



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, February 25, 2021

Day 79

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature
Second Session

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

Aheer, Hon. Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)	Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UC), Deputy Government House Leader
Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UC)	Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UC)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UC)	Nicolaides, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UC)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)	Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UC)	Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (UC), Government House Leader
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)	Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UC)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)	Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP), Leader of the Official Opposition
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)	Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UC)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UC)	Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP), Official Opposition Deputy Whip	Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UC)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader	Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)	Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UC)
Dreeshen, Hon. Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UC)	Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (Ind)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP), Official Opposition Whip	Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UC), Government Whip	Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)	Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UC)
Fir, Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UC)	Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)	Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UC)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC)	Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UC)	Savage, Hon. Sonya, Calgary-North West (UC), Deputy Government House Leader
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)	Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, Calgary-North East (UC)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)	Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Goodridge, Laila, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche (UC)	Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UC), Deputy Government Whip
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UC)	Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, Calgary-Shaw (UC)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP), Official Opposition House Leader	Schweitzer, Hon. Doug, QC, Calgary-Elbow (UC), Deputy Government House Leader
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UC)	Shandro, Hon. Tyler, QC, Calgary-Acadia (UC)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)	Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)	Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Horner, Nate S., Drumheller-Stettler (UC)	Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UC)
Hunter, Hon. Grant R., Taber-Warner (UC)	Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP), Official Opposition Deputy Whip	Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
Issik, Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UC)	Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)
Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UC)	Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)
Kenny, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UC), Premier	Toews, Hon. Travis, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UC)	Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UC)
Loewen, Todd, Central Peace-Notley (UC)	Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UC)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UC)	van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)	Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UC)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)	Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UC)
Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UC)	Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, QC, Edmonton-South West (UC), Deputy Government House Leader	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UC), Deputy Government House Leader	Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UC)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 62

New Democrat: 24

Independent: 1

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Shannon Dean, QC, Clerk	Philip Massolin, Clerk Assistant and Director of House Services	Amanda LeBlanc, Deputy Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>
Teri Cherkewich, Law Clerk	Nancy Robert, Clerk of <i>Journals</i> and Research Officer	Chris Caughell, Sergeant-at-Arms
Stephanie LeBlanc, Clerk Assistant and Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Janet Schwegel, Director of Parliamentary Programs	Tom Bell, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Trafton Koenig, Senior Parliamentary Counsel		Paul Link, Deputy 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 Dreesen	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
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 Justice and Solicitor General
Ric McIver	Minister of Transportation, Minister of Municipal Affairs
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 Jobs, Economy and Innovation
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
Martin Long	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism
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. Rowswell

Eggen
Gray
Issik
Jones
Phillips
Singh
Yaseen

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Neudorf
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Barnes
Bilous
Irwin
Reid
Rosin
Rowswell
Sweet
van Dijken
Walker

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goodridge
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

Amery
Carson
Glasgo
Gotfried
Lovely
Neudorf
Pancholi
Rutherford
Sabir
Smith

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Schow
Deputy Chair: Mr. Sigurdson

Ceci
Lovely
Loyola
Rosin
Rutherford
Shepherd
Smith
Sweet
Yaseen

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Cooper
Deputy Chair: Mr. Ellis

Dang
Deol
Goehring
Goodridge
Long
Neudorf
Sabir
Sigurdson, R.J.
Williams

Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

Chair: Mr. Ellis
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

Amery
Dang
Getson
Glasgo
Irwin
Nielsen
Rutherford
Sigurdson, L.
Sigurdson, R.J.

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Smith
Deputy Chair: Mr. Reid

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Barnes
Deol
Ganley
Gotfried
Jones
Lovely
Loyola
Rehn
Renaud

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Ms Phillips
Deputy Chair: Mr. Guthrie

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Lovely
Neudorf
Pancholi
Renaud
Rowswell
Schmidt
Singh
Turton
Walker

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Hanson
Deputy Chair: Member Ceci

Dach
Feehan
Ganley
Getson
Guthrie
Issik
Loewen
Singh
Turton
Yaseen

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 25, 2021

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Hon. members, I ask that you please remain standing as we pay tribute to three former members of this Assembly who passed since the last time we met.

Mr. James Douglas Henderson
January 2, 1927, to June 29, 2020

The Speaker: James Henderson served three terms in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. In his first two terms, from 1963 to '71, he was the Social Credit Member for Leduc. During his time he was the Minister of Health, the minister of the environment. When elected the third time, Mr. Henderson was the Social Credit Member for Wetaskiwin-Leduc, 1971 to '75. He served as the Official Opposition whip in 1972 and then as Leader of the Official Opposition and House leader in '73. In the fall of 1973 Mr. Henderson became an independent member. Mr. Henderson graduated with a bachelor of science from the University of Alberta in 1948, then worked as a petroleum engineer. His public service began as a municipal politician, where he served as the mayor of Devon. After his tenure with the Legislative Assembly of Alberta he remained active in politics as he was a candidate in the 1988 federal election, mayor of Devon from '89 to '92, and a candidate for the Devon town council in 2001. James Henderson passed away on June 29, 2020, at the age of 93.

Mr. Leonard Barry Pashak
April 21, 1937, to February 3, 2021

The Speaker: L. Barry Pashak served two terms as the Alberta New Democrat Party Member for Calgary-Forest Lawn from 1986 to 1993. Mr. Pashak was a graduate of the University of Calgary, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in mathematics in 1962 and a master of arts in sociology in 1971. Mr. Pashak taught mathematics, sociology, and political science at Mount Royal College. A self-described political activist, he was a candidate in four federal elections and two provincial elections prior to being elected to serve the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. His activism and commitment to democracy continued after his tenure. From 2000 to 2001 he was the leader of the Equity Party. Barry Pashak passed away on February 3, 2021, at the age of 83.

Hon. Elaine J. McCoy, QC
March 7, 1946, to December 29, 2020

The Speaker: The Hon. Elaine McCoy served two terms as the Progressive Conservative Member for Calgary-West from 1986 to 1993. She was the minister of consumer and corporate affairs from '86 to '89, the minister of labour from '89 to '92. Mrs. McCoy obtained a bachelor of arts and a law degree from the University of

Alberta. She worked as senior legal counsel for TransAlta Utilities Corporation and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1988. In 2005 Mrs. McCoy was appointed to the Senate. One of the first Senators to embark on web-based initiatives, Mrs. McCoy believed in engaging with people on social media, describing how, quote: it benefits citizens by giving them hope that they, too, can effect change, can be heard, and participate in the progress of our country. End quote. Mrs. McCoy was an advocate for Senate modernization and an ardent representative for Albertans. Elaine McCoy passed away on December 29, 2020, at the age of 74.

In a moment of silent prayer I ask that each of you remember the way that you may have known Mr. Henderson, Mr. Pashak, and Mrs. McCoy. Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let your light perpetual shine upon them. Amen.

Hon. members, please remain standing and don't join, due to COVID-19 public health restrictions, the singing of our national anthem by Brooklyn Elhard. It will be followed immediately by *God Save the Queen*.

Ms Elhard:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen!

The Speaker: Hon. members, please be seated.

Thank you, Brooklyn.

The hon. the Government House Leader is rising on some procedural matters.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do rise to move Government Motion 62, which is on the Order Paper in my name.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I appreciate the motion on behalf of the hon. Government House Leader. In order for him to move it at this time, this will require unanimous consent.

Perhaps you might just ask for unanimous consent.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Correct, Mr. Speaker. Out of practice. I will move first that I can get unanimous consent in order to move briefly to Government Motions.

The Speaker: Excellent.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Government Motions

Physical Distancing in Legislature Chamber

62. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that despite Standing Orders 13(7), 16, and 32(4)(b) for the duration of the 2021 spring sitting of the Second Session of the 30th Legislature and to allow for appropriate physical distancing within the Chamber during that time, all members may sit, speak, and vote in any seat

that has not been assigned to them provided that they immediately relinquish that seat on the request of

- (a) the member who has been assigned that seat, or
- (b) the Speaker.

The Speaker: This is a debatable motion. Is there anyone wanting to join in the debate?

[Government Motion 62 carried]

Members' Statements

The Speaker: Well, hon. members, welcome back to the daily Routine. I look forward to this session together. I'm sure there is going to be an incredible amount of good-quality debate and very little codswallop.

Critical Worker Benefit

Ms Renaud: It took over nine months for this government to start the process of distributing funding designed to top up wages for essential front-line workers. Almost one year into dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and these workers are still risking their health and safety and the health and safety of their families, yet the critical worker benefit launched by this government actually leaves out more essential workers than it includes.

Let me give you an example. The Skills Society is the capital region's biggest nonprofit disability support provider. They serve over 375 people with disabilities, many with complex needs, who are extremely vulnerable. They are one of the few programs in Alberta supporting Albertans with developmental disabilities who live in the inner city and face multiple barriers and increased risk. They have over 500 essential workers doing this work across the city. Since the pandemic started, they've had over 70 cases of COVID hospitalizations, staffing shortages, and unprecedented pressures. Every single one of them remained dedicated to their work, knowing they were essential for stewarding this community through the pandemic.

1:40

Yet despite promising that disability support workers would be included in this benefit program, this government told them after the fact that many of their staff would not qualify because they don't work overnight. That is wrong. The fact is that this government is drawing a line in the sand between who is critical and who is not months after deeming them essential. These workers face the increased risk posed by the pandemic every day, and they rose to the challenge to help fellow Albertans. Their reward is another broken promise. This government had nine months to design a proper program to support these workers, and they still got it wrong. Applications are still open.

Minister, I urge you to take a good, hard look in the mirror and make the right decision to change the ridiculous eligibility requirements of this benefit.

Thank you.

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

Economic Recovery and the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the COVID-19 pandemic Alberta's government made significant efforts to support and protect Albertans' lives and livelihoods. When COVID cases rose in the fall of last year, our government implemented stronger health guidelines designed to lower overall cases, reduce

hospitalizations, and protect Albertans. As Alberta continues to bend the curve, it is critical that we continue to follow a measured approach that aims to work with Albertans, not against them. Our four-step path forward provides a clear set of goals for Albertans to see. This plan takes away the confusion that is evident in other provinces' plans for easing restrictions. While other provinces have been quick to shut down businesses, churches, and recreation activities, with little or no indication of when they will reopen, our plan clearly communicates the opposite. However, communication is not enough right now.

That is why we launched the small and medium enterprise relaunch grant, providing up to \$20,000 to Alberta businesses ordered to close or alter operations. With the conclusion of this program in March, we will continue supporting businesses by providing \$30,000 to those hardest hit by the pandemic, with an additional \$10,000 for those with a revenue loss of over 60 per cent. Grants like this are crucial for Alberta businesses to off-set costs and also provide funds used to implement measures to minimize virus transmission and protect their local communities.

Additionally, despite delays by the federal government on vaccine procurement, Alberta continues to lead the vaccine rollout in vaccinating our health care workers and our most vulnerable. As of February 23 we have administered over 186,000 doses of the vaccine, with over 77,000 Albertans receiving their second dose. In order to fully protect Albertans, the huge success of our provincial vaccine rollout is a testament that a positive future is on the horizon.

Our government remains committed to protecting our health care system and supporting Alberta businesses. Thank you to all Albertans for helping to protect lives and livelihoods across the province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Pilots Ken Fowler and Hannelie Eder

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd prepared a member's statement in the fall last year, and unfortunately we didn't get a chance to get it out due to timing, but I'd like to share with the House here a couple of words about some Alberta aviators that passed away last fall, in September.

Ken Fowler and Hannelie Eder were two experienced pilots, and they were good people that will really be missed. I had a chance to talk with them at length two weeks prior to their accident about all the interesting things taking place out in Rocky Mountain House at the airport there. You see, they were out of the Villeneuve Airport, and they were part of a local crew that ended up flying overtop of the Leg. Building in Edmonton to pay tribute to the RCAF pilots who had served our country when we had needed them the most.

Hannelie was originally from Germany and chose to live here in Alberta. It's where she continued her career in policing and reached her dream of flying. Her RV-6 was a local favourite in a lot of the aerobatic competitions. Ken and I spoke about the Rocky Mountain House Airport and how it was an incubator for aerobatics in the country and how they were training some very high-quality pilots. We spoke of some of his own designs. He had a speed glider that he had been working on and a jet-powered aircraft. They were the two at the top of the list.

It was with a heavy heart that I received a text two weeks later about an accident. To quote a post from Team Rocket, of which Ken was a cofounder:

We are heartbroken to share the news that beloved Team Rocket pilot Ken Fowler passed away on Saturday, September 26, as a result of an aircraft accident near Edmonton, Alberta.

Ken was a loving husband, devoted father, grandfather, talented pilot and friend to all. He was a passionate aviator who spent his life sharing his knowledge and encouraging others. Ken co-founded Team Rocket Aerobatics, one of the most sought-after Airshow routines in North America; he was a long-time member of the International Council of Air Shows, a dedicated ACE evaluator and an enthusiastic mentor for many.

On October 2 pilots from across the province flew into Rocky Mountain House to say goodbye, and I was able to pay my respects there as I was amongst that aviation community. The funeral was posted on Facebook, where folks could make their statements, be part of it, where they had touched their lives.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows.

Racism Prevention

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On December 8 two Muslim women were attacked at Southgate mall. On December 15 another woman wearing a hijab was assaulted at a train station. On December 16 a black man was assaulted in central Edmonton in what police call a hate-motivated attack. On February 3 two more Muslim women were attacked. Last Wednesday another black Muslim woman was stalked and harassed. And on Saturday protestors carrying torches and walking in memory of Charlottesville paraded in front of this very building.

It is unconscionable that anyone could look at these incidents and dismiss them; however, that is exactly what this Premier has done. It took him days to condemn the white supremacists set on terrorizing people in the city. Even when he did, he made excuses for some in the crowd. That is shameful and unbecoming of the office he holds, Mr. Speaker.

As the critic for multiculturalism I know it's my responsibility to ensure that Albertans, particularly those from racialized communities, feel welcomed and safe in Alberta. I'm here today to fulfill that responsibility and to ensure that this Chamber understands the fear, confusion, and hopelessness that so many in the communities I represent face. I'm here today to ensure that this Chamber understands the abandonment that racialized Albertans feel from their government.

We are at a critical moment in the history of this province, but the challenges we face are not insurmountable. If we are going to overcome these issues, we must first acknowledge that they exist. Then we must be unrelenting in our fight against racism. We are elected by people to serve people, and the people in our communities need our help. So it is up to us; it's our duty and responsibility. I hope the Premier will finally agree with me and the members of the Alberta NDP and step up. Albertans are looking for actual leadership.

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

Pink Shirt Day

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in recognition of Pink Shirt Day, celebrated on February 24, which is an international day to recognize and stand against bullying. Today I wear pink to send a message that I will stand against bullying in our respective communities across Alberta. We know that bullying can happen to anyone at any time regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

Fourteen years ago two teens from Nova Scotia saw one of their classmates being bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school. They took a stand and started a legacy of action. They bought dozens of pink shirts and handed them out to students and teachers at their high

school to wear on the same day. This was a simple yet powerful statement that bullying would not be tolerated in their school, that we must welcome, include, and respect others no matter who they are or what they wear.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Community and Social Services as well as the Minister of Education and the Minister of Children's Services for keeping this legacy alive here in Alberta to show everyone in our communities, whether in school or at home, online or at work, that bullying has no place in our lives. I would also like to thank the teachers in my riding of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain and across Alberta for the work they do every day to prevent and stop bullying in our communities.

I'm proudly wearing pink today, and I'm happy to see many of my colleagues here doing the same. We hope that everyone will join us and take a stand against bullying not just for today but throughout the year and especially with the increased isolation from the pandemic. Help is available through the bullying helpline, an anonymous tool available 24/7 in more than 170 languages. Anyone dealing with bullying can dial 1.888.456.2323 to find out how to get help in their area or chat online at alberta.ca/bullyingchat. Together we can work to end bullying and make our communities a safer place for everyone.

Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre has the call.

COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. If there's one word this government fails to understand, it's "humility." For weeks the Premier and the Health minister boasted about their vaccine response. "We're ready to roll," the Premier told Albertans; "We're ready to inoculate more than a million people a month." Then when they finally rolled out a website to allow Albertans to sign up for appointments, it crashed because it wasn't prepared for the demand. Premier, this is one of the most important public health efforts in our lifetime. Will you apologize to those Albertans who spent hours trying to book vaccinations only to be foiled by the incompetence of your Minister of Health?

Mr. Kenney: Well, first of all, let me welcome all members back to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the work ahead of us on behalf of Albertans.

We were all very disappointed with the technical problems of the centralized online booking for seniors over the age of 75 for the vaccine yesterday. Fortunately, those problems were resolved through the course of the day. We received over 1 and a half million phone calls in the space of the first hour or two, but now over 100,000 seniors have been booked on that system, in addition to 22,000 seniors in congregate care, in addition to tens of thousands through the pharmacies that will be delivering the vaccine through the program.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm indeed happy to hear that those thousands of Albertans were able to sign up, but thousands more spent hours waiting for them to fix this broken website. Many simply gave up. It was so bad that one Albertan took it upon himself to rewrite the code of the website. When asked about that, the minister had to ask a reporter to send him the tweet so he could look at that solution. Premier, how can you trust the competence of a Health minister who has to outsource his tech fixes

to Twitter? He lost the trust of health care workers long ago, and now all Albertans are being subjected to his incompetence. Isn't it time for a competent Minister of Health?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, this is a remarkably competent Minister of Health, who has led us through this challenging pandemic with, thankfully, one of the lowest per capita rates of death in the western world, in the developed world, for a large population jurisdiction. The minister was very clear with his officials that their budget was no consideration; they had an unlimited budget to prepare for this centralized booking. He also asked that they stress test for the anticipated 130,000 on the first day. Unfortunately, that did not happen. I spoke very bluntly to officials about this today to ensure that never happens again.

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, this Premier and that Health minister are responsible for the pressure that was created when they dragged their feet all last fall in taking actions to curb the rise of cases in the second wave. They created the pressure that overwhelmed the health care system, and they failed yet again, as they did on contact tracing, to prepare for this website after spending weeks bragging about their vaccination capabilities and attacking the federal government. We Albertans deserve real leadership that takes responsibility for those actions, doesn't put it off on other officials. When will we see that from this Premier and this minister?

Mr. Kenney: Albertans have seen that from day one of the pandemic, when this province was the best prepared in Canada with respect to personal protective equipment, so much so that we could share surplus material with other provinces. This province has consistently had the highest per capita levels of testing in the country over the course of the past year. This was the first province with an online assessment tool. We've had the fastest pace of vaccination through much of the past several weeks. We now have over 2,000 contact tracers and the ability to investigate over 1,400 cases a day. Mr. Speaker, that's leadership.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre for his second set of questions.

Government Members' Remarks on COVID-19

Mr. Shepherd: I suppose it's expected, Mr. Speaker, that on budget day the Premier is going to rewrite so much of history or attempt to, but the fact is that all of us owe a debt of gratitude to Alberta's public health officials, doctors, and front-line staff. They've guided us through this pandemic, done their utmost to save lives, and they deserve gratitude. What they don't deserve is having their hard work undermined and disrespected by folks like the members for Airdrie-East and Cypress-Medicine Hat, who have publicly campaigned against the health care measures they support. Minister of Health, will you clearly state that you reject these dangerous conspiracy theories and, if so, tell us what you will do to stop your colleagues from spreading them?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, from the beginning Alberta has taken a balanced approach to protect both lives and livelihoods, unlike the NDP, who has had only one goal throughout this pandemic, which is to politicize it, to attack people, to create fear, to create panic. It has been grotesque to follow the most irresponsible opposition in Canada, that has never missed an opportunity to spread fear, panic, hysteria. If they were in office, the schools would be closed right now. We would be in a hard lockdown, and Albertans would not have the balanced approach that we do today.

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, the hysteria is coming from the words of this Premier. Indeed, the politicization, creating fear have come from those members who have spread untruths like: masks spread COVID; students wash their hands too much; our COVID-19 tests are 50 per cent inaccurate; and, on the eve of the second wave, quote, the worst is behind us. None of this was true, but no action was taken to stop that constant spread of inaccuracies by UCP MLAs. Are the Premier and the minister unaware that these ludicrous, factless claims undermine our public health effort and put lives at risk? Will they stop their MLAs from spreading these dangerous conspiracy theories?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with a number of Albertans who believe that we should have no public health measures or very few. I think we do need targeted measures and to use them as a last and limited resort to prevent or control viral spread, to protect our health care system, and to save lives and prevent preventable deaths. Within that range – it's called a democracy. There's a legitimate space for democratic debate within that space. Obviously, for some of the people that were in front of the Legislature the other day perpetuating conspiracy theories that all of this, that COVID isn't real and has been invented – I reject those views completely, but those are not the views of anyone in my caucus.

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, some of those people out there were inspired by this Premier because the issue starts at the top. This Premier told this very House that COVID is just like influenza, that young people aren't affected by it, that vulnerable Albertans with no housing may be magically immune. His comments were cited by folks at that march, including that one, right here in my constituency, where people carried torches in an attempt to intimidate others. He's been quoted by GraceLife Church in their flouting of the public health orders. To this Premier: will he apologize for his claims and acknowledge that his leadership is so weak that he's now actively helping fuel misinformation and provide . . .

The Speaker: The Premier has the call.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, what a perfect and almost humorous encapsulation of the absurdity of the NDP position on COVID-19. The protesters to whom he refers were out there attacking me and this government, referring to me as Hitler, as a dictator, as a fascist, for having brought in this government's reasonable public health measures. I in particular and this government in general were the targets of the venom of those who were promoting conspiracy theories and, sadly, some who were promoting hatred, hatred which we unqualifiedly condemn.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has a question.

Government Members' and Staff Members' Travel

Member Ceci: Stay home; save lives: this message was repeated over and over during the holidays, Mr. Speaker, even while six UCP MLAs were jetting off to the beach. The Premier, who spent weeks lecturing Albertans that they should stay home, gave a free pass to his caucus, his cabinet, and his own chief of staff to holiday in Hawaii, Vegas, Mexico, London, and Arizona. Premier, Albertans were offended by the selfishness of your caucus and your refusal to take action. Will you unequivocally apologize and take full responsibility for this scandal? You are their boss, after all.

Mr. Kenney: Already did that, Mr. Speaker.

Member Ceci: It took five days for this Premier to take action but not because it was the right thing to do; rather, because of the extreme public pressure. Even then the Premier's so-called punishments involved giving his MLAs less work and giving his chief of staff a \$50,000 severance cheque. Can the Premier explain why Albertans have had to sacrifice so much to follow the rules but have to fight his government for help at every turn while his jet-setting MLAs barely get a slap on the wrist? Is this what he calls responsibility? Albertans call it a joke, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the day after I became aware that some members had travelled, I took responsibility for having been insufficiently clear about our expectations, and action was taken. I don't know how people losing their jobs constitutes a promotion. With respect to severance for people who have been removed from their positions, it's a legal obligation that the NDP honoured with respect to their staff as well.

Member Ceci: The Premier really saw nothing wrong with the minister of emergency management jetting off to Hawaii because she didn't really want to miss her family's annual Christmas tradition. I have news for the Premier. Hundreds of thousands and thousands of Albertans missed their families' annual Christmas traditions this year. Does the Premier see no connection between his minister choosing Hawaii over doing her job during a pandemic and the failure of his government to manage this public health crisis? I'll give him a hint: it's his lack of leadership.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, apparently, the member opposite missed the fact that there were serious and wide-ranging consequences for that conduct.

2:00

Critical Worker Benefit

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, in May 2020 the federal government announced a program to help provinces provide wage top-ups to essential front-line workers. It was meant as a thank you to the hundreds of thousands of Albertans who risked their lives when the pandemic hit. That includes everyone from nurses and health care aides to correctional officers to the workers at meat-packing plants, all of whom face the risk and danger of workplace outbreaks. Yet this government left that money on the table for 287 days. These workers deserved better. Premier, how can you possibly justify waiting nearly a year to give these workers the thanks they were due?

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, once again the premise of the question is completely false. The delay was not nearly a year. We consulted broadly to find the best way to administer the critical worker benefit, with some 350,000 Albertans, front-line workers in both the private and public sectors, receiving \$1,200 payments, at a cost of nearly half a billion dollars, with an enormous contribution from Alberta taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, we know one thing, though. If the NDP was in charge, that money only would have gone to NDP government union members. Private-sector workers on the front lines benefited from this program as well, and we fought for . . .

Ms Gray: Two hundred and eighty-seven days.

The minister already had to put nonprofit workers back in after initially telling them they weren't included. I'm glad to see this government clarify, but my colleagues and I have received thousands of messages from workers who were told by this government to keep working at the start of the pandemic. They were told they were essential, but now that there's money involved,

they're told they're not critical enough. Premier, why do you continue to disrespect Alberta workers by disqualifying them from this important benefit?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I will remind the NDP that one of their affiliate government unions delayed the wage top-up to health care aides in long-term care settings for months, using their workers as pawns in a power game. For the NDP, it's always about politics and never about people.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, not a single labour group or worker was consulted prior to the rollout of the critical worker benefit. In fact, the minister has had to clarify and backtrack multiple times since it has rolled out. Employers are required to apply on behalf of their workers, but there are more hoops to jump through than a three-ring circus. Frankly, this program is a mess. This money should have been a good story, but so far it's only causing stress and pain. I ask the Premier: how do you expect Albertans to trust you and your government when it's clear they are the last priority on your list?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to clarify. We worked with a number of ministries in rolling out this benefit, and the comments made by the members opposite saying that the nonprofit sector was not included are simply incorrect. As the members opposite know, nonprofits deliver many of the services for Children's Services, Community and Social Services, and they were included from the outset on this. Wood's Homes, Ben Calf Robe Society, Family Connections, Kids Kottage, Hull Services: these are just to name a few of the not-for-profits that were included in the original intention. The only difference is that the delivery mechanism was through the line departments.

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

Working Parents Benefit

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parents across Alberta have been through significant stress over the past year. Even with the uncertainty of the pandemic and the economic downturn, many parents continued working, providing essential services and fuelling our economy. Child care is an integral part for these working parents, and yesterday's announcement on the working parents benefit is welcome news. Can the Minister of Children's Services please explain how the working parents benefit will help parents across Alberta get back to work and kick-start our economy?

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

Ms Schulz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The pandemic and the economic downturn have created significant stress and uncertainty for working parents and families, as the member said, as many of them have continued to fuel our economy and provide essential services over the past year. Fewer families have been using child care over the last number of months, and we then have a certain amount of dollars, \$108 million, in unspent funding for child care. We decided to put those dollars directly back into the pockets of hard-working Alberta parents. This \$560 benefit per child will be very helpful for these families, and for those already accessing the subsidy, this benefit will almost completely cover the cost of one month or more . . .

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

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Minister, for your answer. Given that my riding of Spruce Grove-Stony Plain has one of the youngest populations within the province and given that many lower to middle-income working families residing in my riding require child care for their children, can the same minister please explain to this House who will be able to apply for this benefit and why certain eligibility considerations were made?

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services has the call.

Ms Schulz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Families with a household income of up to \$100,000 who have paid \$561 or more and have accessed at least three months of child care or preschool between April and December of last year will be eligible to apply. This benefit is income tested so that we can ensure families most in need are receiving these supports and funding. We've also extended the eligibility requirements to families accessing all types of licensed and unlicensed child care as well as preschool, because this government has always and will continue to support parent choice.

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Minister. Given that this benefit will help nearly 100,000 Albertan families and approximately 192,000 children will be eligible to receive it and given that this money is going directly to the parents at a time when many are working hard to get back into the workforce, can the minister please explain to this House why this benefit is going directly to parents and not to child care providers as was done previously?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Child care is absolutely an important part of Alberta's economic recovery. That is why together the provincial and federal governments have invested over \$110 million directly to support the needs of child care operators right across this province over the last number of months. We also made sure that early childhood educators were eligible for the critical worker benefit, recognizing the important work that they have done over the past year. But with these unspent dollars the one group that we really wanted to support was those hard-working Alberta parents, and that's why we've invested these dollars right back into their pockets.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has risen.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Children's Services finally announced how she'll be spending the unused dollars in her child care budget. While I'm glad that this money will no longer be sitting inactive in a bank account somewhere, working parents in Alberta are actually terribly disappointed with how it's being used. Instead of investing it in quality, affordable, and accessible child care for all Albertans, it's being spent on a one-time payment to some families that will cover just two weeks of child care. Two weeks. Minister, how do you expect Alberta parents to afford child care next month, you know, when you don't have a budget to sell? Don't you believe that Alberta families deserve affordable child care every month?

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, this one-time working parent benefit goes to support parents at a time when they have been facing unprecedented stress and chaos, both because of the pandemic but also because of economic uncertainty. The members opposite called for us to reinvest these dollars, which were intended to be invested to support child care subsidies for hard-working Alberta parents. We are doing exactly

that, investing these dollars back into parents who need the help the most right now.

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

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that universal, quality, affordable child care is the necessary infrastructure to get families back to work and given that investing in child care is the single most effective thing we can do to jump-start our economy now and promote long-term job growth in the future and given that getting Albertans back to work should be the number one priority of this government, Minister, do you actually believe that any parent will now be able to go back to work or school because you've given them two weeks' worth of child care? Why is your government using this money in such an embarrassingly ineffective way?

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, we continue to be focused on child care because we have said that it is an important part of Alberta's economic recovery. Absolutely, this is one-time funding, but we will continue to support working parents and child care operators right across this province. The one most important thing we can do to protect lives and livelihoods of Albertans is to keep our economy open to work towards a safe restart, which is not what the members opposite would like to do. They would like to keep our economy shut down, and that is the number one barrier to Alberta parents getting back to work.

Ms Pancholi: Well, given that under the NDP's \$25-per-day child care program low-income parents paid zero dollars per day and now that the minister has ended that program, they're paying at least \$13 per day and given that all other families in the \$25-per-day program will see their child care fees double or triple in April, forcing many of them to leave their jobs because they simply can't afford child care anymore, and given that thousands of working parents don't even qualify for this working parents benefit despite spending over 30 per cent of their monthly income on child care, Minister, how is it possible that your government has so misunderstood the needs of working families and the economic need to get Albertans back to work?

2:10

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would point out that in the former government's own pilot program, the feedback was that people felt that it was unfair. It picked winners and losers. It didn't measure income, need, employment, or need for postsecondary training. We continue to invest in the highest subsidies and wage top-ups for early childhood educators in the entire country. We are going to continue to support Alberta working parents through very targeted investments at a time where we have to balance both these important investments and fiscal restraint and responsibility.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Energy Strategies

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The UCP government's energy strategy has failed. Last March the Premier made a risky bet that Donald Trump would win the White House, and he lost. The Premier bet up to \$7.5 billion on Keystone XL despite significant legal and political risk, and on his very first day in office President Biden stopped the project in its tracks. Can the minister tell us

exactly how much money has been lost on this risky bet to date, and how much is at risk? Please be specific.

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, the final number with respect to liability is pending ongoing discussions with the operator, TC Energy, but the only reason that the NDP is raising this question is because they've always opposed this pipeline. Their leader campaigned against it. They sent MPs down to Washington to actively lobby against it, just like the member who posed that question attended rallies to oppose Northern Gateway when she was working for green organizations. This government was elected to do everything possible to get pipelines built and to undo the NDP's antipipeline record.

Ms Ganley: Given, Mr. Speaker, that we supported the project with barrels of oil rather than betting Albertans' money and given that the UCP's failed energy strategy was also built around a public inquiry, an inquiry that has been delayed three times and is at least \$1 million over budget, and given that the inquiry has been caught peddling climate-change-denying conspiracy theories, which only harms our international reputation and scares away investment, resulting in job losses, not gains, can the minister tell us exactly how many jobs the inquiry has created? Is it just one for a major UCP donor?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, we did extend the time commitment for the public inquiry by four months for them to complete the report, and that was so that they could complete it fairly and do due process, give an opportunity for those companies and those organizations who are named in it to have a chance to respond. But the reason why we're doing the public inquiry is to defend our oil and gas sector – to defend our oil and gas sector – that the NDP government did not do when they were in office. I'm very proud of the work that we are doing to defend our sector. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Ganley: Given that the UCP's war room is also part of the failed energy strategy and that the war room has been an embarrassment after plagiarizing multiple logos and impersonating and attacking journalists and given that the UCP failed inquiry is outdone only by its disastrous war room and given that both of these failed creations have actually served to further harm our international reputation and scare away investors, will the minister admit that they wasted billions of dollars of Albertans' money on their failed energy strategy with nothing to show for it, and will she board up the war room and cancel the inquiry?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite would not understand what defending the oil and gas industry is. They sat in government for four years, and during those four years we saw Northern Gateway vetoed, we saw Energy East cancelled, we saw divestment and project after project terminated, and during that time I don't recall them ever standing up once and denouncing the lies and myths and the damage that was being done to our industry. Never once did they defend our industry, and we will. We always will.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Carbon Offset Program

Mr. Rowsell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The carbon offset program has been used to compensate participants for their contributions to reducing net emissions since 2012. The crops of farmers can form a carbon sink, which helps off-set CO₂ in our atmosphere. The result is some extra money in the pockets of our farmers for this sequestration. To the Minister of Environment and Parks: could you explain how this program has aided agricultural industry in recent years?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the hon. member for the question. Since 2012 the carbon offsets for farmers program has been supporting the emission-reducing potential of our agriculture sector. The program was one of several initiatives in our province that have reduced emissions while creating jobs in key Alberta sectors, including agriculture. There is incredible innovation and work taking place in this province that is benefiting our key sectors all the while creating jobs and protecting the environment in our province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Mr. Rowsell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for the answer. Given that some of our farmers have come to rely on this extra source of income from the carbon offset program and given that this funding has been very useful to help agricultural producers pay for some of their operational expenses in recent years and given that a memo went out in late 2020 indicating that the program would wrap up in 2021, to the same minister: can you explain why the program will no longer be available this year?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, Alberta farmers are receiving emission offsets through the conservation cropping protocol and have known since 2012, the year that the program was launched, that it would end in 2021. In fact, the end of the program, the year, is actually written into the program when it was introduced. Alberta Environment and Parks recognizes that some farmers are still actively using the program to generate emission offsets and has sent out a memo to advise them of the changing situation as well as to have discussions with them about other programs that are available that I suspect I'll have an opportunity to talk about in just a second.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rowsell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister. Given that if this program were to disappear, the cost to the farmers would be high and given that, with other forms of federal taxation such as the carbon tax on the rise, our farmers are stretched financially as it is and given that our farmers want some sort of compensation for how they are helping to reduce the CO₂ in the atmosphere, to the same minister: are there any programs being considered to replace the carbon offset program, and if so, can the minister elaborate on them?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, they're not only being considered; there are other programs already in place. Other offset protocols are available to farmers in our great province, including the selection for low residual feed intake in beef cattle; the agriculture nitrous oxide emission reductions, to manage fertilizer usage on farm fields; biogas production and combustion, where biodigesters are used to produce energy from waste products; microgeneration for insulation or micro wind turbines and solar

panels; and energy efficiency for reduced electricity usage in buildings. I'm proud of the work that all Albertans, including farmers and other industries, are doing to help protect our environment inside our province.

Coal Development Policies

Mr. Schmidt: On February 8 the Minister of Energy finally, after months and months of Albertans asking her to reconsider her approach on coal mining in the eastern slopes, pressed pause and promised consultations. Unfortunately, Albertans still don't know any details about how the government plans to consult Albertans. The only thing they do know is that the minister is hoping for more coal development. Can the minister now promise Albertans that the outcomes of the consultation will be open and are not predetermined to bring more coal mining to Alberta's eastern slopes?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member knows, we did reinstate the coal policy on February 8. We reinstated it after hearing the voices of many, many Albertans who were concerned that some protections along the category 2 lands on the eastern slopes would be lost with surface mining for coal. That's why we reinstated the coal policy. Not only did we reinstate the coal policy, but we put in place two directives to the AER to reinforce that, directives that there be no further exploration and directives that there would be no mountaintop mining on category 2 lands.

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

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many Albertans will be disappointed that the minister failed to answer my first question and given that while the Minister of Energy has promised to pause changes to the coal policy until after consultation, work to advance coal development is still ongoing as several projects are still under exploration and the Minister of Environment and Parks is working to make more water from the Oldman rivershed available for coal mining and given that Albertans want this government to engage in good faith, can the ministers promise us today that that they will immediately halt any coal activity and stop the damage that is happening on our eastern slopes?

2:20

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows and is well aware, we are not changing water allocations. What we are doing is doing consultations with Albertans to hear their views on what they would like to see in a modern coal policy. I announced that we would be starting those consultations on March 29. I've asked the department to prepare an engagement strategy, to have terms of reference, scope of review. This is going to be a very extensive consultation project to hear from Albertans. It will be conducted by Albertans, for Albertans, and it'll be designed to protect our mountains, mountains that Albertans have told us they cherish very much.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that before the government finally admitted its mistake, the Premier told Albertans that the coal policy was a dead letter and that there was nothing to worry about and given that Albertans disagreed because they knew that removing the coal policy opened up the eastern slopes for more coal mining and given that only coal mining companies were consulted ahead of time and that for months the government listened to them alone and told everyday Albertans that they were seeing ghosts, to the minister:

how can Albertans possibly trust you on the coal file when you cut them out of talks, publicly stated false information, and auctioned off some of our most beautiful natural areas to the highest bidder?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite knows, we've fully reinstated the coal policy, including the restrictions on category 2 lands in the eastern slopes. I think that the member opposite would appreciate it because it was their government who said on May 24, 2016, in a letter to the AER, that the category 2 designation does not preclude surface coal mine development. When I read the coal policy, it says that it does, that it is restricted. I would ask the member opposite to explain what they meant when they removed that restriction. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. [interjections] Order. It might be the first day, and maybe I'm a little grumpier than I need to be, but I was on my feet for an extended period of time.

Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview has the question.

Support for Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Small businesses are paying the price for the continued games being played by this UCP government. Owners are doing everything they can to keep their doors open and their staff employed, and for the Premier to announce a half-finished program, which won't be available for months and lacked any substantive details, is insulting. Annie Dormuth from CFIB stated, quote: additional support through the enhanced COVID-19 business benefit will come too late to give Alberta businesses a fighting chance of survival. End quote. To the minister of jobs and the economy: doesn't your government realize many businesses may close their doors for good before they even see a dime?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Jobs, Economy and Innovation has actually spent a great deal of time talking to and understanding small business. I can assure the hon. member that the welfare of those small businesses is a very top priority for that minister and our entire government, and I can assure the hon. member that we are considering what is best for those small businesses during this tough time. We acknowledge that while we can't make the tough times go away, we are trying to make it better.

Mr. Bilous: Not fast enough.

Given that the minister is claiming that this new program will help the hardest hit businesses that have fallen between the cracks of the previous provincial and federal supports and given that among the businesses hardest hit are music venues, hotels, and fitness studios but that now the minister is capping how much these businesses receive in support after shortchanging new businesses – forget cracks; your programs have left gaping holes for small businesses – isn't now the time to actually step up and lend them a hand? If you're out of ideas, I've got a bunch from Alberta businesses at albertasfuture.ca that you're welcome to look at.

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of gaps, if the hon. member thinks that it's difficult to try to help out the businesses that are not fully open now, during the current restrictions, can any of us imagine how tough it would be under the NDP if almost everything was closed down? They constantly campaigned during this whole time of COVID to close more things down, to shut more

businesses, to take more people's jobs away, to drive investment out of Alberta. We are actually trying to keep people in business, trying to help those businesses stay open, and trying to keep people in their jobs, unlike what the NDP has been asking for.

Mr. Bilous: Your government is failing badly.

Given that the minister, with one stroke of his pen, could put a cap on delivery fees and provide Alberta restaurants immediate relief and given that when asked about implementing a cap, the minister says that he's happy to allow large international companies like Uber Eats and SkipTheDishes to gouge the very small businesses the minister claims to support and given that a 30 per cent commission is threatening the very existence of our small businesses, Minister, do you stand with our local Alberta small businesses or with these international companies threatening their very existence?

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, with the NDP it's always a zero-sum game. If they want to help somebody, they want to put somebody else out of business. They want to take away the jobs of those people delivering food. The Premier actually took a more balanced approach and asked the delivery places to lower their fees where they could, and some of them are working with that, but the fact is that we have allowed those businesses to be open as much as we can. We will continue encouraging the delivery people to be reasonable. Businesses still have the ability to deliver it themselves or band together and get another delivery service, but the point is that we want all businesses to survive, unlike the NDP, that wants to pick winners and losers.

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

Driver's Licence Road Tests

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's a teenager hoping to get on the road for the first time or someone working towards a career in commercial transportation, driving plays an important role in the lives of everyday Albertans. When the NDP decided to nationalize road tests, we witnessed massive backlogs and delays that were months long, and we all know that economic recovery includes people also being able to get their licences. Minister, could you elaborate on the changes you announced and how they will help alleviate this problem?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we've recounted this a few times, but a couple of weeks before the last election the former NDP government unceremoniously nationalized all the driver examiners and went from over 150 driver examiners down to 77 and created an untenable backlog, which we've been fighting with ever since. We've taken measures to hire up. We've got up to over 200 driver examiners. We actually have more to say, which I hope I'll get a chance to in the next question.

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

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our road testing system should be simple to use, easily accessible, and offer timely access to tests for people who need one. Given that Albertans have had to deal with backlogs and delays for the past several years and given that many have been unable to access a test entirely, Minister, what impact have these changes had since they were implemented, and how will they affect the lives of Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's some good news. From the driver examiners for 4, 5, and 6 that were government employees, about 95 per cent have actually caught on with the privatized system and are working with registry agents right now, and we've gone in my office from people sending me letters every day about not being able to get a test for weeks, months, not even being able to book a test – as of last week I know there was an excess of 20,000 tests available between then and the end of March. It may not be perfect yet, but it's way better than the mess the NDP left us.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the previous government created bottlenecks in the road test system for so long and many Albertans thought the issue would never be resolved, they claimed they were doing it to make sure that road tests were conducted more fairly. Given that road tests are once again offered in the private system, how is the Alberta government making sure that these tests are conducted fairly and with accountability, and how can Albertans trust the road test system?

Mr. McIver: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP blew up the system and nationalized it, they actually ruined the ability of the driver examiners that were left to do a good job for Albertans. About the only thing that we agreed with them on – and they were right about this. There were some problems with the system, but rather than fix the problems, they blew up the whole system and put people out of the ability to get their tests for a couple of years. Now all driver examiners have a government-issued GPS-enabled tablet which keeps track of when they start, when they stop, and provides some consistency and some oversight. We have more inspections. Again, it's not perfect, but it is way better than what the NDP left.

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

Postsecondary Education Funding

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Students graduating in Alberta have amongst the highest debt levels in the country. They're facing increased costs due to the rise of interest rates imposed by this UCP government, and some are facing overall tuition hikes of more than 20 per cent. I wrote to the Minister of Advanced Education to ask him to consider the effects of the budget cuts to postsecondary in a time when we need to give Albertans further access to training and an incentive to stay in the province. Minister, will you commit to Albertans that you will stop the cuts to postsecondary immediately, before it's too late?

2:30

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, we know that supporting our postsecondary institutions right across Alberta is important. We also know that the MacKinnon report clearly stated that we do invest more in postsecondary institutions than other comparable provinces. Tuition is, in fact, the main way students invest in their education at Alberta postsecondary institutions, and this provides significant value for their money right here in Alberta. A postsecondary education greatly improves social and economic outcomes, and we're working on increasing the return on investment for students by strengthening the connection between education and jobs.

Mr. Eggen: Well, given that those same students are facing historic unemployment levels due to the pandemic, making it much more difficult for them to pay this massive increase in tuition, and given that higher tuition, fewer employment opportunities, higher debt

means that over 33 per cent of Alberta students are considering leaving this province to find training elsewhere, it's the responsibility of this government to find ways to retain and attract the best and brightest minds to support Alberta's economic recovery. Minister, will you please commit to making education more affordable to help Alberta students get through this unprecedented . . .

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

Ms Schulz: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Alberta's average degree program tuition is lower than the national average. The average undergraduate degree program tuition in Alberta is \$6,098 in 2020-2021, the national average being \$6,580; the average international undergrad tuition in Alberta is \$27,404; national average, \$32,019; average international graduate tuition here in Alberta, \$14,683; national average, \$19,252.

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, given that Alberta students face the highest debt rates in the entire country and given that this minister and this government are paving over the fact that Alberta students are being literally left out in the cold, unable to go to school because they can't afford it, Minister, will you release – and this is important – the Campus Alberta grant list today so that Albertans can see just how deeply you have cut our 26 universities, polytechnics, and colleges? You didn't release it last year. It will come out sooner or later. You might as well give it to Albertans right now.

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that I can't speak to the budget before it is presented in about half an hour here in the House, but I will remind the members opposite that our undergraduate tuition degree programs are about \$250 below the national average. But what's really exciting: here in Alberta the Minister of Advanced Education is working on Alberta 2030: building skills for jobs. This plan will build a common vision and direction for our higher education system. It will make sure students have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in whatever career path they choose, whether in the arts, skilled trades, or STEM.

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

AgriStability Program

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The economic uncertainty of the past year has revealed just how much we all rely on every level of the supply chain. I'm especially grateful for the work of the Alberta farmers and ranchers. COVID-19 outbreaks throughout the pandemic have increased the amount producers need to pay for feeding their livestock. These uncertainties make it difficult for producers to know their financial future. In response the federal government has changed the formula for AgriStability to provide farmers additional financial security for the next two years. To the minister: can you explain to Alberta farmers and ranchers why you haven't signed on to this deal?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is pointing out a change the federal government has made. I guess I don't know the finer details, but I am sure that the minister of agriculture will have more to say about this down the way.

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

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that it's a partnership between the provinces and the federal government and given that grain is now selling at record high prices and that producers who need to extend the time they feed have more difficulty in profit and the variability of the industry requires stability and given that AgriStability is a business risk management program that can provide that assurance and given that this program is a shared cost with the federal government and Alberta should take advantage of the opportunity to ensure federal dollars are being leveraged to help Alberta farmers and ranchers, again to the minister. I've spoken to so many farmers and ranchers who want this deal. Why aren't you listening to them?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's government is currently considering the proposal by the federal government while also pursuing larger transformational change to better support Alberta's farmers and ranchers. I can assure you – I know your constituents would agree – that when it comes to standing up for the agriculture industry in the province, this government is behind them a hundred per cent and still has not forgotten that hon. member's approach to managing the agriculture industry, when she brought in things like Bill 6, trying to shut down the family farm. Farmers can rest assured we'll continue to stand with them here in the Alberta government and make sure we get the best deal possible for our province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, but the deadline to sign on to the AgriStability has already passed. Given that it is clear the minister has a different business risk management model than AgriStability and given that the current federal proposal is only set for two years, so even if this deal was signed, the minister could still consult and design a program for the future and given that if there's nothing in this budget to provide stability for farmers, then this minister will have a lot of explaining to do and given that these farmers' and ranchers' work is critical to our economic future, to the minister: why not stand up, do the right thing for Alberta farmers and ranchers, and sign on to the AgriStability program?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong yet again. In fact, the federal government is still waiting for a response, not only from Alberta but from Saskatchewan and Manitoba. All three provinces have forwarded concerns. As I said, the minister of agriculture is in conversations with the federal government. We'll ensure that we get the best deal possible for our farming and ranching communities. I understand that the hon. member has a history inside this Chamber of not standing with the agriculture community, but rest assured, this government will continue to stand side by side with farmers and ranchers. We'll stand side by side with them against the NDP's attack on them, and we'll continue to make sure that they get the best deal with the federal government. [interjection]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon has the call.

COVID-19 in Schools

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. COVID-19 is still causing an issue for normal operations and our day-to-day lives. One of the groups that has been hardest hit by restrictions is young people, who rely on school and other activities for social interaction. Ensuring

their safety is a priority, and balance is not easy to find. Students have been back in school for more than a month now after the break that started in December due to high COVID numbers. To the Minister of Education: can you please update us on the current COVID numbers in schools and the effect on operations?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. I'm sure everyone here will be happy to hear that less than 1 per cent of students and staff have active cases of COVID-19. As Dr. Hinshaw has said, we continue to see the number of new cases in school-aged Albertans declining, and we are working really, really hard to keep it that way. We will continue to follow the advice of our chief medical officer of health and her team, and we are ready to make changes to the school re-entry plan if it's needed. We just really, really value her solid advice, and we will continue to make student safety a priority.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that the vaccine rollout is a key part of being able to get back to normal operations of everything from business to schools and given that the Trudeau government has completely mismanaged the procurement and the rollout of vaccines in Canada and given that teachers are vital to the learning of future generations and are asked to constantly be exposed to dozens of children at a time, to the Minister of Health: what priority level are teachers currently at for vaccines in Alberta, and when can they expect them based on current procurement numbers?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health has risen.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that many, many Albertans would benefit from receiving the vaccine, and we want to offer it to them as soon as possible. There is limited supply, though, still, as the member points out, so we continue to target Albertans who are the most at risk of severe outcomes. We've successfully vaccinated, the first province to do so, all residents in continuing care. We're currently vaccinating community seniors over the age of 75. Currently teachers aren't allocated for phase 1 or 2, but some teachers who meet the criteria set out in phase 2 will get the vaccine. That includes any teacher who will be eligible for . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. Given that we supported schools with additional money and resources for COVID response over the past year and given that there are major delays in procurement of vaccines that are being depended on for normal operations and given that there are several variants of the virus that are beginning to appear in Alberta that may cause further issues if they spread further, to the Minister of Education: are we prepared to further support schools and education financially regarding COVID for this year or until vaccines have been sufficiently administered?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education has risen.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The safety and well-being of our staff continues to be our number one priority, and we will continue to support them financially. Alberta's government has made substantive investments in school divisions, with \$120

million in increased operational funding, \$250 million in accelerated capital maintenance funding, of which HVAC and ventilation upgrades were a part. At the end of the 2019-2020 school year school boards reported a total \$384 million in operating reserves, which is an increase of \$21 million despite this unprecedented year. School authorities have had access to about a billion dollars in additional funding. Three-quarters of this was directly funded by Alberta taxpayers. We are proud of that.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that concludes Oral Question Period, but prior to anyone moving, I would beg the indulgence of the Assembly to make a brief statement.

Statement by the Speaker

Table Officer Stephanie LeBlanc

The Speaker: It has been said that those who choose public service deserve our thanks because the system only works when thoughtful and principled people participate. I would like to take a moment to recognize the dedicated service of one of our table officers, Stephanie LeBlanc.

Stephanie joined our team at the Legislative Assembly Office in 2008 as a legal research officer. Within a few years she was serving this Assembly at the table, where she has consistently provided trusted advice over the years. Today is Stephanie's last day in this Chamber, at least for now, as she shifts her focus to her young family. Now, I do know and I do have to warn you members that Stephanie likes to add a little bit of excitement on her last days of things. It wasn't too long ago that she was in the office on her last day before a maternity leave when her first daughter decided it was time to enter the world, giving a whole new meaning to not only a family-friendly workplace but also a work-life balance.

Now, I say that this is Stephanie's last day for now because typically if you talk to any staff about her leaving, their first response is, "Well, maybe she'll come back someday." I certainly share that hope. It's no wonder people think so highly of Stephanie. Here are just a few things that people have to say.

Stephanie is one of the most upstanding professionals that I know, whose sunny disposition always turns a cloudy, dark COVID day into a more bearable one. But more importantly, she is an amazing human who we all have had the pleasure to work with.

In my interactions with her, I could tell you that she is a very intelligent, compassionate, and capable person. When she talks about her family, I can tell you that they mean the world to her.

She's my go-to person for anything and mostly everything as she always knows the answer to my questions or at least where I can find the information.

Stephanie, you have certainly made a lasting impression on all of us and have served the Assembly with admirable dedication and professionalism. On behalf of all members of the Assembly I want to wish you well. Who knows? Maybe you will come back someday, but in the meantime we wish you the very best and hope that our paths cross again.

Hon. members, please thank Stephanie LeBlanc. [Standing ovation]

Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less, we will return to Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West has a statement.

Postsecondary Education Funding

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, Alberta is home to a rich landscape of diverse colleges, universities, and polytechnics. We have a world-renowned postsecondary system, and the New Democratic Official Opposition is here to fight to keep it that way.

Cuts to postsecondary education in Alberta from this government have been putting our institutions at risk and driving students out of our province. This government's cuts decimated our schools even before the COVID pandemic began.

Now, with so many struggling, the government continues to gamble with our postsecondary education and Alberta's future. One of Alberta's greatest strengths is our postsecondary sector. Our schools draw students and faculty from around the world, a system that provides a world-class education and enriches our society with job opportunities and shaping individuals to build our communities and to build our economy.

We don't agree with this government's assessment that our institutions of higher learning are just a line item on a budget, with limited value. Spending resources on postsecondary is an investment that will pay dividends exponentially for years to come. Alberta is home to many quality postsecondary institutions in every corner of our province, and we know that our future depends on increasing access to these institutions and economic diversification, that postsecondary helps to nurture. We must grow and sustain those assets to attract more talent to Alberta to learn and to live in every part of our province. We must work on new and innovative ideas on how to leverage our postsecondary assets and to grow the talent pool here within Alberta, not to slash and freeze out the future for Alberta's students, like this government seems to be trying to do.

COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Mr. Speaker, it is my duty as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to represent my constituents in Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville. I've had many concerns that the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine is moving too slowly. With an aging population in my riding, many are worried about the delay in receiving the vaccine. In fact, I've heard many of the same concerns all over the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is a vaccine shortage across the whole country, and this is due to the failure of the federal government in procuring enough vaccines for distribution to our most vulnerable population. That is why I wrote the federal Minister of Public Services and Procurement on February 12. I voiced my constituents' concerns that the federal government needs to step up and fight for more vaccines for all Canadians. When I sent the letter, Canada was 38th in the world for vaccine distribution per 100 people. There is no excuse that Canada, which is a member of the G-7, is so low on procurement of the vaccine.

After many weeks of waiting for the vaccine, it is good news that this week all of Canada has finally received 640,000 doses. With these new doses and our provincial vaccine distribution plan in place, we are able to distribute vaccines to the most vulnerable. Starting on February 24, we are in phase 1B, which vaccinates Albertans 75 years and older. With continued procurement of the vaccines, we will be able to continue with our provincial vaccination plan. This means that everyone who wants a vaccine will receive it this year.

But we still need the vaccines to be procured by the federal government. The recent doses are great news, but there still is a lot of work needed to be done and many more vaccines needed to be distributed across Canada. My hope is that we continue to receive the necessary doses of the vaccine from the federal government. If

not, I will continue to be the voice for my constituents that need them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Critical Worker Benefit

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The COVID pandemic has put a tremendous amount of strain and stress upon Albertans that work in many critical businesses and sectors. This includes nurses, health care aides, paramedics, school bus drivers; those working in food banks, women's shelters, grocery stores; and so, so many others. These Albertans have put themselves in the path of COVID day after day in order to ensure that the rest of us have safe access to the goods and services that we need to function as normally as possible. It is high time that these workers receive some tangible recognition for their services and their support.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to see the government move forward with the critical worker benefit. The critical worker benefit is a joint federal-provincial program that will see \$465 million going to approximately 380,000 Alberta public- and private-sector workers in the form of a one-time \$1,200 payment. Workers in health care, social services, and education as well as some parts of the private sector defined as critical services such as grocery and pharmacy retail, food processing, transportation, private health clinics, and many others will receive a one-time payment to recognize their hard work and continued dedication to serve and support Albertans throughout the pandemic.

2:50

The critical worker benefit directly shows our government's commitment in ensuring critical workers in both the private and public sectors are taken care of and appreciated during these difficult times. Our government is dedicated to protecting the lives and livelihoods of all Albertans, and this benefit is just one more step in that direction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka has a statement to make.

Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Controlling greenhouse gas emissions, or GHGs, produced by major industrial emitters is fundamental to addressing climate change and enhancing Alberta's economy. There are many options on how to best tackle this issue. I, like many Albertans, don't think new taxes and fines that only make everyday life more expensive are the correct path. When it's minus 35 degrees, taxes shouldn't drive Albertans to have to ask themselves if they can afford to heat their homes.

I believe that the entrepreneurial spirit that runs deep inside the heart of Alberta will be our most effective path to resolving this issue. Entrepreneurs like Zero Emissions Energy Technology, or ZEET Inc., in my riding are blazing the tech trail that may lead us to a more sustainable future. Their proprietary technology, placed in an industrial natural gas facility, can help capture some of the six to 10 million BTUs of fugitive lost energy escaping every hour from a compressor engine's exhaust. Each ZEET unit can effectively capture the annual equivalent of removing 518 cars from the road while reducing energy costs. Fabrication of these units in Blackfalds will benefit their struggling industrial sector.

Innovation in value-added sectors like this will be crucial to Alberta's economic recovery from the triple hit we've received in the

past years. I am proud that our government is acting to return the Alberta advantage. Measures like expediting the job-creation tax cut, lowering the corporate tax rate from 12 to 8 per cent, make Alberta one of the most attractive jurisdictions in North America for investment. Changes in policy like the technology innovation and emissions reduction regulation also take a balanced approach as we move out of these tough economic times. Building on the record level of new capital investment in Alberta's tech sector in 2020, our province is in a unique position to find new and innovative ways to address greenhouse gas emissions while creating jobs and protecting lives and livelihoods for all Albertans.

Thank you.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the appropriate number of copies of the 2021-22 main estimates schedule for the Second Session of the 30th Legislature.

The Speaker: Hon. members, it's time for Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Motions

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Committee Membership Changes

63. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
Be it resolved that the membership of the Assembly's committees be replaced as follows:
- (a) on the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund that Mr. Rowswell replace Mr. Getson and Mr. Rowswell replace Mr. Getson as deputy chair, Ms Issik replace Ms Glasgo, and Mr. Yaseen replace Mr. Turton;
 - (b) on the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices that Ms Rosin replace Mr. Jeremy Nixon, Mr. Smith replace Mr. van Dijken, and Mr. Yaseen replace Mr. Walker;
 - (c) on the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills that Mr. Dang replace Ms Ganley, Mr. Amery replace Mr. Horner, Mr. Rutherford replace Mr. Neudorf, and Mr. Getson replace Mr. Jeremy Nixon;
 - (d) on the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing that Mr. Barnes replace Ms Issik, Ms Ganley replace Ms Pancholi, and Mr. Gotfried replace Mr. Yao;
 - (e) on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that Mr. Guthrie replace Mr. Gotfried as deputy chair, Mr. Walker replace Mr. Gotfried, Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk replace Mr. Barnes, Ms Pancholi replace Mr. Dach, Mr. Neudorf replace Mr. Reid, Ms Lovely replace Ms Rosin, Mr. Singh replace Mr. Stephan, and Mr. Turton replace Mr. Toor;
 - (f) on the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services that Mr. Sigurdson replace Mr. Walker;
 - (g) on the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future that Ms Sweet replace Mr. Dang, Mr. van Dijken replace Mr. Horner, Mr. Rowswell replace Mr. Stephan, and Mr. Walker replace Mr. Toor;
 - (h) on the Standing Committee on Families and Communities that Ms Lovely replace Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Gotfried replace Mr. Jeremy Nixon, and Mr. Smith replace Mr. Yao;

(i) on the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship that Mr. Guthrie replace Ms Fir, Ms Issik replace Mr. Rehn, and Mr. Turton replace Mr. Smith.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion is self-explanatory, and as you can tell, I am clearly not going to be the table officers' replacement.

The Speaker: Hon. members, according to Standing Order 18(1)(h) this is a debatable motion. Does anyone have any additional comments, questions, or debate to be added to the motion?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question.

[Government Motion 63 carried]

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Amendments to Standing Orders

64. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:
- A. Be it resolved that temporary amendments be made to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, effective February 10, 2021, as follows:
- (a) Standing Order 3 is amended
 - (i) in suborder (4) by striking out "(8) or (9)" and substituting "(8), (9) or (10)", and
 - (ii) by adding the following after suborder (9):
(10) Subject to suborder (12), the Speaker may extend a period of adjournment in accordance with suborder (11) if the Speaker is satisfied that either of the following applies:
 - (a) the Assembly should not meet on that specific date or time due to an emergency event;
 - (b) it is in the public interest for the period of adjournment to be extended.
 - (11) The Speaker may extend an adjournment by, after consulting with the Government House Leader and the Official Opposition House Leader,
 - (a) specifying the date and time until which the adjournment is extended, and
 - (b) providing notice of that date and time when the Assembly shall next meet to transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that date and time.
 - (12) A period of adjournment extended under suborder (11) may be superseded by subsequent notification from the Government under suborder (8) that the Assembly must meet.
- (b) Standing Order 5 is amended
- (i) in suborder (1) by striking out "20 Members" and substituting "12 Members", and
 - (ii) by striking out suborder (2) and substituting the following:
 - (2) If, during a sitting of the Assembly, a question of quorum arises, the Speaker shall, on determining that a quorum is lacking
 - (a) order the bells to ring for no longer than 15 minutes,

- (b) conduct a count of the Members present immediately after the bells are rung, and
- (c) if quorum is still lacking on conclusion of the count, declare a recess or adjourn the Assembly until the next sitting day.

B. Be it further resolved that the temporary amendments in this motion come into force on passage and expire at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, June 4, 2021.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the motion is self-explanatory and, I believe, has the support of the opposition.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Government Motion 64 is debatable according to Standing Order 18. Is there anyone else that would like to add to the debate this afternoon with respect to the motion before the Assembly?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question.

[Government Motion 64 carried]

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Bill 211

66. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that Bill 211, Municipal Government (Firearms) Amendment Act, 2020, be moved to Government Bills and Orders on the Order Paper.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a motion to move the hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat's private member's bill, that is currently working its way through the legislative process, that was designed to stand up against the federal government's clear violation of our jurisdiction as a province in an attempt to be able to use municipalities to attack law-abiding firearm owners inside our province. This is something that this government will not tolerate.

Mr. Speaker, I know you're aware of a motion that was passed unanimously in this Assembly, moved by myself, to make it clear that we would stand up for law-abiding gun owners inside this province if the federal government was to continue with their attack on them. It appears that the federal government, unfortunately, is going to do that. As the hon. member has a bill that is already ready to go to be able to stand up to the federal government, the government is going to take the steps of making it a government bill and getting it through the Chamber as fast as possible.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Government Motion 66 is a debatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 18(1)(a). Is there anyone wishing to join in the debate this afternoon?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call the question.

[Government Motion 66 carried]

The Speaker: Hon. members, this afternoon, as you are well aware, will be the Budget Address. In order to allow adequate time to prepare for the Budget Address by the hon. the President of Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance, the House is recessed until 3:15.

[The Assembly adjourned from 3 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order!

The Speaker: Hon. members, please be seated.

Transmittal of Estimates

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

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, I've received certain messages from Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I now transmit to you.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise.

The Speaker: The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required by the offices of the Legislature for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, and recommends the same to the Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required by the government for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, and recommends the same to the Assembly.

Please be seated.

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 2021-22 offices of the Legislative Assembly estimates and the '21-22 government estimates.

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance, do you have an additional tabling to make? Proceed.

Mr. Toews: In addition, Mr. Speaker, I also wish to table the '21-24 government of Alberta strategic plan and the Budget 2021 ministry business plans.

Government Motions

(continued)

Budget Address

61. Mr. Toews moved:

Be it resolved that the Assembly approve in general the business plans and fiscal policies of the government, as presented in the Assembly on February 25, 2021.

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

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, I now wish to table the government's 2021-24 fiscal plan and move Government Motion 61.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present Budget 2021 to this House. It's a budget that is focused on what matters most today, on health care and jobs. Today marks the first in a series of one-year anniversaries for Alberta that are unlike any other in this province's history. Today and in the weeks and months to come we will pass the one-year mark of unprecedented events that have shaken our province, our country, and the world and continue to test our collective resolve. A year ago, on the day I presented Budget 2020, a dispute amongst OPEC Plus countries tore the bottom out of energy prices. At the same time, the government of Alberta was already closely monitoring an emerging epidemic originating out of Wuhan, China.

3:20

Through the first months of 2020 and into March this government began planning for the onset of what was ultimately declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. As a cabinet we considered the different strategies, from containment to mitigation, and we reflected on the information and advice of Dr. Deena Hinshaw, our chief medical officer of health. Mr. Speaker, the scale of the required response to the pandemic was unpredictable. What

was immediately evident to the Premier and to all of cabinet, however, was the need to prioritize the protection of lives and livelihoods of Albertans during this period of great uncertainty. These twin priorities of our pandemic response would overtake all other plans and aspirations that we as a government may have had for our province for the foreseeable future, and it heightened our focus on our third priority, fiscal accountability, by ensuring adequate funding support to meet the challenges of the pandemic while laying the groundwork for Alberta's economic recovery when we emerge from this global human health crisis.

COVID-19 has challenged health care systems around the world, including ours. This government recognizes that protecting the capacity and function of our health care system is essential if it is to be available to deal with COVID-19 and all other health issues that require attention. I want to thank the Minister of Health and his officials and everyone working in the health care sector. To our nurses, doctors, long-term care workers, comfort workers, contact tracers, and support staff: your efforts are appreciated. You deserve our thanks and that of all Albertans. It became clear to this government early on that the disease would not be controlled until we'd achieved widespread vaccinations and immunity. In the meantime we've continued to achieve our goal of bending the curve in the infection rate to ensure that our hospitals are not overwhelmed.

Our government has adopted an approach that strikes a balance between the actions necessary to limit the spread of the disease and the need to keep our economy functioning, but, Mr. Speaker, there can be no mistake that the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic have been profoundly difficult. Some have lost their lives or that of a loved one, more have lost their livelihoods, and many have lost their hope. Throughout the pandemic there has been a vigorous debate about how best to manage this catastrophe. Some have perceived this as a binary choice to either keep the economy open or save lives. From the beginning this government chose to trust that our fellow citizens would do the right thing in following public health advice and orders, and the vast majority have. We chose to respect our fellow citizens, the everyday Albertans who work hard and make significant contributions to the economy of this province and that of the country. They pay for our health care system and our system of social supports, and they help maintain the social fabric of our province. Trusting and respecting our fellow citizens has been the basis for our balanced approach to managing the pandemic.

When economies around the globe fell like dominoes last March, this government set out transparent benchmarks for managing the pandemic. Principally, we focused on the key metric of hospital capacity. In March we implemented public health restrictions that effectively bent the curve even while we kept much of our economy open. Indeed, roughly 85 per cent of Alberta businesses were permitted to remain open in the spring of 2020, representing 96 per cent of our economy by GDP. When we returned to a public health emergency last November and then implemented further public health restrictions two weeks later, in December, we did so with the knowledge and lessons learned in the first wave. Those were incredibly difficult decisions that nobody at our cabinet table ever wanted to make, but we did so to protect the health care system and prevent it from being overrun.

Mr. Speaker, when we presented our first budget in October 2019, it fulfilled our platform commitment to maintain the health care budget. We continued to honour that commitment in Budget 2020, and when the global pandemic was declared, we immediately added half a billion dollars to health care. Since March 2020, in addition to the highest per capita spending on health care compared to other large provinces, we've spent what was necessary to fight

COVID-19. With Budget 2021 we continue that fight. While the ongoing vaccination effort provides hope that victory is within reach, we know that we have several hard months still ahead.

Mr. Speaker, while we're unable to predict with precision the duration and cost of fighting the pandemic in the upcoming year, Budget 2021 includes a COVID-19 contingency provision of \$1.25 billion for the next fiscal year. These are emergency funds that supplement the existing and considerable base budget of the Ministry of Health, bringing our total expected spending on health care for Albertans to \$23 billion.

Mr. Speaker, it's become clear that even after we beat the pandemic, there will be a residual need for extra resources in health care. In spite of the best efforts by Health, the pandemic will leave a longer list of Albertans waiting for necessary surgeries and procedures. To fund this and other postpandemic pressures, Budget 2021 provides over \$900 million in increased base funding for health for the duration of the fiscal plan.

Before the onset of the pandemic the Ministry of Health was well under way with a review of Alberta Health Services. The minister publicly released the results of that review, but its implementation has been on hold while we've focused on managing COVID-19. In the coming months, as we beat back COVID and return to our normal lives, work to improve our health care system will resume. We will not have the luxury of avoiding the prepandemic fact that per capita health care spending in Alberta is well above the national average. We will continue implementing the AHS recommendations to ensure our system is patient-centric and efficient, with costs more on par with those of other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that COVID-19 has proven to be exceptionally difficult for those on the margins of our society. This government will continue to consider the unique needs of high-risk and vulnerable people in our COVID response. Budget 2021 continues support for these Albertans today and throughout the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, to date in this pandemic we've provided almost \$5.9 billion in financial relief and supports to businesses in Alberta. That includes a grant program for small businesses directly affected by public health measures which is providing over \$700 million in needed support, support that is keeping businesses open and helping them survive.

Mr. Speaker, we were among the first jurisdictions to respond to the economic consequences of the pandemic with immediate measures to free up cash for employers. We deferred corporate income taxes to provide Alberta businesses with access to \$1.5 billion to pay their employees, their rent, and continue operating. We deferred WCB premiums for all private-sector employers and committed to covering half of the 2020 premiums for small and medium-sized businesses. Utility payments were deferred. The education property tax was frozen and deferred. We abated tourism levy payments and Alberta Energy Regulator fees, and this was all within days of the first measures of our province.

Throughout the pandemic I've had nothing but admiration for Alberta businesses that quickly adapted to our new reality. Those efforts along with the actions of government helped protect us from the worst possible economic outcomes. They've contributed to the strong foundations from which we've been able to build a comprehensive approach to recovery.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board I consider responsible fiscal management my core priority. As the minister with this fundamental responsibility I want to share a critically important fiscal reality. Economic recovery and growth will be essential to get this province to fiscal balance. That priority has acted as a beacon while we've navigated this crisis. That is why we accelerated the full implementation of our job-creation tax cut as part of our recovery plan. That is why we've kept

a laser focus on regulatory modernization and red tape reduction, efforts that earned Alberta an A grade from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business this year, thanks to the good work of our Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction. This is great progress considering the members opposite left this province with an F at the end of their term. With our preferred business tax rates, vastly improved regulatory environment, low cost of living, and world-class affordable commercial space we've created an incredible value proposition. In fact, you could say that we've created a special economic zone, and it's called Alberta.

As part of the recovery plan we added \$1.4 billion in 2020 to our capital plan for construction projects to position the province for future economic growth and to provide immediate opportunities for unemployed Albertans. Core infrastructure and projects that would improve our competitiveness and productivity were prioritized. Projects included core capital maintenance and new necessary infrastructure, improving transportation corridors, health care and education facilities, and utilities upgrades.

3:30

Mr. Speaker, our capital stimulus in 2020 has already created thousands of jobs and is laying the foundation for future economic growth. The 2021 capital plan furthers our government's commitment to recovery, with 41 new projects and ongoing support to stimulus funding outlined in the recovery plan, with a \$1.7 billion increase from the previous budget and a three-year total capital spend of \$20.7 billion. This will create opportunities for private-sector participation and support more than 50,000 direct and 40,000 indirect jobs through to 2024.

The 2021 capital plan will build roads and bridges, overpasses, water projects, gas lines, schools, hospitals, long-term care homes for seniors, addiction treatment centres, tourism infrastructure, and agriculture and natural resources projects that will help develop and protect Alberta's distinctive resources and support environmental sustainability. We are aggressively pursuing every area where Alberta has a competitive advantage in private-sector investment and job growth.

I want to reflect for a moment on why Alberta businesses, regardless of their size, are so vitally important. Mr. Speaker, Alberta businesses do more than employ Albertans. They provide meaningful work and fair pay to citizens across the province. We know from research that working is vital for good health. It promotes independence and personal achievement, supports healthy social engagement and connection. There is pride and great purpose in meaningful work and in providing for oneself and one's family.

When I released Budget 2020 a year ago, it included a new Alberta jobs plan that identified key areas for growth in the Alberta economy. We did not know then what we know now, that the jobs plan would constitute another fundamental element of our recovery plan. Mr. Speaker, around me today are colleagues who've worked tirelessly on developing sector-specific plans that will grow and diversify Alberta's economy. Budget 2021 will provide funding for these sector strategies to ensure Albertans have a competitive edge as economies reopen, growth restarts, and opportunities reappear. In the coming weeks the details of each of these strategies will be provided to Albertans, and we'll be focused over the coming months and years on implementation, adaptation, and progress on those plans.

Many people talk about economic diversification, but they are often not precise about what they mean or what they believe it will achieve. Some suggest that diversifying the economy requires a transition from our traditional sectors such as energy. Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. That is not this government's position. Oil and

gas are still among the most productive and highest paid industries in the nation. The sector's commitment to continuous improvement has created today's high tech, highly productive, and efficient industry.

The average greenhouse gas emissions intensity of an oil sands barrel declined 22 per cent over the past decade. Moreover, leading producers are on track for further reductions of 16 to 23 per cent over the coming decade. Well, from Alberta's oil and gas sector it's been a key factor in the continuous improvement of the standard of living of all Canadians, and it has provided a foundation for economic diversification in Alberta, spurring technological innovation, providing wealth for further investment, consumer spending, and benevolence. Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear. Economic diversification is a key component in economic recovery and a key priority for this government, and it includes a strong and innovative energy sector.

Mr. Speaker, I've said it before, and it bears repeating today. A robust economy and real wealth creation is built on the effort, investment, and ambition of its citizens and businesses, and government's role is to provide a business environment that encourages that entrepreneurial spirit of its people. Not in our lifetimes have business investment and private-sector growth been more important, so our government will continue to create the most competitive business environment in the country, and for that we will make no apology.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's also be clear about the challenge that we face as a province and as a nation. Even before COVID, Canada experienced investment decline of almost \$165 billion since 2014. The biggest obstacle to recovery may be our own national government, which has layered on regulatory requirements, created investment uncertainty, chased away the investment that maintains family-supporting jobs, and is now increasing the costs of our most vital national economic drivers. The federal government's 240 per cent increase in the carbon tax will disproportionately hit key Alberta sectors, including agriculture, in ways that we've not yet fully calculated. We do know that trade-exposed sectors in Canada may be particularly vulnerable, and moving the carbon tax to \$170 per tonne cannot be seen in isolation. If we're going to ensure prosperity for future generations of Albertans and Canadians, we must reverse the trend of investment decline, and we must have unity of purpose in positioning the nation for economic recovery.

So far achieving unity of purpose has been elusive. That has been reflected in the federal government's unilateral approach to fiscal stabilization. As members know, changes to the program were announced as part of the most recent federal fiscal update, changes that fall far short of fairness. Mr. Speaker, Alberta has contributed hundred of billions of dollars to the federation in recent decades, and we cannot continue to see the same federal government arrogance and unilateralism as it develops plans to spend billions of dollars on economic recovery. A strong Canada needs a strong Alberta, so I would ask the federal government to respect Albertans' priorities, whether that is further technological innovation in our oil and gas sector or broadband to serve rural Albertans or fairness in fiscal stabilization or other initiatives that are defined by Albertans for Alberta.

Budget 2019, the first budget of this government, put the province on a credible fiscal path to balance by 2023, a commitment we made to Albertans in our platform. Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear with Albertans. While balancing the budget remains a high priority for this government, the pandemic and the resulting economic realities have significantly impacted the revenues of the province and will delay the timing of a balanced budget.

When I released the mid-year budget update last November, it included a set of fiscal anchors. These anchors will guide and

inform government decisions and ensure we're best positioned for fiscal recovery. First, we will bring our spending in line with that of other provinces on a per capita basis. In its report the MacKinnon panel told us that for years Alberta has spent more per capita than comparable provinces without achieving better outcomes. We began taking steps to bring spending down in 2019, and outside of our pandemic response we've made good progress, but there's more to do.

Second, we will keep our debt manageable by keeping Alberta's net debt-to-GDP ratio below 30 per cent. GDP is a measure of economic output and has a strong correlation to a jurisdiction's own ability to generate revenues. The ratio indicates a government's ability to repay its current debt and reflects its balance sheet's strength. The higher the ratio, the greater the burden on government to repay.

Third, once we see our way clear of the pandemic, we will present a clear path and timeline for balancing the budget.

Mr. Speaker, to put the province on a trajectory for fiscal recovery, perhaps the most important fiscal anchor is to align Alberta's spending levels and outcomes with those of comparative provinces and take actions to be at least as efficient. All governments face tough choices. In Alberta for too long governments avoided that fate. The public sector grew. Costs escalated. Even in years with \$100-per-barrel oil governments in this province could not balance the budget. While our spending has temporarily and necessarily risen to meet the challenges of the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis, Budget 2021 continues the long-term expenditure trajectory laid out in our first budget, Budget 2019, and will align our spending with that of comparator provinces within the term of the fiscal plan.

3:40

One area where we can no longer delay is addressing a public-sector salary structure in Alberta that has for decades been an outlier compared to that in other provinces. Mr. Speaker, I want to address public-sector workers directly. To each and every Albertan who works in the public sector I say thank you for the work that you do. Many of you have gone above and beyond your regular responsibilities, responding to needs created by the pandemic. Your contribution matters, and it has not gone unnoticed. However, addressing public-sector salary structure is required to protect government services and ensure a sustainable fiscal trajectory for the province, and it's a decision supported by significant data that shows the many ways our compensation is greater than that of other provinces. Perhaps if previous governments had shown restraint, we would not have had to confront this issue, but, simply put, we no longer have the revenue to justify higher comparative wages, especially at a time when many Albertans throughout this province have either experienced a wage reduction or lost their jobs entirely. That reality has further impacted government's revenue, revenue that pays for services and for the wages of public servants.

We see other governments here and abroad rapidly escalating their debt. We have had to do so ourselves over the past year and over the course of this fiscal plan. We do so reluctantly, Mr. Speaker, and with clearly articulated fiscal anchors that mitigate against excess and position the province for fiscal recovery because we know that every time we borrow money, we are taking away opportunity and potential from future Albertans. We know that while many want to believe that interest rates will stay low forever, we must anticipate what rising interest rates will do to the repayment of debt here in Alberta and in Canada.

It's critical that Alberta students receive a world-class, high-quality education, and that starts with stable funding for school authorities. Our commitment to stable and predictable education funding is why we introduced the new K to 12 funding model in

2020. We remain committed to providing school authorities with the resources they require to support safe learning for all Alberta students. Approximately \$130 million will be provided to school authorities in COVID mitigation funding that would have been removed from the education system because fewer students enrolled in the 2020-21 school year.

As we protect our funding in education and even increase our funding in health, we are also continuing to find ways to bring the cost of public services in Alberta more in line with those in other provinces. Those are tough choices, and I want to thank my colleagues on Treasury Board, who worked so diligently over the last several months to help make those decisions.

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2021 demonstrates that we are committed to sustainability, to adequate funding for necessary programs that is better calibrated to the costs in other jurisdictions and maintains our net debt-to-GDP ratio under 30 per cent. That is a sustainable path. Sustainability means that we've assessed what the future generations can bear, and we believe they can maintain these levels of benefits without the need for levels of taxation that will undermine productivity, prosperity, and personal aspiration. When taxes are too high, they discourage work, they undermine personal savings, they chase away investment, and they suffocate innovation.

Mr. Speaker, this budget announces no new taxes or tax increases. To those who would suggest that we should simply raise taxes, I say no. Raising taxes at the best of times impedes economic growth, and with the challenges we face today, it would undermine the economic recovery that is so essential.

While a third-party review of the efficiency and appropriateness of a revenue structure will be important in the future, our immediate fiscal focus is on growing the economy and delivering government services most efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, I sometimes think about what might have been. I think about how if past governments in Alberta had maintained fiscal discipline, we could have increased holdings in the heritage fund, reduced or eliminated ongoing deficits, and avoided massive debt. We cannot change the past, but I'm committed to learning from it. I ask all Albertans to reflect on this: if we know that past excesses were ill-conceived and have left us depleted, then let's apply that wisdom to our decisions today. Together we will make better choices that consider the fortunes of future Albertans.

When you look at the totality of the budget I'm presenting today, Mr. Speaker, everything we are doing is to support that goal: supplementing the budget of the Ministry of Health to ensure continued effective pandemic response and to shrink surgical wait-lists, which have grown; protecting education funding and enhancing financial literacy in classrooms; keeping government costs in check so we can keep the tax burden on Albertans low and not impede economic recovery; ensuring that we have the most competitive business environment to position the province for investment attraction and sustainable economic diversification; supporting strategic sectors; positioning the economy for diversification and growth; continuing with strategic infrastructure projects to employ Albertans now; seeking a fair deal within the federation to fight for the interests of Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, over this last year there are countless Alberta stories of resilience, innovation, and compassion, and we've witnessed Alberta's famous entrepreneurial spirit rise to the occasion. People are betting on Alberta by launching new business ventures, from fishing gear rentals in Edmonton, opening a new restaurant in the city's historic Transit Hotel building, or perfecting the process to recycle plastic waste into fence posts in Vermilion. Orpyx Medical Technologies, a Calgary-based company, will create up to a hundred jobs and provide over 40 million locally made medical

masks to Alberta Health Services. That entrepreneurial spirit is fundamental to economic growth, so in spite of our present affliction, I remain very hopeful for the future of this province.

As Alberta's government we have worked hard to create an environment for growth, and we are seeing those efforts bear fruit. Alberta has favourable demographics, including the youngest population among provinces, and population growth is expected to remain above the national average after 2021.

In just the first three quarters of 2020 Alberta has attracted a record \$304 million in venture capital investment. That's higher than the previous full-year record, and 2021 looks even better.

Tech companies like mCloud Technologies are moving their headquarters to Alberta and plan to hire many more Albertans. Symend quintupled its workforce to 250 employees in the last year and plans to double that this year. Neo Financial plans to undertake significant hiring this year, with 70 positions currently open. Jobber plans to hire 200 more people. There are many more examples. Big Rock Brewery announced an \$8.8 million capital plan focused on strategic IT investments that will position western Canada's largest independent brewer for sustainable growth.

Mr. Speaker, there are also numerous positive economic indicators in Alberta's foundational industries. Solid activity in the North American housing market continues to bode well for lumber prices and exports of forestry products. Crop exports are forecast to remain strong again this year following a blockbuster production year in 2020. The livestock sector is poised to benefit from improving market prices and food service demand, and a growing global population will continue to drive growth in agrifood exports.

In Alberta energy investments in oil and gas and renewables are forecast to increase, and projects are set to begin or resume construction this year, including Greengate's \$500 million solar power project and BHE Canada's \$200 million Rattlesnake Ridge wind project.

Mr. Speaker, while President Biden's cancellation of the Keystone XL permit was incredibly disappointing, there remains a bright future for the oil and gas industry in the province. With critical pipeline construction moving forward on Enbridge line 3, Trans Mountain expansion, and Coastal GasLink, we're getting closer to fixing the egress issue that has held back industry investment for years. TC Energy's NOVA Gas Transmission and Pembina Peace pipeline expansion are both set to go ahead in 2021. This will further debottleneck the system and will result in increased industry investment and job opportunities for Albertans.

3:50

This government along with Canada Infrastructure Bank and eight irrigation districts have partnered on a historical \$850 million

investment in irrigation infrastructure to support economic recovery in Alberta. The investment is expected to lead to the expansion of over 200,000 irrigated acres. These events will propel real manufacturing exports to grow by 4 per cent this year and 3.5 per cent over the medium term.

Mr. Speaker, the resilient and generous nature of Albertans is part of the very fabric of our province, and it's no surprise, then, in these unusual and challenging times that those very traits were so evident in communities from one end of Alberta to the other. In my community, for example, the Salvation Army kettle fund exceeded its annual goal by over \$270,000. Mobile flower trucks were routinely sold out as local businesses bought flowers for every senior in nearby care homes, and schoolchildren formed parades to brighten the day of those who were shut in. A Calgary landlord notified all tenants in a three-storey walk-up that rent was free for December, and an elderly veteran's bill was paid by a stranger who said: God bless veterans; lest we forget. I have to mention the 91-year-old who shovelled his neighbour's driveway. Most significant, however, were the small acts of kindness, ingenuity, and generosity that didn't make the headlines but made a world of difference in the life of a neighbour, a stranger, or a community.

Mr. Speaker, there are tangible reasons for hope and optimism. While we can be confident that better times and economic growth will return, we cannot be certain about the full time frame of that return to normal. Let me assure you: Alberta's government will remain nimble to respond to emerging needs. We will be transparent in the midst of uncertainty. We will continue to follow through on our commitments so that every Albertan can feel confident as we continue to navigate through these challenging times together.

Mr. Speaker, we will stick with Albertans every step of the way.

The Speaker: The hon. the Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn the Assembly until Monday, March 8, at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:53 p.m. to Monday, March 8, at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 2nd Session (2020-2021)

Activity to Thursday, February 25, 2021

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 Sitings.

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.*), 791-98 (*May 27, 2020 morn., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 859-91 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed*)
Third Reading — 861-69 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 cC-32.7]

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.*), 1004-09 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1238-44 (*Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 1364-70 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 c9]

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.*), 933-35 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft.*), 970-72 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1040-43 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve.*), 1077 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1257-66 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1311-16 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1442 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1452-55 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c14]

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 — 827 (*May 27, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 858-59 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 891-99 (*May 28, 2020 aft.*), 972-76 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1266-72 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1370-75 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve.*), 1406-11 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft.*), 1413 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1479-81 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1539-40 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1636-37 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., adjourned*), 1678-79 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c16]

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 with amendments*)

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

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force 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 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 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 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 on division)

Royal Assent — (May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force 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)

Second Reading — 937-54 (Jun. 1, 2020 eve.), 1011-40 (Jun. 2, 2020 eve.), 1058-67 (Jun. 3, 2020 aft.), 1228-38 (Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1375-78 (Jun. 15, 2020 eve.), 1470-79 (Jun. 17, 2020 eve.), 1541-51 (Jun. 22, 2020 eve.), 1575-88 (Jun. 23, 2020 aft.), 1620-25 (Jun. 24, 2020 aft.), 1639-47 (Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 1657-59 (Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force September 1, 2020; SA 2020 c11]

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

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

Second Reading — 954-70 (Jun. 1, 2020 eve.), 1109-12 (Jun. 3, 2020 eve.), 1127-35 (Jun. 4, 2020 aft.), 1179-81 (Jun. 8, 2020 eve.), 1209-22 (Jun. 9, 2020 aft.), 1285-96 (Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 1428-29 (Jun. 16, 2020 eve.), 1455-59 (Jun. 17, 2020 aft.), 1551-55 (Jun. 22, 2020 eve.), 1588-90 (Jun. 23, 2020 aft.), 1647-50 (Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 1676-78 (Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 26, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c18]

Bill 17 — Mental Health Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1125 (Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 1203-09 (Jun. 9, 2020 aft.), 1272-74 (Jun. 10, 2020 aft.), 1316-23 (Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1396-1406 (Jun. 16, 2020 aft.), 1413 (Jun. 16, 2020 eve.), 1461-70 (Jun. 17, 2020 eve.), 1605-08 (Jun. 23, 2020 eve.), 1630-36 (Jun. 24, 2020 aft.), 1650-54 (Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 1675-76 (Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed)

Royal Assent — (Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; certain sections come into force on June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c15]

Bill 18 — Corrections (Alberta Parole Board) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 912 (Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 989-1004 (Jun. 2, 2020 aft.), 1011 (Jun. 2, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1413-24 (Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 1655 (Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c12]

Bill 19 — Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 989 (Jun. 2, 2020 aft, passed)

Second Reading — 1079-98 (Jun. 3, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1424-28 (Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 1495-97 (Jun. 18, 2020 aft.), 1555-56 (Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c17]

Bill 20 — Real Estate Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1057 (Jun. 3, 2020 aft, passed)

Second Reading — 1125-27 (Jun. 4, 2020 aft.), 1169-79 (Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 1185-90 (Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 1279-85 (Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c10]

Bill 21* — Provincial Administrative Penalties Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1181-85 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1296-97 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve.*), 1355-57 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft.*), 1442-52 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1819-22 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1983-99 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2071-74 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2264-68 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2020 cP-30.8]

Bill 22 — Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (Hunter)

First Reading — 1301-02 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1591-95 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve.*), 1655-57 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1798-1804 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1879 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1939-57 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 1965-66 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2050-51 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2053-59 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c25]

Bill 23* — Commercial Tenancies Protection Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1392 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1529-35 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft.*), 1601-05 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1879-80 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 2181-83 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020, with certain sections taking effect March 17, 2020; SA 2020 cC-19.5]

Bill 24 — COVID-19 Pandemic Response Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1537-39 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1569-75 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1625-30 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1679-81 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020, with certain sections taking effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c13]

Bill 25 — Protecting Alberta Industry From Theft Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1719-35 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1804-05 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1904-05 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft.*), 2031-32 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c24]

Bill 26 — Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1735-41 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1764-72 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1845-56 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1964-65 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2081-86 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c20]

Bill 27 — Alberta Senate Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1741-47 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1772-79 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1822-27 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1899-1904 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1999-2001 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2074-76 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2076-81 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c19]

Bill 28 — Vital Statistics (Protecting Albertans from Convicted Sex Offenders) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1619 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1704-17 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft.*), 1779-82 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1856-60 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1880-82 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1896-99 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c26]

Bill 29 — Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 1619-20 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1784-97 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1962-63 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2163-81 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2239-64 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force September 1, 2020; SA 2020 c22]

Bill 30* — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1695 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1783-84 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 2032-37 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2086-2103 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve.*), 2189-97 (*Jul. 20, 2020 eve.*), 2210-27 (*Jul. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2289-96 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2313-28 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2360-61 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Committee of the Whole — 2432-475 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2512-20 (*Jul. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2523-31 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 2539-61 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2562-69 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force July 29, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c27]

Bill 31 — Environmental Protection Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1878 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2023-31 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2233-39 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2309-12 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force July 23, 2020; SA 2020 c21]

Bill 32 — Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020 (Copping)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1861-63 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2003-23 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2051-53 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2059-69 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2147-62 (*Jul. 20, 2020 aft.*), 2268-73 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve.*), 2296-307 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2328-40 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2361-63 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Committee of the Whole — 2404-32 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2475-85 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2502-12 (*Jul. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2531-39 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed*)
Third Reading — 2569-78 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2579-86 (*Jul. 28, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c28]

Bill 33* — Alberta Investment Attraction Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1760-61 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1807-19 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1927-37 (*Jul. 13, 2020 aft.*), 2117-27 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2227-31 (*Jul. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2233 (*Jul. 21, 2020 eve.*), 2340-44 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2312-13 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve.*), 2363-65 (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 2401-04 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2485-88 (*Jul. 27, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 29, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 cA-26.4]

Bill 34 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1966-69 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 2116-17 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 2117 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 2312 (*Jul. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jul. 23, 2020 aft.*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c23]

Bill 35 — Tax Statutes (Creating Jobs and Driving Innovation) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 2616 (*Oct. 20, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 2666-81 (*Oct. 21, 2020 aft.*), 2741-55 (*Oct. 26, 2020 eve.*), 2803-15 (*Oct. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2841-47 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2860-69 (*Oct. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2940-43 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 2986-94 (*Nov. 3, 2020 eve.*), 3072-83 (*Nov. 5, 2020 aft.*), 3126-36 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve.*), 3208-12 (*Nov. 17, 2020 eve.*), 3265-72 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve.*), 3361-65 (*Nov. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 3834 (*Dec. 7, 2020 eve.*), 3886-92 (*Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Third Reading — 3900 (*Dec. 8, 2020 eve.*), 3903-09 (*Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, with certain sections having effect on various dates; SA 2020 c40]

Bill 36 — Geothermal Resource Development Act (Savage)

First Reading — 2616 (*Oct. 20, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2696-2706 (*Oct. 22, 2020 aft.*), 2755-60 (*Oct. 26, 2020 eve.*), 2925-29 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 2974-78 (*Nov. 3, 2020 aft.*), 3121-24 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3224-32 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft.*), 3292-94 (*Nov. 19, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 3336-42 (*Nov. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 cG-5.5]

Bill 37* — Builders' Lien (Prompt Payment) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 2665 (*Oct. 21, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2774-84 (*Oct. 27, 2020 aft.*), 2828-38 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3024-29 (*Nov. 4, 2020 aft.*), 3031-48 (*Nov. 4, 2020 eve.*), (*Nov. 24, 2020*), 3398-3401 (*Nov. 24, 2020 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 3529-30 (*Nov. 25, 2020 eve.*), 3544-45 (*Nov. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c30]

Bill 38 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 2665-66 (*Oct. 21, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2795-2800 (*Oct. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2838-41 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft.*), 2884-93 (*Oct. 29, 2020 aft.*), 2960-65 (*Nov. 3, 2020 aft.*), 3124-26 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3232-36 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft.*), 3419-24 (*Nov. 24, 2020 eve.*), 3503-13 (*Nov. 25, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3611-14 (*Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, with exceptions, and with section 6 taking effect January 1, 2021; SA 2020 c37]

Bill 39* — Child Care Licensing (Early Learning and Child Care) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schulz)

First Reading — 2827 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2883-84 (*Oct. 29, 2020 aft.*), 2929-40 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 2979-86 (*Nov. 3, 2020 eve.*), 3206-08 (*Nov. 17, 2020 eve.*), 3272-76 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3357-61 (*Nov. 23, 2020 eve.*), 3401-09 (*Nov. 24, 2020 aft.*), 3411-19 (*Nov. 24, 2020 eve.*), 3513-25 (*Nov. 25, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 3685 (*Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force February 1, 2021; SA 2020 c31]

Bill 40 — Forests (Growing Alberta's Forest Sector) Amendment Act, 2020 (Dreeshen)

First Reading — 2696 (*Oct. 22, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2784-93 (*Oct. 27, 2020 aft.*), 2800-03 (*Oct. 27, 2020 eve.*), 2849-59 (*Oct. 28, 2020 eve.*), 2965-74 (*Nov. 3, 2020 aft.*), 3136-38 (*Nov. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3424-27 (*Nov. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3606-11 (*Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force May 1, 2021, with exceptions; SA 2020 c34]

Bill 41 — Insurance (Enhancing Driver Affordability and Care) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 2882 (*Oct. 29, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2915-24 (*Nov. 2, 2020 eve.*), 3011-23 (*Nov. 4, 2020 aft.*), 3051-58 (*Nov. 4, 2020 eve.*), 3164-73 (*Nov. 17, 2020 aft.*), 3255-65 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve.*), 3276 (*Nov. 18, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3679-85 (*Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3700-07 (*Dec. 2, 2020 morn.*), 3753-58 (*Dec. 2, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, except part of section 3, which has effect January 1, 2022; SA 2020 c36]

Bill 42 — North Saskatchewan River Basin Water Authorization Act (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 2907 (*Nov. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 3009-11 (*Nov. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 3048-51 (*Nov. 4, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 3072 (*Nov. 5, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 cN-3.6]

Bill 43 — Financing Alberta’s Strategic Transportation Act (McIver)

First Reading — 2956 (Nov. 3, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3150-64 (Nov. 17, 2020 aft.), 3276-80 (Nov. 18, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3594-3605 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve.), 3687-3700 (Dec. 2, 2020 morn.), 3721-33 (Dec. 2, 2020 aft.), 3751-53 (Dec. 2, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 3784-88 (Dec. 3, 2020 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 cF-13.5]

Bill 44 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 2956 (Nov. 3, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3115-21 (Nov. 16, 2020 eve.), 3354-57 (Nov. 23, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3591-93 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 3685 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 c33]

Bill 45 — Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Allard)

First Reading — 3006 (Nov. 4, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3175-79 (Nov. 17, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3525-29 (Nov. 25, 2020 eve.), 3654-65 (Dec. 1, 2020 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 3685 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force January 1, 2021; SA 2020 c38]

Bill 46 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Shandro)

First Reading — 3071 (Nov. 5, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3176-92 (Nov. 17, 2020 eve.), 3342-54 (Nov. 23, 2020 eve.), 3459-65 (Nov. 25, 2020 morn.), 3614-22 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve.), 3675-76 (Dec. 1, 2020 aft.), 3788-93 (Dec. 3, 2020 aft., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 3823-34 (Dec. 7, 2020 eve.), 3853-60 (Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed)

Third Reading — 3869 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve.), 3872-79 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c35]

Bill 47 — Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020 (\$) (Copping)

First Reading — 3070-71 (Nov. 5, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3192-206 (Nov. 17, 2020 eve.), 3236-45 (Nov. 18, 2020 aft.), 3367-73 (Nov. 24, 2020 morn.), 3427-41 (Nov. 24, 2020 eve.), 3445-59 (Nov. 25, 2020 morn.), 3622-28 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve.), 3630-42 (Dec. 1, 2020 morn.), 3743-51 (Dec. 2, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Committee of the Whole — 3763-70 (Dec. 3, 2020 morn.), 3893-3900 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Third Reading — 3901-02 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve.), 3910-16 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; SA 2020 c32]

Bill 48* — Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Hunter)

First Reading — 3096 (Nov. 16, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3247-55 (Nov. 18, 2020 eve.), 3387-98 (Nov. 24, 2020 aft.), 3441-43 (Nov. 24, 2020 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3665-75 (Dec. 1, 2020 aft.), 3733-40 (Dec. 2, 2020 aft.), 3759-62 (Dec. 2, 2020 eve.), 3834-36 (Dec. 7, 2020 eve.), 3861-68 (Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed on division)

Third Reading — 3869-70 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve.), 3879-86 (Dec. 8, 2020 eve., passed on division)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on December 9, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c39]

Bill 50 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2020 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 3502 (Nov. 25, 2020 aft., passed)

Second Reading — 3545-52 (Nov. 26, 2020 aft., passed)

Committee of the Whole — 3587-91 (Nov. 30, 2020 eve., passed)

Third Reading — 3677-79 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve.), 3685 (Dec. 1, 2020 eve., passed)

Royal Assent — (Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 c29]

Bill 201 — Strategic Aviation Advisory Council Act (Gotfried)

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*)
Second Reading — 914-26 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1156-61 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft.*), 1337-47 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft, passed*)
Third Reading — 1514-22 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 31, 2020; SA 2020 cS-19.8]

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*), 1149-56 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly;*), 1156 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., not proceeded with on division*)

Bill 203 — Pension Protection Act (Gray)

First Reading — 1148 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly; not proceeded with*)

Bill 204 — Voluntary Blood Donations Repeal Act (Yao)

First Reading — 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 2288 (*Jul. 22, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)
Second Reading — 2379-93 (*Jul. 27, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Committee of the Whole — 2720-33 (*Oct. 26, 2020 aft.*), 2908-09 (*Nov. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 3096-3103 (*Nov. 16, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 c41]

Bill 205 — Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month Act (Singh)

First Reading — 2718 (*Oct. 26, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3070 (*Nov. 5, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)
Second Reading — 3103-08 (*Nov. 16, 2020 aft.*), 3307-14 (*Nov. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 3813-14 (*Dec. 7, 2020 aft., adjourned; amendments introduced*)

Bill 206 — Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Glasgo)

First Reading — 2827 (*Oct. 28, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3223-24 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft, reported to Assembly*)
Second Reading — 3314-21 (*Nov. 23, 2020 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 207 — Reservists' Recognition Day Act (Rutherford)

First Reading — 3224 (*Nov. 18, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3719 (*Dec. 2, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Bill 208 — Alberta Investment Management Corporation Amendment Act, 2020 (Phillips)

First Reading — 3782 (*Dec. 3, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)

Bill 209 — Cost of Public Services Transparency Act (Stephan)

First Reading — 3806-07 (*Dec. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 211 — Municipal Government (Firearms) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glasgo)

First Reading — 3849 (*Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 212 — Official Sport of Alberta Act (Yaseen)

First Reading — 3849 (*Dec. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr1 — The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Edmonton Repeal Act (Williams)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 3292 (*Nov. 19, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)
Second Reading — 3629-30 (*Dec. 1, 2020 morn., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 3740 (*Dec. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 3740-41 (*Dec. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Dec. 9, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 9, 2020; SA 2020 c42]

Table of Contents

Prayers	3917
In Memoriam	
Mr. James Douglas Henderson, January 2, 1927, to June 29, 2020.....	3917
Mr. Leonard Barry Pashak, April 21, 1937, to February 3, 2021	3917
Hon. Elaine J. McCoy, QC, March 7, 1946, to December 29, 2020.....	3917
Government Motions	
Physical Distancing in Legislature Chamber	3917
Committee Membership Changes.....	3929
Amendments to Standing Orders.....	3929
Bill 211	3930
Budget Address	3930
Members' Statements	
Critical Worker Benefit	3918, 3928
Economic Recovery and the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout.....	3918
Pilots Ken Fowler and Hannelie Eder.....	3918
Racism Prevention.....	3919
Pink Shirt Day	3919
Postsecondary Education Funding.....	3928
COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution.....	3928
Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction.....	3928
Oral Question Period	
COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout	3919
Government Members' Remarks on COVID-19	3920
Government Members' and Staff Members' Travel.....	3920
Critical Worker Benefit	3921
Working Parents Benefit	3921
Energy Strategies.....	3922
Carbon Offset Program.....	3923
Coal Development Policies	3924
Support for Small Businesses Affected by COVID-19.....	3924
Driver's Licence Road Tests	3925
Postsecondary Education Funding.....	3925
AgriStability Program	3926
COVID-19 in Schools	3926
Statement by the Speaker	
Table Officer Stephanie LeBlanc	3927
Tabling Returns and Reports	3929
Orders of the Day	3929
Transmittal of Estimates	3930

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

For inquiries contact:

Editor

Alberta Hansard

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875

E-mail: AlbertaHansard@assembly.ab.ca