in *Hansard*, you can see, does she refer to wanting other ministers to speak. Now, I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that at the time I thought it was an odd request. But it was a request that the opposition made of us, and I was willing to agree.

Then yesterday, after we debated in this House until 6:30 in the evening, which is over six hours of debate, on the COVID motion, the Member for Edmonton-Manning released a statement that said: these ministers outright refused to respond to the concerns we heard from Albertans; after weeks away from the Legislature, they chose not to be held accountable. Mr. Speaker, I will point out that all of those ministers sat in this Chamber for question period yesterday and were certainly prepared to answer the questions.

The members for Edmonton-Gold Bar and Edmonton-Strathcona would later tweet out about the absence of ministers, and I quote: I will be telling my constituents who was in the room for debate yesterday. Well, Mr. Speaker, I know I will be sharing with my constituents who was in the room for the debate. I will not break parliamentary protocol and tradition by referring to the absence of any member, but I will certainly be referring to where the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar was with my constituents as well as the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. I would point out that Albertans

can look at the record with *Hansard* and will clearly know who was in the Chamber yesterday debating legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find actions like that from the Official Opposition to be reprehensible and disingenuous at best. When I go home to my constituents this week, I know they will have words for that behaviour, and I would be surprised if I can share those remarks in this Chamber. My constituents also know that actions have consequences, and you reap what you sow.

In closing, Speaker Zwozdesky, in his October 31, 2013, ruling, which you can find, Mr. Speaker, on page 2656 of *Alberta Hansard* for that day, notes the following.

However, I also stressed “the importance of ensuring that members are the first to see proposed legislation in its final form . . .

Final form.

. . . before a bill is disclosed to outside parties.”

That quote the Speaker is referring to in his ruling can be found originally on page 58 of *Alberta Hansard* for May 29, 2012, the year before he was being quoted. The key point here is this: in its final form.

At that time . . .

and also with the case that is before this Chamber today,

. . . there was no factual basis to actually conclude that explicit and verbatim details or provisions of the bill were disclosed. Accordingly, it was held that the member’s ability to perform her functions in that instance had not been impeded.

I would like to point out that not every statement about a bill that is on notice will automatically lead to [a qualified] prima facie case of privilege.

As you well know, Mr. Speaker.

I want to reiterate that the government has never shared the final form of a bill with the media prior to being introduced in the Assembly, and therefore there is no way this rises to the threshold of a prima facie breach of privilege.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, are there any other submissions?

Seeing none, I would like to provide some comments with respect to the point of privilege and the submissions made today. As hon. members will know, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta has spent significant time studying privilege, studying precedents here in our Chamber, and I am quite familiar with this particular point of privilege and the instances in which it has been raised previously. I want to share with the Assembly some of the things that I will be taking into consideration with respect to my decision. I was inclined to rule this afternoon after being familiar with the situation from previous study, but given some of the submissions, I am willing to take some time and consider that.

I would like to note a number of the things that I will be considering and express some of my concerns. I, too, received notice of the point of privilege at 10:31 via press release of the NDP caucus. I can share with the NDP caucus that that was disappointing to the Speaker, to receive notice of a point of privilege through press release and not through the most courteous fashion and appropriate fashion, which would be official notice to my office, which I did not receive until, as noted in the submissions today, 11:28. I will consider whether or not this was, in fact, the first time and the earliest at which notice could have been provided to the Assembly of the point of privilege given that notice was in fact provided to the media prior to the Speaker or to members of the Assembly.

I will also consider Speaker Zwozdesky’s statements of December 2, 2014, when he said, “There is no specific right to have the government brief members on the content of a bill.” I will also consider the comments made in 2013, when the then Speaker said, “Accordingly, there was no release of the bill” – which in this case

there clearly hasn’t been – “or any technical briefing provided to persons who were not members prior to [its] introduction.”

Now, we’ve heard submissions from the hon. the Official Opposition House Leader that, in fact, there was a technical briefing that took place. So I will consider what may or may not have transpired at that reported technical briefing. If, in fact, the submission made by the hon. Government House Leader is correct that there was no technical briefing with respect to an introduction of the bill to members of the media and not members of the Assembly, then perhaps there hasn’t been a breach. But I will take into consideration the possibility that, in fact, there has been a breach, in which case it is possible that we would find a contempt for the parliament.

I will also take into consideration – and I think this point has raised a number of other additional questions in that if we are providing technical briefings to some members of the Assembly but not all members of the Assembly being invited to that technical briefing – if, in fact, a breach of privilege has happened to other members, if not just the opposition, for the provision of a technical briefing that some members may not have been able to attend or be invited to, I will make additional considerations around that particular issue. I think that much has been said about this issue of technical briefings, and I think it is important that the Speaker takes time to consider both the submissions today as well as the precedent. I will be reporting back to the House on Monday with a final decision on this point of privilege.

Hon. members, we are at Ordres du jour.

## Orders of the Day

### Government Bills and Orders

#### Second Reading

#### Bill 7

#### Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020

[Adjourned debate May 28: Mr. Schweitzer]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, is there anyone wishing to speak to second reading of Bill 7? The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has the call.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure this afternoon to rise and speak on this important bill, which touches upon the lifeblood of this province. Going forward, of course, we will always be intent on making sure that the proper amount of scrutiny is placed upon any proposal to build new energy developments.

3:10

We do, of course, always look for efficiency and shorter timelines for decisions by the AER. However, of course, there are concerns when we have an arbitrary measure such as this bill imposed upon the AER in terms of the timelines for their deliberations. While it would be granting greater certainty for everyone involved to have timelines shortened and to ensure that industry proponents know exactly when the deadlines will be in place for deliberations on proposals that might come forward to build new infrastructure, the consultations and the assessments have to be done correctly, and the government needs to support that.

I think we’ve seen numerous instances over the last recent history in this country where indeed it was determined by the courts – of course, Kinder Morgan and what is now called the Trans Mountain pipeline ended up having to reconsider and go back into

deliberations because the courts determined that the deliberations were inadequate. That is the situation that we dearly want to avoid going forward. I think that this bill perhaps risks that we end up in court more regularly because those who may be objectors to a certain proposal or energy infrastructure proposal may feel they were subjected to too short a time frame or didn't have the opportunity to properly bring forward their concerns.

Indeed, the courts have set precedents showing that if that was the case, if the procedures in place to consider the proposals that are brought forward to build infrastructure were deemed to be circumventing the ability of those who might oppose projects, then the courts will decide in favour of those proponents who felt that they were subjected to a short, arbitrary time frame. So it's very, very important that we do have proper consultation and assessments that are done correctly. We have a reputation in this country of, you know, ensuring that our environment is protected, and I think that's something that we in Alberta should move towards making sure is established as part of any type of legislation that we bring forward to change how the process of approval for energy infrastructure is made in this country.

As I said, the arbitrary nature of these timelines that cabinet seems to be investing in itself with this legislation, I believe, can set ourselves up for legal disputes, and that is really contrary to what the legislation hopes to do. It hopes, I believe, to make approvals more efficient, to give certainty, and to make sure that unnecessary costs are not added to the process. As I mentioned, we've had challenges to process before and potentially failures, as we've seen with Northern Gateway or Trans Mountain. It's very concerning that this bill will end up exposing ourselves to similar types of challenges in the future because of the fact that it does grant the cabinet in and of itself the ability to set an arbitrary timeline which may not actually give adequate time for full consideration and a full hearing for those who wish to speak and bring concerns forward or, for that matter, even for those who are the proponents of the infrastructure that is being proposed to fully make sure that their concerns or their desires to have the project go forward are brought to the public forum.

That's indeed not only for Canadians' consumption, Mr. Speaker, but for international, industrial, commercial consumption. I think it's important that we lay bare the debates over any type of infrastructure proposal that the AER would consider so that it remains unchallenged by the courts, so the decisions have the respect of those who participated in the process as well as the public, who will in many cases have opposing views, whether you're looking at environmentalists versus those who propose the energy development that may be under consideration. The process has to be seen as fair, and I think that any time a government basically says, "Look, we're creating a time limit here," there is an inherent injustice that may be claimed by one side or the other. I'm very concerned about that perhaps making the whole process more problematic and creating problems for the AER that the government is actually trying to intend to solve with this very legislation.

I know that during our time in government we did improve the process significantly by streamlining and digitizing it. There was quite a bit of cost saving involved in that as well.

I don't know if the minister can lay out what the plans are for the timelines that they intend to impose upon the AER. This bill certainly does not. There are a number of questions we have about how it will work with projects that have shared jurisdictions, interprovincial projects that are, of course, very complex. We may have, of course, more than one level of government involved. How indeed do you come to the decision to determine what timelines are appropriate? It's not necessarily something that is an applied science at the moment. I can sense that cabinet will have a guessing

game on its hands when it comes to many of these projects that the AER has before it, and there are new developments all along the way.

Of course, as we know, during this time of pandemic globally there are surprises that governments will come upon, and it will affect their timelines on a variety of things. Of course, major developments in pipeline or other energy infrastructure projects can get set back by any number of things, and an arbitrary ministerial or cabinet decision to limit an AER consideration time frame may indeed be a hampering mechanism rather than one that empowers the AER to make more streamlined and more efficient decisions. So there's a risk inherent in what the bill proposes. Certainly, I don't know if the risks are being considered fully and contemplated fully by the bill, and those are questions that I think the government should be answering in attempting to assuage the concerns of those who fear that this bill may actually create more problems than it purports to solve.

I'm not sure if indeed the commercial benefit from this is going to be something that is seen as much as the government hopes. I'm just thinking of the corporate board rooms who are looking at this type of an arbitrary cabinet decision. They know from past experience that globally investors are very sensitive to environmental considerations, to considerations regarding climate change and carbon footprints and so forth. You know, we've seen divestment in our own oil sands from major investment holders who've decided that there are certain decisions that were made in this province that were not favourable to their investors, and they've decided not to invest.

This move – and by "this move" I mean this Bill 7 – is one that perhaps will add to their fear about the level of consideration that is being given to the environment and to climate change by major investors around the world, who see the sources of oil production, certainly, throughout many parts of the world, many of which will supply the world at a cheaper cost, and they rank them against our potential developments and those that the AER may be considering. They take a look at this bill and say, "Well, goodness, this government has given itself the opportunity to put a limit, put a clamp on what consideration is taken for major oil projects and infrastructure projects in the energy field," and therefore it may even further dampen their willingness to want to invest in our energy projects and in developing our oil sands and western Canadian energy development and pipelines and other infrastructure that the AER might consider.

I think that it's really incumbent upon the government to make sure that they are very, very clear about how they've thought this through in terms of what the risk will be to the investment in our oil sands and other energy developments in this province.

3:20

I know that this bill is intended to add clarity to the whole process, to give some comfort to commercial interests when they are making investments in projects and infrastructure to energy development in the province, but it may have the opposite consequence. I think that I'd like to hear from the government members about that, whether they've actually thought that end through, and if they've discounted that as an argument, why so? It seems to me it's very, very timely to consider what the international financiers are looking at in terms of oil investments when we know that just before the pandemic there was a major decision by Saudi Arabia to limit its oil production, and of course that went along with the Russian curtailment. We ended up having a huge drop in the price of oil just before a major pandemic hit, and we know what the consequences have been for Alberta.

Anything that will perhaps put a damper on investment decisions to consider Alberta oil, which is more expensive to produce than

many other portions of global oil production, is something that one must consider very, very strongly. I think that it's something that the bill hasn't really contemplated, and I think we have to look at it through the lens of our current situation in the province, where the global investment world and the energy world are looking at who can produce this barrel of oil not only the cheapest but also with the lowest carbon footprint. That is something that, for the long term, global financiers are taking into consideration very, very strongly.

On top of that, of course, there's a red tape issue that the government is trying to avoid at every step, but here they are sort of sticking a spoke in the wheels of the process for approving oil and energy projects by giving cabinet authority to limit the time frame of consideration by the AER. I think that on top of the red tape that that produces, it also sends out some red flags to the international investment community. Rather than actually creating certainty, I think it creates the opposite. It creates uncertainty, because you have this arbitrary nature of cabinet's ability to go in and limit the time frame. It's like a government placing a time frame or time limits on debate, closure. It makes it inherently unjust, perhaps.

I'm concerned that in future we'll see major investors not have certainty because they don't know at what point the government may actually shut things down, whereas previously, yeah, there may have been some delay because the courts would be involved, but at least there was the certainty of a court decision to rely upon once that point was reached. Here there's a guessing game going on as to whether the government of the day might in fact decide upon approval of a project or not, and based on that they set the time frame accordingly, so the playing field may be balanced one way or another.

I've got a lot of concerns about the legislation, and I know that other members of my caucus have expressed concerns as well. They may wish to speak at more length on some of the other measures, particularly the red tape issue and some of the details about the direction that cabinet gives to the AER, because they set a certain limitation or time frame on the deliberations on a certain project approval, whether or not there's actually sort of an unseen hand that will sway the AER not only in its deliberations on that particular project but also for future and ongoing projects.

We've seen the same thing with the other pieces of legislation the government has brought forward, where they want to, in fact, during a time of emergency go ahead and interfere with a municipality's decision-making process, and we see the same pattern here with this piece of legislation, where the government's hand is influencing how the process operates in terms of approving an infrastructure project and kind of tilting the playing field in one way or the other, depending upon the government of the day and their decision to support or not a particular project that the AER has under consideration.

With that, I think I'll leave those questions for the government to perhaps respond to, and I hope to hear some responses and some considered and thoughtful arguments, perhaps, back and forth during the debate on this piece of legislation. I'll also leave some time for members of my own caucus as well to add to some of the comments that I've made and outline some of their concerns or, you know, supports for other pieces of this bill.

I thank the members of the Assembly for their attention, and I will cede my time to other members who wish to bring forward their thoughts on this bill.

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

I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie is looking to join debate.

**Member Loyola:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure, as always, to get up and speak to the bill. I just want to be absolutely, one hundred per cent clear that we are in favour of supporting shorter timelines for decisions by the AER.

Of course, one of the things that I want to touch on specifically when it comes to Bill 7, Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020, is the whole issue of consultations and assessments but specifically in regard to indigenous communities. I've had a fair amount of experience visiting indigenous communities all across Alberta, and I know enough to know that speaking to the chief and council of an indigenous community, a nation is not simply the only way that you can consult. In fact, it is the opinion of several members of indigenous communities that it's the responsibility of a chief and council to take the information back to its members, back to the members of the community, and to hold discussions on what's being proposed.

It's important when we're putting it in this context. Of course, we're trying to shorten the timelines. At the same time if we are to truly respect how indigenous communities discern whether they want to move forward with a particular project or how they are going to be participating within a particular project, that needs to take its time as well.

I'll remind members of this House that the whole concept of chief and council was actually something established by the Indian Act, a Canadian law, and it's not so much the way that the majority of indigenous communities actually conceptualize leadership and authority within their communities. For those who know the topic well, they will know that elders in the community play an essential role in the decision-making process, and in light of the fact that as a society we have matured enough to now know that we need to do our best for reconciliation here in the province of Alberta as a government, to reconcile with indigenous communities because of injustices that have occurred in the past, I think that this needs to be highly considered, right?

It's also an important part of the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. It's not only the reconciliation process that we need to do as well. We need to understand that there are international laws decided upon, discerned on by indigenous communities world-wide. I know that perhaps not all agree with what has been stated inside the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, but we should be doing our best as a government to make sure that we are respecting indigenous communities fully.

3:30

Again, I go back to the role of indigenous elders within those communities and knowing that simply reaching out to the chief of a particular nation and having a discussion, although it is legitimate, it's not the only way that consultation can take place. If we are to be fair and just in our processes, then we should strive to encourage and provide the time for indigenous communities to actually go through a consultation process with people in their communities, right? You know, it's kind of like a catch-22. We're saying, "Let's shorten the timelines," but we're also saying, "Let's make sure to respect the time that is required for communities to actually have a voice at the table and not conceptualize the chief and council and indigenous communities as all being just one homogeneous group of people."

Just like we have in our society, we have people of different ideologies, different philosophies, different ways of looking, different – I'll just clarify and say different perspectives. You're going to get that same cross-section within indigenous communities as well. Not all agree on, for example, what some may call development. It's really important that we respect all the particular

perspectives within indigenous communities so that when we're moving forward as a society together, hand in hand, trying to make Alberta a better place, we're doing it where we're trying to respect the most people that we possibly can within a process and at least giving the opportunity for people to provide insight and feedback.

Of course, I mean, it's a well-known perspective now that's been shared with Canadian society or, I would say, North American society in general that indigenous peoples, especially traditional perspectives, choose to contemplate how a particular decision is going to affect even seven generations down the line. I think that this is food for thought for us as people who govern or participate in the governing process that we should also contemplate. How is this going to affect people seven generations down the line? It's important for us to not only provide the time for indigenous communities to do that themselves but then also for us to be able to contemplate and take that into consideration.

That being said, I just want to say that, for example, when we were in government – and it's something that was really near and dear to my heart, making sure that we were putting in place the calls for action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the time. As the people well know, prior to 2015 there were a number of hearings held throughout the entire country regarding truth and reconciliation with indigenous communities. Members from communities had an opportunity to come into these large general assemblies and actually share their personal and historical perspectives among these large groups of people, people from indigenous and nonindigenous backgrounds. It was such an incredible learning opportunity for the people that participated in this process.

I think that it's important for us to do justice for not only the people who participated and dedicated their time and energy and immense efforts to going through these processes of discernment and coming up with these calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission but to make sure that within our own processes in how we relate and interrelate with indigenous communities – better stated, indigenous nations – here in the province of Alberta, we pay respect to that process and we make sure that we're incorporating, as much as we possibly can, avenues by which this can take place.

Of course, it was so near and dear to my heart and many in the Alberta NDP caucus that while we were in government, we invested a serious amount of time and energy into making sure that indigenous consultation was being done. It's not only that we were just saying: okay; let's just do it. No. It was actually providing the space to have these conversations about how we can potentially do it. What does it look like so that it's not a top-down approach of saying, "Okay, well, we're going to consult, we're going to provide the opportunity, and this is how it's going to be done"? No. It was actually working with indigenous communities.

I want to say that, you know, the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford did an exceptional role and exceptional – exceptional – work in connecting with so many indigenous nations across Alberta in all treaty areas of 6, 7, and 8, visiting these communities, going and spending time not only with chief and council, again, but with elders from these communities. I can tell you that – and I'm sure that many people in this House actually feel this way and think about it this way – we respect our elders. We respect the people in our communities that came before us, and we honour the experiences that they have had. When they speak, we listen so that we may gain insight into how they live their lives and how they made decisions. Of course, again, you're going to get a wide spectrum of different beliefs and ways of looking at life and the world, but it's important that we provide that opportunity. I just wanted to speak to the fact that the Member for Edmonton-

Rutherford, while he was the Minister of Indigenous Relations, did a phenomenal job of making sure to connect with indigenous communities and then discuss and come up in concert with them the consultation capacity to ensure that indigenous people could participate in the very best way possible within how we were interacting, you know, I would say, in that nation-to-nation relationship.

It's really important that this not be swept aside, swept under the rug, that we continue to look at ways that this can be done in the most effective manner. I understand that shorter timelines are important in order that we can have projects move forward in a more timely manner, but again, what we're seeing here is that they're setting arbitrary timelines, and it seems to me that this is the government, you know, kind of setting itself up for legal challenges and potential failures, as we have seen with Northern Gateway or Trans Mountain. It's important that we take all this into consideration.

3:40

Now, one of the things that I wanted to bring up was that when we were in government, very early on, thanks to us having an incredible, insightful leader and others that were leading in our government, we were able to get a number of different stakeholders from different perspectives – right? – get indigenous communities sitting at the table with people who are advocates of the environment, get the petroleum industry sitting at the table, all people sitting together at the table so that we could then come up with the way that we move forward. It wasn't about pitting one group against another. No. It was a way of getting everybody to sit at the table and to discuss how we could potentially move projects forward in a respectful manner, making sure that everybody had input within the process so that at least we who are on the governing side could then take those perspectives, those insights into consideration when coming up with changes in the law and regulation as they applied and, particularly, in this instance, to the AER.

Now, all this is being done in the context of the fact that the government now has recently rolled back or suspended a number of environmental protections, and this has been done largely without consulting indigenous people. So here I am raising the red flag on this call and saying: you know, our country – our country – went through a process of making sure that . . .

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available, and I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen on that.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under 29(2)(a) I'd certainly like to hear some more from the hon. member who has just spoken. I certainly know that we are in a very, very unique time in global history but also our history of this province. We're in the middle of a pandemic but also in the middle of a crisis in our energy industry. Of course, government with this bill is very, very significantly altering the process by which the Alberta Energy Regulator might operate and will subject them to arbitrary cabinet time frames based upon picking winners and losers potentially and setting the time frame to perhaps reaching outcomes desired by the government of the day.

I know that there are going to be significant deliberations, Mr. Speaker, around new concepts in energy and implementation of things such as solar, wind, small nuclear power. It's going to be looking at new electricity, hydro dams, electricity generation from hydro dams using what are called water batteries, all kinds of energy infrastructure. It's certainly a significant part of Alberta's economy and will be so for the foreseeable future. But it has to be dealt with correctly in the environment of super scrutiny that all oil-

producing regions are under. As is well known, there are options for countries who wish to buy energy and natural gas.

The time has long since passed when, for example, in my grandmother's era, she would ride her one-eyed pony out and watch the construction of an oil field derrick outside of her Thorhild home and know that in short order there would be oil coming out of the ground. Now things are changed a lot. The process is much more under scrutiny, and rightly so. In order not to jeopardize the industry we rely upon so much, I think that even past generations would agree, including my grandmother, that the scrutiny is warranted. We don't want to end up being subjected to situations, Mr. Speaker, where we end up with an abandoned well situation or similar to what we have now because regulations, perhaps, were not considered well enough by the energy regulator of the time in approving projects or oil field development.

I know that the member from our caucus who recently spoke talked about the importance of the new types of energy that are coming on and the importance of consultation, and I know that there are many pieces of oil infrastructure running through his riding of Edmonton-Ellerslie. I'm just wondering about the amount of talk that he has heard in his riding about the different energy projects, new types of energy production that we have on the table and new projects that will be considered by the Alberta Energy Regulator.

I know that things that are in vogue right now – of course, this particular government is talking about selling off parks and opening up coal mines, and that debate on the eastern slopes of our Rockies is something that I was involved in since my grade 11 debating days. I know that on a Sunday afternoon CFRN here in Edmonton hosted a radio debate between members of high school debating teams and prominent members of government and business. One particular Sunday afternoon – it would have been in 1973 – myself and my debating partner, after doing about three months of research, were involved in a radio debate about the development of the eastern slopes through the Rockies versus coal mine development. Land reclamation, recreational development, pristine watershed development: all that kind of thing came into the context of the debate. Our debating opponent was the then environment minister, Mr. Bill Yurko. Mr. Yurko wasn't too pleased with us because we'd had the benefit of three months of research going into that debate, but I know that Mr. Bruce Hogle, retired now from CFRN, enjoyed it very much.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member. We may have to wait for committee to hear a response.

I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview has risen to join the debate.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'd like to add a few comments to the comments that my colleagues just presented on Bill 7, the Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020. Certainly, what we're understanding from the UCP government is that this bill will hold the AER accountable for timely application reviews and that this will be a step towards making the province's regulatory system more effective and efficient; actually, even the best in North America is what the UCP is saying. They're doing this partially, I think, because they heard in consultation, which they're reporting to have had with industry, that it will enhance the process and improve things.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate that I, too, would like the process to be more efficient and the timelines to be shorter, but I guess the big question is: at what cost? So we need to look at: is this being expedited or the timelines shortened, and in doing that, is that compromising the actual thoroughness and effectiveness of the process? Certainly, we need to look at that and make sure that, you

know, due process, due diligence is carried out. Our own Energy critic here on the NDP side has certainly spoken about that. We do support clear and consistent timelines for decisions by the Alberta Energy Regulator. They're needed to provide greater certainty for everyone involved. I mean, this is really something that we can totally agree on, that this is something that's important and that we do want to create consistent, clear guidelines.

You know, he said that while in government we improved the process ourselves significantly by streamlining and digitizing it and by investing in indigenous consultation capacity to ensure that indigenous people were included in resource development decisions. We know that if the UCP wants to improve the approval timelines, consultations and assessments have to be done right. They have to be done right. It's so crucial to this very important work of the AER. They must have meaningful support for consultation capacity in place to avoid court challenges, prevent delays in getting our resources to market and of course securing jobs for Albertans.

3:50

Certainly, on this side of the House we are in support, you know, of making the timelines shorter, but they need to be comprehensive enough to make sure that they're done properly and that consultation is done with groups involved so that considerations are made that are important to be made.

You know, forgive me if I'm somewhat cynical, but even this week we heard the Minister of Energy say very clearly – and it made international, national news, certainly local news. I think it was *The Guardian* in the U.K. that published it. You know, the Minister of Energy said: this is a great time to build pipelines because it's under the cover of COVID-19, so not as many people can get together to protest.

Having heard the comments of the minister in the media, this does cause me to question the sincerity of the government. It doesn't seem that they do necessarily care. It doesn't seem that they are concerned about doing it correctly and comprehensively and including all voices, not just select voices that they want to hear from. Of course, this is all very fundamental to democracy. It's not about just elevating the voices of people you want to hear from. Actually, everyone is a citizen of our province. Everyone has the right to speak up. It's not just a select few. I mean, that's certainly one of the things that motivates me in my work. It's that I'm standing up for all my constituents and listening to all their voices. Certainly, in government we did that, and I would like to know that this government is doing that. That is one of the fundamental tenets of any democracy, that people's voices are heard and that they're not dismissed. Certainly, the right to assembly, the right to speak: that is something that needs to be honoured. It's a right of a Canadian citizen.

It's very disheartening to hear the Minister of Energy, you know, off the cuff just say how much she disregards it because she has her focus and her view. It's highly disrespectful to many people who are very concerned about the environment, the sacred lands of the indigenous people. I want to bring that to this government's attention, that it's so important that these shortened timelines that they're proposing in this bill aren't going to just, you know, run over or dismiss or slam through without proper process and the care for people's perspectives. I hope it's a sincere process, that it has integrity. These are sort of principles, tenets of any kind of a healthy process. But having heard these comments, you know, on national news, in various international publications, I question that. I think it's very clear that the minister doesn't necessarily have the time of day for people who perhaps think differently than her, and that's really disturbing.

Certainly, we have seen that this government has done that in other ways also with indigenous people specifically. I'll just share a few examples. Before they took office, they were criticized for trying to sell treaty land without consultation. This was, you know, something that they spoke about on the campaign trail. Of course, the relationship between indigenous people and a government is nation to nation. So to act like an owner of something that's not yours, which is what was being done by the UCP, that is not a respectful relationship. Just in recent weeks indigenous people criticized the government for failing to consult them on changes to environmental monitoring and the province's long-standing coal policy.

Again, these are just more examples of why we on this side of the House are really concerned that this shortened timeline is going to mean that some people's opportunities to be involved in a robust consultation or understanding of some of the challenges that these decisions could have on the environment, on indigenous people's land are going to be disregarded. You know, it might actually in the long run create more difficulty for projects being approved. As we all know, with Trans Mountain the federal government had to go back, didn't they? They had to go back again and again because the Supreme Court of Canada, the National Energy Board told them: "Hey, you did not do your due diligence. You did not have a robust, integral process regarding Trans Mountain. You need to go back and consult in an authentic, sincere, honest way with indigenous people." So that's what they did. They did go back, but guess what? That took way longer. That took way longer.

I just want to say to this government that we have to make sure that these shortened timelines don't negate important voices in our communities. We must make sure that our process is sincere because in the long run it'll come back, and we don't want to repeat those mistakes. We need to learn from past mistakes that have really hurt our province significantly. Our oil and gas industry is very important to us. Not having another pipeline, not having the Trans Mountain, for example, to tidewater meant that we are very vulnerable to the U.S. So that's something that our leader, our government fought for, to have that there because of another order of government's neglect, really, to do things in proper process and then finally the National Energy Board's demand that they go back and do not only appropriate consultation with the indigenous people but also regarding the marine area on the B.C. coast because the impact on the environment, on whales was one of the aspects of it to make sure that marine life wouldn't be negatively impacted by that.

I guess I'm just cautioning the government to be sure that these shortened timelines are still fair and will create enough of a comprehensive opportunity for assessment in the application process because we don't want to have to take twice as long, and we don't want to go through sort of expensive court challenges, which will cost us more.

Another thing that I guess I'd like to bring up is that I know that this government has created a ministry of cutting red tape, and the intent is very much to streamline, I think, government processes. Again, that's something that we can all appreciate. I mean, we know that governments can be very cumbersome. You have to fill out this form or talk to this person, and it can be, you know, difficult. The intent of that is a good idea. The trouble when you're doing that is: are you cutting off a process that's actually key to making sure that proper consultations or assessments are done, maybe making sure that employers follow through on implementing the employment standards or making sure they're respecting the labour code? So having the due diligence to be able to check on that stuff means that that's not red tape. That's important oversight. Of course, one of the big jobs of government is oversight, looking to make sure that

things are done fairly and that the best interests of the citizens are taken care of.

4:00

We want to make sure that it's not just about, you know, cutting it so much that, actually, very vital parts of the work aren't done. Cutting red tape, while it may seem like a positive thing to do, can also take away processes. That can really hurt our society, hurt our environment, for example, and hurt indigenous people. So especially in this area, that's just my caution to the government, that they make sure that what they're doing is not going to compromise consultation with indigenous people, with environmental groups. You know, I've obviously said this loud and clear.

You know, previously, when our government was in power, I was the Minister of Seniors and Housing, and in that time we created an affordable housing strategy for indigenous people. I was a bit frustrated by that process because it took so long. It took longer – this was a distinct strategy specifically for indigenous people – than it did for the sort of more overarching strategy. I was kind of frustrated with my staff a bit about that. But I certainly learned a lot in that process, and I learned how important it was to take the time to get it right.

I certainly was thanked by indigenous people for really listening to what their perspective was. Coming at the whole program, the whole funding model, how it was set up, from their perspective took more time, and it took us sort of stepping back and letting them lead that process more. I think that it's so important for us to make sure that we are, you know, working and collaborating with indigenous people from a nation-to-nation perspective, and certainly that was what I and my ministry worked very hard on to make sure would happen.

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

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie had caught my eye.

**Member Loyola:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very eager to know the perspective of the Member for Edmonton-Riverview because I know that she's out in her community substantially and that these issues regarding the AER and, specifically, indigenous consultation are important to constituents of hers. I want to ask her: prior to the pandemic, of course, when she was out on the doorsteps, what kinds of things did she hear about indigenous consultation from her constituents?

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie for the question. You know, I'm so fortunate in Edmonton-Riverview. It's kind of a central Edmonton riding, and it's mostly sort of mature residential neighbourhoods. I mean, there's the university and the University hospital, so there are those big institutions, but most of it's residential, mature neighbourhoods, very beautiful.

I'm always sort of awed by just a lot of the brilliance of the constituents. I learn so much when I go to the doorsteps and hear their passions. Many of them are oftentimes professors, students, because, of course, of the close proximity to the university, and nurses, doctors who work at the University hospital, for sort of the same reason. I learn so many different perspectives from them and just amazing expertise, and I'm so grateful for that.

I know that there's a deep compassion, certainly, amongst my constituents, really caring about one another and really creating communities. I think there are 16 community leagues, which is kind of a unique situation in Edmonton. I think Calgary has a different



system. These are hubs of people getting together in their own communities. They have activities of all kinds, from, you know, activities for young children to seniors and everyone in between.

Another thing about my riding that's so cool is that there's so much parkland. Of course, it's called Riverview, and it's on both sides of the North Saskatchewan River, so it's magnificent, just many, you know, trails you can walk on. Certainly, if you're canoeing down the river or in a boat, you can just really enjoy how beautiful Riverview is.

But, I mean, one of the things that is so important is that people understand what we, you know, as sort of the dominant culture have done to the indigenous people in our province and that we are educated largely in that and understand this notion of nation to nation and how important it is for us to be sure that we are not, once again, like people before have, sort of running roughshod over other people and not respecting their rights. I know that this is very important to my constituents, making sure that people are cared for, and I know that there are so many who care deeply for the environment and making sure that we are respecting the environment.

They certainly understand the importance of the oil and gas industry in our province, but in 2020 we're able to do both. We can be responsible stewards of the environment, and we can have a robust oil and gas industry. Those two can go together. Certainly, we did create that. When we were government, we had a climate leadership plan, and we were giving tremendous support to the oil and gas industry. So those things together are really important, and it's not one or the other. If we say that it is one or the other, we're mistaken. Of course, the environmental groups need to work alongside the oil industry, as the oil industry needs to work alongside the environmental groups. It's not just me saying this. We hear this from oil companies repeatedly, how important it is for them to be responsible stewards of the environment.

These are some of the things that I hear from my constituents, and I'm always very grateful to have those opportunities to connect with them. I know it's been harder lately because of COVID-19 and just not being able to have that kind of contact, but certainly lots of virtual meetings and e-mails and phone calls also have helped me keep in touch with them.

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

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

**Mr. Deol:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise and add my comments on Bill 7, the Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020. I'm really happy to see the bold statement, the goal it's trying to achieve. We support the content where it says that this bill will help to, you know, provide efficiency to decision-making by shortening the timelines of due process. What comes to my mind, in going through some of the information I was able to glance through on this bill, is when we were saying that we wanted to have a shorter timeline, a consistent approach to coming to the decision-making and approval process with regard to the energy projects.

A question, to my mind, in going through the information is: what mechanisms are we considering, and what tools are we providing? What kind of resources are we considering that the government right now would see as challenges and obstacles and that they would consider as so-called red tape, in their terminology, that they're trying to address through this bill? It was not really very clear to me how they're going to achieve this goal. What is different that we're going to do this time so that, going forward, we will not face the same challenges that we have in the past?

**4:10**

Basically, I will say that lessons have been learned from the lengthy Trans Mountain and Northern Gateway processes. The reason that there are a number of stakeholders – it's not really, like, how you convince all those stakeholders, but I think it's contingent upon how we have provided these resources and the spaces for all the diverse voices. They were the key to the decision-making, and in this case, you know, the courts from every level in this whole process took this very seriously. Basically, when it comes to consultation and assessments, the proper resources and the accurate approaches were not considered or provided, and that has cost Alberta's energy industry and nonindustry Albertans, I would say, big time. So the damage was done.

Similarly, I would say that the government made a bold statement, that they would like to have the timeline and consistent approval process in this case, but how they would come to achieve this goal is still a big question. I don't really see – like, I'm still going back and forth – what resources, what they're trying to do differently that we were not doing in the past. I'm really, actually, not able to make any obvious point that would help the government achieve the goals they are claiming they will do through this bill.

Speaking on behalf of my constituents, I once again wanted to say that a number of my constituents are affected due to, you know, the low global oil prices and the pipeline disputes. The project, then, had been waiting to get through for years and years, but that has been a very hot topic in my constituency, I would say. The people wanted to know.

When it comes to discussion, one thing is obvious. Like, we had a number of stereotypes in the past. We kept blaming our neighbour jurisdictions, that, you know, the projects were being halted because of one or the other jurisdictions because of their different political views, but that was not the case. The courts were very clear on this. Not only the key stakeholders to this but the indigenous communities, I would say out loud, were not convinced on this specific project to come to this side and agree to all the decision-making that was in hand by the Canada energy board, I would say, or the government decisions or all the other partners in this decision-making. The biggest challenge to this project was that the indigenous community specifically was not provided the proper space they deserved to be listened to.

It took a number of years for the federal government, that were wasted. There are still a number of stakeholders that probably do not agree to what the government is proposing or what the government has been deciding on this, but at least the due diligence has been done. The due diligence, I think, is of the utmost importance, as my colleague from Edmonton-Riverview reiterated. That is the fundamental tenet of democracy. That is why I think we are all in this House today and have the privilege to discuss this bill on behalf of our constituents. I think we hold accountability to Albertans.

We will discuss this with due diligence and discuss all the aspects pertaining to such subjects and come to common ground on decisions there. We will see that not all parties probably agree to what is being decided, but their voices are listened to. It's not that they were not provided the opportunity to be part of it.

That is something not clearly outlined as yet, but I'm looking into Bill 7, how this government is trying to achieve this. Simply providing a greater amount of power to the government or to the ministry or to certain agencies is not basically going to address this simple issue, I would say. I'm going to say that this is an issue that has great effects on all Albertans. It doesn't matter which political stripe you belong to. This concerns not only the key stakeholders, I think. Regardless of your political stripe, all the political views

should have been, you know, reflected in this decision-making. There should be a mechanism where all different political views could come together, where we could say that the voices of all Albertans have been heard.

It's not only projects that are important for the energy industry. For millions of Albertans, their future is relying on these decisions, and to speed that up – this is what the government is saying the mandate of Bill 7 is – those mechanisms, I think, have to be applied. Without taking these steps into consideration, I don't think we can achieve this goal.

The other thing I would say is that – how do I want to put it; I'm just looking for the words – it needs to reflect the government's approach, in all honesty, when we are discussing this issue. What message do we want to send to the different political views or the key stakeholders or communities, whether in Alberta or communities in Canada or communities around the world? This is very important. It's not only to build these projects to help get our resources out, but this will only be worth doing if we are able to find the diverse markets for our resources.

One of the biggest points I wanted to raise that is incredibly important, I think, and that is linked to this issue is that the government has suspended the environmental monitoring on our parks.

4:20

If we take this into perspective and we see that the world's largest fund has divested the four major Alberta energy corporations, this is very important. What kind of message do we want to send to the global community? It will be only beneficial if we have the ability to get resources from under the ground and then we have a proper market for them, to get the proper value for our resources. This is the only way we will be able to not only help the energy industry, but also Albertans can benefit from these resources.

Those were some of my comments I wanted to add on Bill 7. I will conclude my comments with those statements for now and then pass it over to my colleagues. If there is an opportunity, I will probably speak to this Bill 7 again.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Member Loyola:** Yes. The member spoke at length. I just wanted to give him an opportunity to see if he wanted to add any additional thoughts, specifically as they may relate to constituents that he has spoken with. I know that in Edmonton-Meadows, like in Edmonton-Ellerslie, we have a wide diversity of ethnic representation within our constituencies, and I'm hoping that specifically you could speak about and share, perhaps from different perspectives within your constituency, the people that you meet with on a daily basis, of course prior to the pandemic, some insights that they have shared with you. Of course, that is through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Edmonton-Meadows.

**Mr. Deol:** Thank you, Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, for giving me the opportunity to share some of the experiences on behalf of my constituents. As I said, this issue was a pretty hot topic during the election last year, and at every second or third door we knocked on and spoke to our constituents, this question was raised, the future of our oil industry, our energy industry. At every third or fourth house we would just, you know, door-knock and talk to the people. Their employment directly relied on the energy industry, and they were so worried.

Also, during the pandemic I've been speaking to so many of my constituents. As I said, my constituency is one of the most ethnic

ridings. There are so many diverse communities, and the people are from all across the world, moving to Canada, coming to Alberta, making that riding home. A number of my constituents are entrepreneurs running their own businesses and part of small-scale industry and proudly, actually, providing and contributing to these small businesses. But due to COVID-19 the situation for their businesses is devastating, and they're looking for help. Right now they're begging for help to get back to their businesses, get their businesses back to work.

Also, this issue always comes up because the energy industry is the biggest contributor to our economy in Alberta. Some of those conversations I would really like to bring into the House, how this small-business industry has been devastated due to COVID-19. One of my constituents who owns a small business just gave me a call. Actually, his location is part of a mall here in Edmonton. The business is still open, and his business is part of, you know, the relaunch strategy, phase 1. He said that his rent alone, without paying his utility bills and salaries – never mind his own salary – the rent for his space, the lease payment alone, is \$6,000. He hardly recovered by, like, opening his business from 7 a.m. to 11 at night, spending long hours. This month his business made a gross income of \$5,800, so he's not able to pay rent. The inventory cost is not part of it. He has base salaries, wages on top of it, and . . .

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

I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods has risen to speak on this bill.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in second reading on Bill 7, Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020. At second reading I appreciate the opportunity to talk about some of my initial impressions from reviewing the bill and pose the questions that I hope, through further debate, we will have the opportunity to engage in here in this Chamber.

I have to start by saying that I strongly support responsible energy development and appreciate that this bill is bringing forward the goal of continuing to support energy development and the processes of the AER. That being said, I have some questions and concerns around the bill and what it is doing, specifically because differences in regulatory approvals and timelines between jurisdictions is an issue that has been raised for some time. It's one that our government, while we were in government, worked hard to try to address. It's one that industry associations like CAPP have looked at and written reports on.

But in the reading that I've done and looking into this bill, the setting of arbitrary timelines does not seem to be how other jurisdictions are successful. Other jurisdictions have improved timelines because they have improved processes, not because of an arbitrary deadline being set but because of an integrated process.

In looking at Saskatchewan's system, put in in 2011, being able to streamline that process and improve it seems to be how other jurisdictions have dealt with delays. In fact, in our own area, here in Alberta, when we've looked at issues within the AER, there appear to be more delays with logistics; not enough use of online processes, which is something that is improving; clear policy direction being missing. So communication delays between government and the AER are holding up specific projects for significant amounts of time. That, obviously, requires conversations between the government and the AER in order to resolve.

The government having a hammer of a deadline that they can impose raises a number of concerns that some of my colleagues have already talked about. If we have processes that need to be followed, if there are consultation requirements that haven't been

properly met, imposing a deadline by cabinet through their regulation-making powers doesn't address those concerns. In fact, in my reading of the bill – I'd be happy to hear more about this through the debate – it appears that the deadlines set trump or supersede all other considerations. My concern is that if there are considerations that consultation hasn't been completed correctly, then we may run into issues with those approvals and uncertainty.

**The Acting Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. However, taking into account the time and under Standing Order 4(2), the Assembly is now adjourned until the next sitting day, which is Monday afternoon, this coming Monday, at 1:30. So drive safely, stay safe this weekend, and we will reconvene on Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m.]



## **Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 2nd Session (2020)**

**Activity to Thursday, May 28, 2020**

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

\* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at 780.427.2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter number until the conclusion of the Fall Sittings.

### **Bill 1 — Critical Infrastructure Defence Act (Kenney)**

First Reading — 4 (*Feb. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 12-18 (*Feb. 26, 2020 morn.*), 96-98 (*Mar. 2, 2020 aft.*), (*May 27, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 859-61 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 861-69 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed on division*)

### **Bill 2 — Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020 (Hunter)**

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 857-58 (*May 28, 2020 morn., adjourned*)

### **Bill 3 — Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)**

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 431-46 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn.*), 458-65 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 465-76 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft.*), 477-507 (*Apr. 7, 2020 eve.*), 572-83 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 659-66 (*May 6, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 703-09 (*May 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2020 c8 ]

### **Bill 4 — Fiscal Planning and Transparency (Fixed Budget Period) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)**

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 858 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 869-75 (*May 28, 2020 morn., adjourned*)

### **Bill 5 — Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2020 (Toews)**

First Reading — 110 (*Mar. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 224-32 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*), 222-23 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*)

Committee of the Whole — 232-33 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 234-41 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 241 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 242-48 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House Sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c3 ]

### **Bill 6 — Appropriation Act, 2020 (\$) (Toews)**

First Reading — 215 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 216-22 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Third Reading — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c1 ]

**Bill 7 — Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)**

First Reading — *(May 27, 2020 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 858-59 *(May 28, 2020 morn.)*, 891-99 *(May 28, 2020 aft., adjourned)*

**Bill 8\* — Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act (Schweitzer)**

First Reading — 431 *(Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed)*

Second Reading — 509-21 *(Apr. 8, 2020 morn.)*, 551-58 *(Apr. 8, 2020 aft.)*, 559-72 *(Apr. 8, 2020 eve., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 593-618 *(Apr. 8, 2020 eve.)*, 671-73 *(May 6, 2020 morn., passed)*

Third Reading — 709-12 *(May 7, 2020 morn., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, except Part 2, which comes into force on July 1, 2020; SA 2020 cP-26.87 ]

**Bill 9 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)**

First Reading — 276 *(Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed)*

Second Reading — 277-80 *(Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 280-82 *(Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed)*

Third Reading — 282-83 *(Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c2 ]

**Bill 10 — Public Health (Emergency Powers) Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)**

First Reading — 296-97 *(Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 307-20 *(Apr. 1, 2020 morn.)*, 337-44 *(Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 354-57 *(Apr. 1, 2020 aft.)*, 407-09 *(Apr. 2, 2020 morn.)*, 426-28 *(Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed)*

Third Reading — 428-29 *(Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed on division)*

Royal Assent — *(Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on April 2, 2020; certain sections took effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c5 ]

**Bill 11 — Tenancies Statutes (Emergency Provisions) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)**

First Reading — 297 *(Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 298-301 *(Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 301-03 *(Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed)*

Third Reading — 303-05 *(Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c6 ]

**Bill 12 — Liabilities Management Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)**

First Reading — 297 *(Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 320-25 *(Apr. 1, 2020 morn.)*, 344-49 *(Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 350-54 *(Apr. 1, 2020 aft.)*, 401-05 *(Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed)*

Third Reading — 406 *(Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c4 ]

**Bill 13 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Madu)**

First Reading — 431 *(Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed)*

Second Reading — 521-26 *(Apr. 8, 2020 morn.)*, 537-51 *(Apr. 8, 2020 aft., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 583-93 *(Apr. 8, 2020 eve.)*, 619-35 *(Apr. 9, 2020 morn.)*, 648-57 *(Apr. 9, 2020 aft.)*, 673-74 *(May 6, 2020 morn.)*, 688-99 *(May 6, 2020 aft., passed)*

Third Reading — 699-701 *(May 6, 2020 aft., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c7 ]

**Bill 14 — Utility Payment Deferral Program Act (Nally)**

First Reading — 687 *(May 6, 2020 aft., passed)*

Second Reading — 724-45 *(May 7, 2020 aft., passed)*

Committee of the Whole — 758-86 *(May 8, 2020 morn., passed)*

Third Reading — 786-90 *(May 8, 2020 morn., passed)*

Royal Assent — *(May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting)* [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, with certain provisions having effect as of March 18, 2020; SA 2020 cU-4 ]

**Bill 15 — Choice in Education Act, 2020 (LaGrange)**

First Reading — 887-88 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

**Bill 16 — Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)**

First Reading — 888 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

**Bill 201 — Strategic Aviation Advisory Council Act (Gottfried)**

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

**Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Protecting the Rule of Law) Amendment Act, 2020 (Ganley)**

First Reading — 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)









## Table of Contents

Members' Statements	
Arts and Community Grant Programs .....	877
Legislative Assembly Debate on COVID-19.....	877
HALO Medical Rescue Helicopter Funding.....	877
Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia .....	878
Beekeeping Industry Concerns .....	878
Conversion Therapy .....	878
Paradise Valley Flooding.....	879
COVID-19 Response and Economic Relaunch Strategy .....	879
High School Graduation 2020 .....	879
Notices of Motions .....	879
Oral Question Period	
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy .....	880
Public Health Emergency Declaration and End Date .....	880
Support for Persons and Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19.....	881
COVID-19 and Seniors .....	881
Economic Relaunch Strategy and Small Boutique Gyms.....	882
Victims of Crime Fund .....	882
Economic Relaunch Strategy and Small Businesses .....	883
Services for Children with Special and Complex Needs .....	883
Arts and Community Grant Programs .....	884
COVID-19 and Child Care.....	885
Cattle Industry Concerns .....	885
Human Trafficking Task Force .....	886
Support for Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19.....	886
Supervised Drug Consumption Sites .....	887
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 15 Choice in Education Act, 2020.....	887
Bill 16 Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020.....	888
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	888
Orders of the Day .....	891
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 7 Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020.....	891

*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

E-mail: [AlbertaHansard@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:AlbertaHansard@assembly.ab.ca)