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The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

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Day 107

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Second Session

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Independent: 3

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

10 a.m.

Tuesday, June 1, 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.

Please be seated.

Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 72

Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act

[Adjourned debate May 31: Mr. Singh]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-East has 10 minutes remaining should he choose to use it.

Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and offer a few thoughts of my own and on behalf of the constituents of Edmonton-Gold Bar with respect to the Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act. I think it's important to recognize from the very beginning that this bill represents yet another profound failure of the government to effectively manage the province of Alberta.

You know, it was interesting, Mr. Speaker. A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to listen to the CBC West of Centre podcast on which the former, I believe, chief of staff or press secretary for the Premier of Alberta, one Katy Merrifield, was on and opining on the competence of government members here in the province of Alberta. In fact, she said that at least 20 per cent of the government caucus shouldn't be trusted to run a lemonade stand in the summertime. The only thing that was shocking to me about that statement was how low a number she estimated had that level of incompetence.

Ms Glasgo: Point of order.

The Speaker: Hon. members, a point of order has been raised.

The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Ms Glasgo: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a very early point of order. It seems like we're starting off just great today, right ducky. Under 23(h), (i), and (j), this member is clearly trying to cause disorder within the House. We haven't even gotten five minutes into debate this morning. If we could just try to keep a modicum of decorum, that would be appreciated.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that very clearly the hon. member is quoting from some material that I'm sure he would be happy to table a transcript of, if possible, but certainly I think that it's relevant to debate. He's using it to drive home a point regarding the bill, and I think that's important.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Well, thank you for your interjections. I, unfortunately for the NDP Opposition House Leader, couldn't disagree more because while he was quoting, he then went on to say that he was surprised that the percentage that that individual had referred to was not higher, certainly then providing his opinion about members of the government, which, as we saw this morning at 10:02, may have had some sort of record there. Congratulations to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Certainly, that did create disorder. I think that it would be advantageous for everyone if he kept his comments primarily to the content of the bill and not about the individual members of the Assembly.

The hon. member.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you for your guidance, as always, Mr. Speaker.

Debate Continued

Mr. Schmidt: The point that I was trying to make is that this bill represents a colossal failure of the government to adequately manage the public affairs of the province of Alberta because we are here completely by mistake. The government proclaimed this piece of legislation as its first act as a cabinet. You know, they swore in their members in Government House, marched upstairs to the meeting room, and proclaimed this piece of legislation as their first act of business, which was a mistake on its own merits, in my view. Not only did they proclaim the piece of legislation, thereby triggering a whole bunch of court challenges from the province of British Columbia, which we knew and the government should have known was going to come; they also forgot to read the legislation, apparently, because the legislation expired at the end of April.

It appeared to me, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier wasn't even aware that that was the case until it was raised in a press conference and he was asked about what he was going to do with respect to this piece of legislation and the fact that it had expired. Had the government been on top of what was going on here, we wouldn't be in the position of needing to debate this piece of legislation in the first place, so it's a failure in its own right. But this is only part of an overall larger failure on behalf of the government of Alberta to effectively manage the natural resources and the economy of the province of Alberta, because this piece of legislation represents one part of a so-called four-part fight-back strategy that the Premier enumerated sometime in, I believe, 2018.

Before he was in the position that he is now, he was outlining his plan for the people of Alberta to apparently defend Alberta's oil and gas industry against people who wish it harm, and that whole fight-back strategy was founded on a complete fiction. The fiction went something like this, that there was a collaboration or co-operation between U.S. oil and gas interests and environmental groups to prevent Alberta from selling its oil and gas resources at market prices. There are some variations of this conspiracy theory, Mr. Speaker. Some of them include the current Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and the former Premier, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, as co-conspirators with the U.S. oil and gas interests and environmental groups to land-lock Alberta's resources.

That was the underpinning of the approach that the government said it was going to take to manage our natural resources and return

jobs and prosperity to the province of Alberta. All we had to do was fight back against this conspiracy, and then the jobs would return and prosperity would return and everything would be right in the world again. They built a fight-back strategy based on this conspiracy theory, Mr. Speaker, that had four parts. One part was this Bill 72, that we're discussing here today. The other three parts were also colossal failures, along with the government's mismanagement of this particular piece of its fight-back strategy.

One pillar of the fight-back strategy was the development of the war room. The big idea was to spend \$30 million a year on a propaganda campaign aimed at combatting so-called misinformation that was coming from these conspirators who wanted to see Alberta's resources landlocked. That war room, that \$30 million, has been an abject failure. Right from the beginning, Mr. Speaker, it has caused embarrassment to the people of Alberta. We don't have to go into detail about all of the missteps that the war room has made, but from day one, when they selected their logo, they embarrassed the people of Alberta. They basically copied and pasted another trademarked logo and tried to use it as their own.

They foolishly attacked the *New York Times*, probably the most well-respected newspaper in the entire world. They had the hubris to think that a failed UCP candidate would be able to take on the *New York Times* in the public forum and win in a fight of public opinion against that. Just a few months ago they turned their eyes to the Bigfoot movie which was released on Netflix, which up until that point had been a flop. Because the war room made such a stink about it, it turned into one of the most viewed movies on Netflix.

10:10

Those are just the three failures with respect to the war room that come to mind. Meanwhile it would be one thing, Mr. Speaker, if the war room were causing embarrassments from time to time but jobs were returning and the energy industry were booming again, but that's not the case.

Part 2 of their fight-back strategy was commissioning an inquiry into the funding that was being provided to environmental groups, which we now call the Allan inquiry. The idea was that the people need to know what's going on with the funding of these environmental groups, to get to the bottom of the story here. The government believed its own conspiracy theory about collaboration between U.S. oil and gas groups and environmental groups conspiring to land-lock Alberta's resources. By hiring their friend Steve Allan, they were going to get to the bottom of this. The truth was going to be set free, and the people would finally know exactly who the enemies of Alberta were. It turns out, two years and \$3.5 million later, that the Steve Allan inquiry has no report to publish, and the minister gets extension after extension. He hasn't actually yet, as far as anybody knows, talked to any of these people who are supposedly under investigation.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, we don't even know certainly that the inquiry is actually independent, as it was purportedly set up to be. Again, on the same podcast – this podcast has created a lot of problems for the government – Donna Kennedy-Glans claims to have spoken to Steve Allan in private conversations. She says that, according to what he has told her, the work of the inquiry is a never-ending negotiation between the Minister of Energy and him, which is not how public independent inquiries should be conducted. Independent inquiries should not be getting direction from the government whatsoever. We may be in the absurd position of having to launch an inquiry into the inquiry just to see if, in fact, they were as independent as the government claims. So that's part 2 of this government's failed fight-back strategy.

Part 3 was the creation of a litigation fund that the government was going to set up to allow anybody who wanted to litigate on

behalf of energy projects that were being tied up in the courts. Now, after they were elected, they narrowed the scope of that litigation fund somewhat and limited it to First Nations groups who wanted to intervene into court challenges with respect to energy developments. They set aside \$10 million for that fund. How much of that fund has been used, Mr. Speaker? It was interesting. We were at Public Accounts I believe in November 2020, and we asked exactly that question: how much of the litigation fund has been spent? The answer? Forgive me; I don't have the exact number in front of me, but it totalled a few hundred thousand dollars. Of the \$10 million that they purported to spend in their fight-back strategy plan of developing a litigation fund, 2 or 3 per cent of the money available was even used. This was free money. There are no strings attached. If you're a First Nations group and you want to litigate in favour of an energy project, the government will trip over itself to give you the money. Nobody wants it. That was part 3 of the failed strategy.

Now we have part 4, Bill 72, which, as I said at the beginning of my comments here this morning, was proclaimed at the wrong time and was let to expire apparently by mistake, by complete oversight.

Not only did they fail completely, not only is their fight-back strategy a complete failure on its own, just by examining the record, it hasn't even correlated to an improvement in the energy industry. We have over 200,000 Albertans right now who are unemployed, many of them long-term unemployed. Many more than that don't even show up in the employment statistics because they've given up looking for work, Mr. Speaker. That's what happens when you build a plan to manage the province of Alberta that's founded completely on a fiction. The people of Alberta are out hundreds of millions of dollars with nothing but embarrassment to show for it.

There were some other things not explicitly laid out in the fight-back strategy but that were also intended to protect Alberta's economic prosperity, return jobs to the province of Alberta. The corporate tax cut was one, reducing the corporate taxes from 12 per cent to 8 per cent.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General has risen.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't just sit here and watch the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar spew all the stuff he has to say on Bill 72. The truth is that the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has been protesting pipelines as far back as we can remember in this province.

Mr. Schmidt: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order has been called.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, I know that it's only been about 20 minutes since you ruled on 23(h), (i), and (j), on using language that's intended to create disorder in the House. The Minister of Justice just stood up and said, "The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has been protesting pipelines" since – I can't remember the time frame that he used. I challenge the Minister of Justice to find a single example of me protesting pipelines, and if he can't, then he should apologize and withdraw those statements.

The Speaker: The Member for Cardston-Siksika has risen.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pot, meet kettle. I rise to challenge that point of order. Though I understand that the hon.

Minister of Justice's comments might be frustrating and annoying to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, such that his comments can be similar to members on this side of the Chamber, I do believe that the hon. Minister of Justice, though without the benefit of the Blues, was referring generally to a caucus that has been against Alberta's energy sector from the beginning, particularly knowing that a number of members on that side of the Chamber have attended anti-oil rallies since being elected in this Legislature. Again, without the benefit of the Blues I wouldn't be able to comment on the specific wording – I'll leave that up to you – but I don't think there's a point of order, certainly a matter of debate. Rather, if the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar wants to call points of order on language that he finds offensive or maybe, you know, slightly inappropriate, he might want to look at his own scripts and follow his own counsel.

10:20

The Speaker: Hon. members, I am prepared to rule. The interesting point of this particular ruling is that I disagree with both of you. Specifically, hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika, it's very apparent that the Minister of Justice was speaking specifically about the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar and his previous track record on a particular issue. Having said that, the difference between the previous point of order and this one is that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, I would suggest, insulted the intelligence of members of the government, and in this case the hon. the minister was referring to things that the member may or may not have done, which certainly could be considered a dispute of the facts or a matter of debate.

Having said that, I will provide the same caution to the hon. Minister of Justice as I provided to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, that perhaps if members were to stick to the content of legislation and not individual actions or otherwise, the decorum will surely rise.

Debate Continued

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly do appreciate that. You know, sometimes we sit in this Assembly and we hear things on matters of public interest, matters that affect our province, and we hear members on the opposite side represent their views publicly on those issues. So there is no doubt to anyone in this particular province that the members opposite, the NDP as a political party, have opposed pipelines in this province. They have zero credibility when it comes to fighting for Alberta's critical energy sector. Zero credibility.

Although they may want to stand before the floor of this Assembly and spew otherwise, Albertans see them for who they are, a political party with sister political parties at the federal level and in B.C. that have consistently pursued actions, activities, protests – you name it – against Alberta's critical oil and gas sector, to the point where, you know, they have filed a lawsuit. The majority of members opposite as a political party – as a political party – have protested against Alberta's pipelines. Those are facts. So Albertans . . .

Ms Pancholi: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is called. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Point of Order

Language Creating Disorder

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Minister of Justice just did exactly what you cautioned him against. He just

indicated that members of the opposition protested against pipelines. I believe you just provided a caution against doing that. So I ask you to once again caution this minister on 23(h), (i), and (j). He's causing disorder, and he's done exactly what you just cautioned him against.

Mr. Schow: What a lively crowd we have this morning, Mr. Speaker. I certainly believe that this is a matter of debate. Though in the previous point of order the hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General was referring to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, in this instance he's referring to the opposition caucus in general. There is no direct comment. [interjections] I believe I do have the floor.

The Speaker: Order. Order. There's no debate of a point of order in the middle of a point of order.

Mr. Schow: I believe I do have the floor. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon. member, while I appreciate the interjection, I just provided caution. There is no reason for you to continue in that vein. I'm happy to hear the intervention, but I will deal with other members of the Assembly. You deal with you.

Mr. Schow: Certainly. In this instance, Mr. Speaker, I will deal with this, well, not a point of order. That is what I believe. Again, the Minister of Justice was referring to the opposition caucus, who on a number of occasions has opposed pipelines. He's simply stating a fact. I believe it's a matter of debate in terms of a point of order. If you need to go further down the road . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. The members of the government caucus sat idly by while the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud defended the point of order, which is her right. I also think that it's the member opposite's right to be able to make his arguments free from interjection of heckling. During a point of order it's not conducive to increasing decorum for that to continue.

The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not a point of order; matter of debate. Two words: Leap Manifesto. Deny it. Maybe we can move on.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I am prepared to rule on this particular point of order. There is often much consternation and frustration inside the Assembly and much political to and fro on a wide variety of issues. From time to time members of the opposition make accusations about members of the government and things that they may or may not do or may or may not believe. This is the crux of our democracy. One team feels strongly one way; another team feels strongly in the generally opposite direction.

The hon. Minister of Justice was corrected for referring to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar in previous positions that he may or may not have held. In this case, very specifically he referred to that party, the members of the opposition in a collective, not as a singular. That in its nature creates a matter of debate. Members may not like that. I know that members of the opposition make claims about members of the government that they also don't like. But this is the crux of what we do here.

I encourage members – this is the challenge. When we get away from discussing the core matter of legislation – and many members in the Assembly do that, both on the government side and on the opposition side – we often end up here, with the Speaker playing a role that he would prefer to not play.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Pancholi: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: A point of order is called.

Ms Pancholi: I'd like to seek clarification under Standing Order 13(2).

The Speaker: I provided at least 30 seconds of clarification.

Ms Pancholi: I'd like clarification.

The Speaker: There is no requirement for clarification. I provided it.

The Minister of Justice.

Debate Continued

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, again, this is classical for what we have come to expect in this Assembly. That's what we do here, to be able to point out as a political party, as a government, an opposition so that the people of Alberta will know where we stand on issues.

Mr. Speaker, Energy East was cancelled by the federal government in 2017. Guess whose political party was in office in 2017? The NDP. They said nothing. They did nothing. They did not protest with the federal government on the cancellation of a project that would have injected billions of dollars in the Canadian economy and in Alberta's economy. They stood silent, and they would want us to all of a sudden develop amnesia and forget their record.

Mr. Speaker, a point of correction: Energy East was cancelled in 2017. Northern Gateway was cancelled in 2016. Guess whose political party was in office in Alberta? The NDP. Again they stood in this province and in this Assembly and they did nothing. That project would have injected \$7.9 billion in Canada's economic critical infrastructure.

Keystone XL, vetoed by the Biden administration: the members opposite stood before the floor of this Assembly, did nothing, said nothing. In fact, many of them cheered the Biden administration for cancelling Keystone XL.

Mr. Speaker, here we are again. These members are standing here to talk about Bill 72. In other words, the crux of the argument is: why should Alberta pursue legislation, you know, to send one into any province in this country that would dare undermine our energy and gas sector?

10:30

Mr. Schmidt: Tell us why it expired.

Mr. Madu: We did. That legislation expired.

But guess what, Mr. Speaker? The NDP put forward similar legislation, in their classical nature, just for virtue signalling without proclaiming that particular bill, knowing full well that they had no intention whatsoever. It is a classical virtue signalling act of platitude, yet they want us to sit here, to think that they support our energy and gas sector. Far from it, and the people of Alberta know that.

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

Ms Phillips: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise on Bill 72. I've been sitting here thinking about what this bill should actually be called. I'll start with the title in providing my comments on it. Certainly, this bill is designed to replace a piece of legislation that was allowed to expire. There are certain sections of

this bill that are different than the piece of legislation that the government allowed to expire.

I think the first place to start here is that it's very clear that we are having to have this conversation right now because no one in the policy co-ordination office, the Deputy Minister of Energy's office, the DMO, no one on the legislation review committee of cabinet, the Minister of Energy, the Premier himself, Executive Council: no one there read the bill that they proclaimed. No one. So we are in this situation now where we have to have a new bill because everyone just didn't make it to the final pages of a piece of legislation that was, in any event, actually quite a small piece of legislation. It was only a few pages.

Now, this is very similar to that bill that they allowed to expire because they did not read it, and it's useful to remember why we had that bill that had passed this House but had not been proclaimed. When the government proclaimed it, a bill that they could have simply – if they actually wanted to, you know, make sure that it stayed on as a piece of legislation, they could have amended it, taken out the expiry date, for example. But that would have meant that they read it first. The reason why that bill existed was that in and around the time of ensuring that the Trans Mountain pipeline got built, there were a number of different back and forths with the government of British Columbia, with whom we disagreed quite pointedly on the merits of the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, the expansion of its capacity. Through a number of different initiatives we sent that message loud and clear. One of them was this piece of legislation, that was there to be used as a tool should other strategies not pan out.

But the fact of the matter is that they did. We had the federal government purchase the line. In fact, the government of Alberta did ensure some GOA financial support to that project as well through a number of different negotiations and through a market access committee of cabinet, of which I was a part because I myself felt very strongly and continue to feel, in fact, that the Trans Mountain pipeline is an important piece of infrastructure for Alberta's continued economic prosperity, to coin a phrase which is in fact the title of this act.

You know, certainly, the contents of this legislation are relatively noncontroversial, to me, anyway, as a member in this place, given that at the time I supported the piece of legislation that we passed. I supported the other measures that were taken by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona in her capacity as Premier at the time. I supported my colleagues and industry as well in ensuring that I contributed in every way I could to the Market Access Task Force. I was someone who made these representations, you know, in the media across the country in both official languages. When it was a difficult conversation, when it was an easier conversation I was there to ensure that Alberta's interests were in fact represented.

We are in a situation now, today, Mr. Speaker, where we have guaranteed long-term contracts on TMX for 80 per cent of the expected volumes. The project itself was trying to work out – they've had some construction pauses. I was just reading that Ian Anderson, CEO, was just making a presentation to the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce. They have had an interruption sort of earlier, either earlier this year or in late 2020, and some problems with contractors. Indeed, they had a death on a work site and a very serious injury. I was pleased to see that Mr. Anderson and the contracted company in charge of ensuring that the pipeline gets built took those events extremely seriously because, of course, every worker needs to come home at the end of the day.

It appears that between about 20 and 30 per cent of the pipe is now constructed. That has been finalized. Most of the permitting, even at the municipal level, has proceeded apace through 2020 and into 2021. I was just having a look on the CER website, and it

appears that, you know, while there still seem to be some motions and other appeals being brought forward by the city of Burnaby and some others, which is to be, I suppose, expected, given their previous positions, the fact of the matter is that the regulatory agencies and, of course, the courts have serially responded to those applications by dismissing them, and that is good news.

I went and had a look for construction jobs. While that is a little bit difficult to tease out during COVID in 2020 because some of the work sites were ordered to reduce their number of workers, and so on, I did find a construction industry report that indicated that in 2019-2020 in the province of British Columbia, anyway, there would be 13,000 construction jobs between TMX, LNG, other public infrastructure, and it's possible that that was including some site C construction as well. Most of the construction appears to be – I would happily be corrected by Ian Anderson and his team who are overseeing the project. Most of the Alberta construction appears complete at this point that we now contemplate this legislation, in June 2021.

I would be remiss as well if I did not indicate that there are a number of negotiations and indigenous partnerships happening with this project along the route and in various ways. That, too, is a positive development. It was certainly seen as something of a priority by our government, and as we engaged the federal government, we ensured that every single time we talked to them, we talked to them about some of those community benefits. We talked to them about: if they were going to be the project owner, they should do so in a way that reflected an economic reality in Canada in the 21st century, that is to say that our economic benefits are as broadly shared as possible.

Those are certainly some of my thoughts on the merits of the TMX project. Really, the genesis of this bill when we passed it spoke to attempting to remove some of the uncertainty for TMX. But as I have just updated the House, the fact of the matter is that the vast, vast, vast majority – I would say about 99 per cent – of the uncertainty has been removed for the TMX project now that we are three years, I guess, later than when this conversation really necessitated us passing the protection of our resources bill through this House.

10:40

I note it is curious, Mr. Speaker, that this is a project that is of key national interest. This is why we prevailed upon the federal government to purchase it and take away all of the investor risk that had been presented by a number of different actions by the government of British Columbia at the time and some of the municipalities, and so on. There's no question that it is an important piece of infrastructure, of energy infrastructure, of transportation infrastructure.

I once heard a thing. It was a TC Energy – at that time they were TransCanada – official at a National Energy Board hearing. I once heard him refer to his company as – he said: well, you know, we're truckers. I always liked that metaphor. We transport things, right? Certainly, the Trans Mountain pipeline is scheduled to transport bitumen of a diluted variety. In its current state there is nothing to say that volumes of more upgraded, partially upgraded, or refined products could not make their way through that pipeline.

Indeed, there is an opportunity, I believe, for the government of British Columbia to work really productively with the refinery at Burnaby to ensure that that refinery has access to volumes that are carried through the TMX line, thus ensuring high-quality energy industry jobs in Burnaby and in the Lower Mainland. You know, Burnaby is a working class city. I've spent some time there, and it is an area where good refinery jobs support families, pay mortgages.

Ultimately, you know, obviously, we want more upgrading and refining jobs here in Alberta. I think that's of various kinds, whether it's of our diluted bitumen, whether it's of our conventional oil, or whether it's in the natural gas space, positioning Alberta for that postcombustion future that we know is going to be fast upon us.

You know, there are ways that the government of British Columbia and the city of Burnaby, and so on, could ensure that they are creating good energy industry jobs in the Lower Mainland, and they should. They should do that, Mr. Speaker. The fact that this government hasn't had conversations with the government of British Columbia on that or the federal government or the refinery at Burnaby, which, I believe, has been purchased by Parkland – it was Chevron; I would happily be corrected on that matter – is just a lost opportunity, quite frankly.

The pipeline is being built. We've never heard this government update the House on the number of good-paying jobs either along the route in Alberta or construction jobs in British Columbia, and that, too, is a curious silence. On this piece of infrastructure that is so important to Alberta there's been just radio silence from the government of Alberta on its benefits to our economy, and that's too bad, especially given, you know, the fact that Alberta's economy is recovering the slowest of anywhere in Canada. I was just reading this morning that our labour compensation is the lowest in Canada, our unemployment is the second-highest in Canada. One would think that celebrating TMX might be on the agenda, but it has not been.

This piece of legislation is indeed weaker, Mr. Speaker, than what was on the books before, and it is weaker in a few interesting ways that I believe the government should remedy. You know, I think, too, that reveals that these pieces of legislation really shouldn't be a way for the government to go back and sort of play the hits of their campaign slogans. These should be ways that we are protecting jobs, ensuring more upgrading and refining, ensuring the strength and long-term sustainability of energy jobs, in the broadest conception of that phrase, Mr. Speaker. That's why this legislation is, in fact, disappointing, but it can be fixed.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available if anyone has a brief question or a comment. The hon. the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the Member for Lethbridge-West speaking to Bill 72 and am glad to hear that the Member for Lethbridge-West would support key critical energy infrastructure. That's a welcome development, and I hope that, going forward, they can join us in making sure that we pursue and build all of the critical infrastructure that our key energy sector needs in order to create jobs and prosperity for our people, for our province, and indeed our entire country.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, the record doesn't bear that out. You know, those who were protesting against our energy and gas sector, who were protesting to shut down our pipelines were energized, they were strengthened. Between 2015 and 2019 they were strengthened so much that there's hardly ever a single day or week that I don't read about a group of individuals attacking our oil and gas sector, attacking a particular pipeline. Guess whose government was in office during that particular period? The NDP, the Alberta NDP. They sat down and did nothing and strengthened all of those individuals and organizations, whose sole aim was to devastate Alberta's oil and gas sector, and by so doing, they caused hundreds of thousands of jobs to flee our province, caused billions of dollars to flee our province, caused investors to doubt whether or not this province is still that particular place you could come to and invest and create wealth. That was the record, and I don't ever want the

people of this province to ever forget that, and I am confident that they will not forget that.

It is good, finally, that sanity is beginning to prevail, and I hope that the members opposite continue on that particular path because that is precisely what our people expect of them. Any political party that claims to pursue Alberta's best interests must also pursue the support of our economy and our critical infrastructure. It's so critical. There is no question in my mind that governments across the globe can pursue, can defend their vital economic interests whilst also making sure that we preserve and protect our environment and climate. You can do both, and we can do both. The idea that we can't do both is pathetic.

On this side of the aisle we have sought from day one to strike that particular right balance between making sure that we provide jobs and economic opportunities for our people whilst making sure that we protect the environment and protect our climate. We have done so without undermining our jobs and economic prosperity. The NDP, the members opposite, did not do so for the four years that they were in office, and that is why two major critical infrastructure pipelines were cancelled while they were in office, and they offered no word, nothing. That is why we have seen lawsuits from organizations that support them, filing lawsuits against an inquiry that will ensure . . .

10:50

Mr. Dang: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: A point of order has been called. The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Sub Judice Rule

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate your guidance today, that has already been given, but I think that currently the hon. minister is referring to issues that are possibly before the courts and under the sub judice rule. I would request that you advise him to refrain from doing so.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Listen, I think that if anyone in the Assembly knows the provincial government's position on sub judice and what it may or may not constitute and invokes the principle of sub judice, it's likely the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General. He needs to govern himself, at his own peril, if there is an issue around that.

Debate Continued

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the point I was making is this. We have said time and time again that organizations that the members opposite have aligned themselves with and backed on protests and who have taken actions, civil disobedience, to undermine Alberta's oil and gas sector – I want them to understand that that is not in the interest of our province, our economy, our prosperity as a people. Let them stand with us.

Finally, the federal government is realizing that pipelines are critically important, and, as we speak, they are in court fighting the state of Michigan, who is working so hard to shut down Enbridge's line 5. For 67 years that pipeline has safely delivered, you know, crude oil and oil and gas to the United States and major parts of the east without any complaints.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for the NDP to work with us.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join the debate on Bill 72. As has already been indicated, this bill was originally introduced by us in May 2018 in response to roadblocks by the B.C. government on Trans Mountain. Certainly, our government stood strongly in support of the oil and gas industry despite the rhetoric we hear from the other side of the House repeatedly and what we've just heard from the Minister of Justice.

To demonstrate that, I'll just make a quote here from our Minister of Energy at the time:

Every day, we're leaving money on the table due to a lack of pipeline capacity, and that needs to stop.

We've said all along there would be no surprises for [the] energy sector, and we've engaged with them throughout this process. The powers in this legislation are not powers Alberta wants to use, but we will do so if it means long-term benefit for the industry, for Alberta and for Canada.

Certainly, in the face of the ongoing challenges that were threatening the construction of increased pipeline capacity, the Alberta government – that was us at the time, in 2018 – acted to defend the energy industry.

This is about protecting the jobs and livelihoods of thousands of Albertans and [our] ability to keep Canada working.

It's simple – when Alberta works, Canada works. We did not start this fight, but let there be no doubt we will do whatever it takes to build this pipeline and get top dollar in return for the oil and gas products that are owned by all Albertans.

That was the Premier in, you know, the 2015 to 2019 government, the NDP government.

You know, it is always disturbing to me, Mr. Speaker, that we hear all the time from the current government that we, of course, care little about the oil and gas industry and much more negative comments than that repeatedly, and it is just absolutely untrue. I grew up in the north, in a little oil and gas town in the Peace Country. My brother works for the oil and gas industry. My father, certainly, as a sheet metal journeyman worked very closely with, did much service for the industry. I have many friends, other family members – and I'm just one person in this caucus. Many of us have those same stories, that we, in fact, are very close to the oil and gas industry.

So this rhetoric that we're hearing all the time that, you know, we're all protesting all the time, that we're standing against it – I mean, these two examples that I've spoken about, about our time in government, certainly are just two examples. There are many more. I just am grateful that *Hansard* is recording this and that, really, the truth can be told, because it's not what the UCP are saying and it's not how we operated as government. Of course, that is the spin that they like to give, but it's just not the truth, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, the roadblocks put in place by the British Columbia government have caused great concern and uncertainty and hurt investor confidence, so of course we as the government at the time did absolutely step up in defence of our oil and gas industry. We know that the delays impacted hundreds of thousands of jobs, that are so important to Albertans, that put food on the table, roofs over their heads across Alberta. It's very important, so we stood very strongly, and we stood up against British Columbia regarding that.

You know, it seems that the UCP has sort of bad-news story after bad-news story. It must be hard to keep their heads up because it seems like – even this morning I was reading the newspaper. Now there's a new Leger poll that's out that says that 4 out of 5 Albertans view our Premier unfavourably. They don't like his policies, they don't like what he's doing, and they think he should resign. It must be devastating to be in the government benches right now because there has been bad-news story after bad-news story. Certainly,

Albertans are not feeling supported by this government and are very concerned about what's happening in Alberta.

Certainly, we know that we do have work to do with all of Canada, and one of the things that our NDP government did during our mandate was to have a campaign titled Keep Canada Working, where instead of sort of yelling at Ottawa, yelling at Justin Trudeau, fighting with everyone, we actually educated Canadians and moved the discussion to a more positive one about the oil and gas industry. That campaign, that we invested in and that we worked on with other Canadians to educate, moved the dial from about 40 per cent of Canadians supporting Trans Mountain to 70 per cent, and that's a significant move of the dial. I would suggest to my UCP colleagues that this kind of action, this kind of work to educate and actually listen and go to other Canadians to help them understand the importance of our industry is the better way to go instead of attacking and, you know, just condemning everyone else. It can shift people's thinking if you take the time to listen and actually shift the debate.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Private Bills Second Reading

Bill Pr. 2 The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021

The Speaker: The Member for Lethbridge-West.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of Bill Pr. 2, The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, this private bill has come about by request of the United Church of Canada. They have provided service to Canadians for over a century and were incorporated by an act of Parliament in 1924, and given the overlap of provincial jurisdiction with respect to property legislation there has to be coinciding legislation in every province, Mr. Speaker. That is what this bill addresses. I thank the United Church of Canada for their efforts working with Parliamentary Counsel in drafting and providing answers to members' questions at the Private Bills Committee.

11:00

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, I am prepared to ask the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West to close debate should she choose to do so.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to provide one or two brief comments, first of all, I would like to thank the United Church of Canada for reaching out to me to move this bill on their behalf. Of course, this sort of legislation is these days somewhat perfunctory when it moves through a provincial Legislature and through Parliament, but what this bill actually represents is the church updating its governance structure after six years of consultation with the folks who deliver services to congregations as well as the congregations themselves. I want to thank the United Church of Canada for their very careful work on this and indeed their contributions to communities around the province and indeed across Canada.

One of the congregations that I have certainly attended is their services at McKillop United in the city of Lethbridge. They provide an affirming congregation. They provide a number of different supports to vulnerable people. They are a very, very bright light in terms of a progressive presence for people to gather in the city, and

I thank them for that. I suppose that's potentially why they asked me to move this legislation. I am pleased to do so.

I'm pleased to now close debate, and I thank all of the hon. members for their assistance in helping the United Church of Canada update their governance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 2 read a second time]

Private Bills Committee of the Whole

[Ms Glasgo in the chair]

The Acting Chair: Hon. members, I would like to call the committee to order.

Bill Pr. 2 The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021

The Acting Chair: Are there any comments, questions, amendments to be offered with respect to the bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The clauses of Bill Pr. 2 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Acting Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Chair: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report Bill Pr. 2.

[Motion carried]

[The Speaker in the chair]

Ms Glasgo: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill: Bill Pr. 2.

The Speaker: Hon. members, does the Assembly concur in the report? Please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. In my opinion, the ayes have it. That is carried and so ordered.

The hon. Deputy Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request the unanimous consent of the House that notwithstanding Standing Order 77(1) we move immediately to third reading of Bill Pr. 2.

Thank you.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Private Bills Third Reading

Bill Pr. 2 The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Lethbridge-West, I appreciate that there may be no desire to provide much content, but I do need you to ask or to at least move the third reading of Bill Pr. 2.

Ms Phillips: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to rise now and move third reading of Bill Pr. 2, The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call on the Member for Lethbridge-West to close debate, or she can waive it if she chooses.

Ms Phillips: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will now close debate on Bill Pr. 2.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 2 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 72

Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act (continued)

The Speaker: There are approximately eight minutes remaining should the Member for Edmonton-Riverview like to use them.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore is next.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise this morning here and provide some opening comments on Bill 72, Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act. You know, I guess I should say that I do find the title interesting, talking about preserving Canada's economic prosperity, when clearly we've seen this UCP government struggle to simply preserve Alberta's economic prosperity. Trying to, I think, expand that view to Canada is a bit ambitious. Perhaps, maybe, they should focus on securing ours before worrying about anything a little bit bigger.

Essentially, what we have here with Bill 72 is something that is similar to a bill that the previous NDP government brought in around the whole topic of the Trans Mountain pipeline. That bill, of course, was used to essentially insist that TMX must be built and give Alberta the opportunity to get its product to tidewater. You know, as I've listened to some of the debate here this morning, I find it, I guess, a little bit humorous, some of the thoughts held by the UCP towards the NDP's position on pipelines.

11:10

As an individual who comes from the labour movement, Mr. Speaker, I'm all for good union jobs. They tend to pay better. There are better benefits. There are better working conditions, safety conditions, things like that. I guess that when we talk about the whole topic of TMX, I think it's a very, very large, annoying thorn in the side of the UCP because when you look at that discussion, it shows very, very clearly that we were in favour of pipelines, especially me, like I said, as a union person. They're good unionized jobs. So to sit here and potentially insinuate that potentially myself and some of my colleagues protest these pipelines and try to block these pipelines and everything like that – well, quite frankly, the fact that we brought forward a bill to insist that TMX gets built kind of means that their argument that we're antipipeline doesn't exactly hold water. As a matter of fact, it's probably got such a hole in it that it's probably the size of the Monticello dam drainage spout in northern California. That's how big a hole there is in that argument. Perhaps we could just drop that whole thing because, clearly, that is not the case.

When I look at Bill 72, again, there are some similarities with the one that we had but certainly fewer teeth than the one previous. You know, I can't help but wonder, Mr. Speaker, how the UCP managed to just accidentally not pay attention to the expiry date on that previous bill. I now start to wonder: what else have you accidentally

missed and haven't paid attention to over the course of the last two years?

Again, getting back to that whole thing about Alberta's economic prosperity, we heard right from the very beginning, even before the election: jobs, economy, and pipelines. I'm sorry. You don't get to claim victory on TMX. That was us. We got that job done. That was the whole point of the bill that you let expire, to try to get that done, which we did. We were able to get the federal government to step in under very extraordinary circumstances and invest to get the job done.

Your track record so far hasn't been so great. You've bet over a billion dollars on a pipeline where now who knows whether that's going to be done? I believe that line 5, of course, right now is at risk, and what are we doing? Well, we're shouting, Twitter wars probably, threatening lawsuits, things like that. We know how well that has worked out before, in the past.

Now we have Bill 72 before us, that we're hoping won't degrade the conversation any further but, again: fewer teeth. We're missing the ability to restrict the flow of refined fuels. You know, Mr. Speaker, the whole point was that it was supposed to be a deterrent from opposing TMX. But that's done. It's being built. It's under construction with good unionized jobs. I know the UCP is very anti-union, hates unions, which is funny because those unions provide good union jobs for Albertans.

I guess some of the things that I'd like to possibly ask here – I know that in second reading we don't really get the opportunity to go back and forth, which would be beneficial, and that any chance to potentially respond to questions is very short. I get that. Hopefully, the questions that I'm asking will get written down and we'll maybe get some answers to these, possibly in Committee of the Whole, because I think Albertans deserve these answers.

One of the first things I'm curious about is: why is the Premier now removing the power and weakening our ability to stand up for Alberta? Why did you create less in this bill than in the other one? What was the decision that said, "Well, you know, we don't want to do this because"? I'm hoping we'll see some answers around that. I mean, the reality was that the Premier talked a pretty big game in the beginning about turning off the taps: we just need to turn off the taps, and we need to show the rest of Canada that we mean business. I mean, if you meant that kind of serious business, why did you let the thing expire to begin with?

As I mentioned earlier in some of my remarks talking about the whole goal of jobs, economy, and pipelines, I wonder if the Premier might explain to Albertans why it seems that you're going to end up with fewer pipelines. Keystone is clearly not viable at the moment, especially after betting over a billion dollars on an election, and line 5 is at risk. What are some of the things you're doing to talk to these other jurisdictions, to assure them why it continues to be a good idea to keep line 5 in service?

I mean, we've seen time and time again people pointing fingers at us about our environmental policies. What are you going to do to dissuade those arguments, to, you know, address these fears that they have and show why we're so responsible – not threatening lawsuits, not going on Twitter tirades; good, solid policy – so that when they look at Alberta, they'll say: "Oh, yeah. That's a very good argument. You're right. We need to keep that pipeline in operation"? Over the course of your term why is it right now looking like you're going to have fewer? Your initial "jobs, economy, pipelines" said that you should have more.

I'm also wondering if the Premier will explain to the House: exactly how many jobs have been created or spared as a result of this piece of legislation? What are the projections? Have you calculated how many jobs you'll create? So far you haven't got a great track record on that. Prepandemic we saw 50,000 lost. The

federal government now is stepping up with some money. Hopefully, you'll have a chance to at least maybe get some of those jobs back, not even half, unfortunately, especially given that we've got some of the highest unemployment rates in the entire country. I'm hoping to see some of the projections out of that or, at the very least, that the jobs that we currently have will be spared because of this.

I know it's been a little bit difficult, when it comes to sharing data with not only this House but with Albertans in general, to show what your position actually is to justify the decisions you're making. I've always said that if you've got the information to back up the decision, just show it to me. I'll take my seat and shut up. But I haven't exactly seen that over the course of the last two years.

11:20

You know, how is the now four times, I think it is, Mr. Speaker, delayed inquiry helping to move the conversation? How will this piece of legislation, hopefully, get a report in front of us? My friend from Edmonton-Gold Bar went into great detail about the different stages of this fight-back strategy to get Alberta into a position where we can get our product to tidewater or to market at the very least and get a fair price for that. How will this piece of legislation help the war room move the needle on that conversation? Right now it just seems like we're picking fights with cartoon characters at the cost of \$30 million. It sounds like there's maybe some red tape in there. Maybe you should consult with the associate minister of red tape about how we could move that process along a little bit and not fight with a cartoon character.

As the debate moves forward, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping we'll see some more fulsome answers. Likely, as I said, during Committee of the Whole there will be a better opportunity to be able to go back and forth to get some of these answers. Hopefully, if there is another speaker after me, we won't just hear the whole same tired rhetoric: the NDP did this, and your track record did that, and you guys are always doing this. Maybe actually take one of my questions and answer it. Show me why the decisions that you're making – why we have a piece of legislation that maybe isn't quite as robust as it could be, if that is indeed needed.

Initially, I'm happy to support the bill, but still I'd like to have these answers to be able to go back to my constituents and explain to them what the benefits are going to be – I certainly would never presuppose the decision of the House – why this bill will move forward and make their lives better here in the province of Alberta.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I appreciate, certainly, the last comment from the Member for Edmonton-Decore on his support for Bill 72. That's a good thing. I think it's appropriate for all members to support Bill 72 because it is a good bill that would help us continue to protect our vital economic interests. But, you know, the Member for Edmonton-Decore is known to publicly declare his support for union members, and I fully support that. Again, it is the right thing to do. I fully support that, but I also want the members opposite to spend some good time to think about: what, really, would a union member require? What would a union member want them to do when it comes to critical infrastructure projects that would land them job opportunities so that they can take care of their families?

I will certainly welcome the members opposite to take a look, you know, to listen to many of the union members who worked on Keystone XL. I have spent some time on different TV stations in Canada and in the United States on direct interviews of union

members who actually were working on the Keystone XL pipeline project. Each and every one of them talked about how devastated they were to see the Biden administration cancel that particular project. Here in Alberta have we heard anything from the members opposite in support of that Keystone XL? Crickets. We have not heard anything from them in support. Instead, we know that they cheered for that veto by the Biden administration.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite – and I say this as someone who comes from a union background. Long before I came to this Assembly, I was a union member, and there are so many union members like myself out there. You don't get to hear them because they have no voice. They expect you and I to represent all of their collective wishes on all issues, even the ones we don't agree on.

You know, the members opposite will talk about the Trans Mountain pipeline, how they supported the Trans Mountain pipeline, how they give themselves a high-five for supporting the Trans Mountain pipeline, for getting the federal government to buy this particular pipeline for \$4.5 billion. But, Mr. Speaker, the truth is: let's not forget that every member of the Alberta NDP are members of the federal NDP by their constitution. Constitutionally every one of them is a member of the federal NDP, and the federal NDP were on record multiple times saying that they do not support the Trans Mountain pipeline. In fact, the current leader of the federal NDP, when the federal Liberal government, you know, decided to buy that particular pipeline as a consequence of enormous pressure from the people of Alberta, said:

The Trudeau pipeline is a bad deal that won't solve the problem . . . Giving \$4.5 billion to a Texas oil company is a failure of leadership that demonstrates [Prime Minister] Trudeau has no vision for the future. Climate change leaders don't spend \$4.5B on pipelines.

Sound familiar? The same accusation that the members opposite here have on the job-creation tax cut. Sound familiar? That is their playbook. If it is not ideologically aligned, they will never support it despite its impact on our economy, despite how good it is to provide jobs and opportunities. The B.C. NDP, their sister political party, again, was on record as opposing the Trans Mountain pipeline. Then you ask yourself: why was it that the members opposite want us to believe that they supported the Trans Mountain pipeline? Very simple: pure political calculation. They know that under their watch two pipelines had been cancelled, Energy East and Northern Gateway, and that the people of this particular province would not . . .

Mr. Dang: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: A point of order has been called by the hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

Point of Order Relevance

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that there may only be a few seconds left in the discussion here, but I think, certainly, that we are discussing Bill 72, the Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act. I understand that the hon. minister feels the need to defend his record and his government's record on jobs and that he feels the need to compare it to the former NDP government's record on jobs and the success the NDP government had in getting access to tidewater. I'm sure that, certainly, the minister feels some trepidation that they are unable to have as much success. However, I think that he is currently speaking under 23(b), to matters other than the question under discussion. I think that when we speak to Bill 72, we should try to keep our comments

focused on the content of the bill rather than on the record of the minister or the lack of record that the minister has on jobs.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I hesitate to take any further interjections on this particular matter, but I would just like to highlight that on occasion members, perhaps even the previous speaker, spoke about a wide range of issues, including things like the Canadian energy war room and other things that might not specifically speak to the legislation but that members will use to create and make a point, which are rarely a matter of a point of order but perhaps a continuation or a matter of debate. I think that this is another example of that sort of line of discussion, and I just provide some caution.

11:30

The challenge is that, like, we can't call a point of order on things that we disagree with. We have to call points of order on matters that create disorder, and disagreement ought not create disorder. Disorder is created when members make accusations about particular members, when they make accusations about individuals and not members or political parties. I have heard members of both sides, even this morning, make these sorts of accusations. In fact, I didn't find fault on the opposition side or on the government side for making these sorts of statements of disagreement. This is a matter of debate, not a matter of a point of order.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Debate Continued

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know my time is about to come to an end here, but I want conclude by saying . . .

The Speaker: Unfortunately, this concludes the time allotted for Standing Order 29(2)(a).

The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is next.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today in second reading on Bill 72 and to have a spirited conversation and debate about this bill that's before us today.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

Also, it is impossible, Mr. Speaker, to distinguish or to discuss this bill in isolation of: what is the larger fight-back strategy of the current government? Of course, it is part of that bigger strategy, so certainly when we are looking at this bill, it has to be considered in that broader context because it is yet another example of the fact that this government seems to have a lot of bark but no bite. I'm saying this as a dog lover myself, who likes and loves dogs, even those who do bite, but particularly I have a very barky dog. Anyways, as I was saying, I think it's very important in this context to be talking about that larger fight-back strategy but also to get some clarity and perhaps provide some accuracy to some of the debates that are happening in this House.

Now, I understand there has been a good conversation in this Assembly today about what is or is not a point of order, what are or are not matters of debate, but apart from the rules of order in this House, it might seem a little strange to Albertans who are watching to know that members in this Assembly can in many cases, as the Minister of Justice has demonstrated and members of the UCP caucus generally have demonstrated, make statements that are not based in fact but are still permitted as part of the debate. Part of the concern, of course, is that there are special privileges and rules that happen in this House that protect certain amounts of debates. There are things that can be said in this Assembly that would not and could not be said outside of this Assembly. Those rules might seem a little

arbitrary and obscure to many Albertans who are watching because certainly if an Albertan was listening in today, they may get some false impressions about certain activities or positions or even goings-on of some of the members in this Assembly.

So I encourage all members that even if there are special rules of order that certain things are permitted in this House, certainly those who might be ministers of the Crown might take a certain pride in accuracy and a certain pride because there is perhaps a higher level of public trust in certain positions. Certainly, their word should carry more weight, and certainly being accurate should be important.

On that note, you know, I was disheartened, Mr. Speaker, to hear several times from members of the government caucus allegations about members on this side of the House. I believe that the statement was ruled in order, so I believe I'm able to repeat it even though, again, if any Albertan were to do the fact check on this, they would know that this is actually not an accurate statement. I believe, for example, the Minister of Justice indicated that a majority of the members of the opposition attended pipeline protests.

As the Minister of Justice I would hope, again, that accuracy is important to the minister. We have not yet seen that to be the case in this Assembly, nor in some of his public statements; however, I encourage him to perhaps table that evidence which he has that that's the case. Now, certainly, I don't think that he will be able to do that. I can say that with quite a degree of certainty, Mr. Speaker, because I know the members of this caucus, and to say that a majority of them have attended these kinds of protests is simply not true.

But, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, let's get back to results. Let's talk about results on the energy industry and on pipelines. I was completely confounded when I came into this Assembly to hear that it appears that the members of the government caucus have amnesia about what took place in the four years leading up to 2019 and this Legislature. You would think, based on the comments that we continue to hear in this Assembly, that a major pipeline had not been approved in the four years leading up to 2019, that it had not been approved by an NDP government, but that is absolutely the case. Under the NDP government – I know it is painful for the UCP to accept this and for them to acknowledge this, but the Trans Mountain pipeline was approved and is currently being built. That was done under the NDP. That was the first pipeline to tidewater in 60 years, I believe it was, in Alberta's history.

The previous 44 years of Progressive Conservative government had failed to do that, and here we are halfway into the mandate of this current UCP government, who campaigned on jobs, economy, and, yes, pipelines yet have not been successful in creating any pipelines and certainly have actually – not only have they jeopardized Alberta's interests with respect to line 5, but they gambled away billions of dollars on Keystone XL.

Now, I must mention, Mr. Speaker, that again it is quite disheartening to hear that members of the government caucus and ministers of the Crown have not read *Hansard*, because if they wanted to see statements by the members of the opposition, by the Leader of the Official Opposition in terms of support for Keystone XL, that is on the record. It can be tabled, and I am happy to table *Hansard* for any ministers or members of caucus that require that evidence, but certainly they have access and should be able to read *Hansard* themselves. But certainly, absolutely, the members of the opposition, the Leader of the Opposition has been very clear that Keystone XL would have been incredibly important to Alberta, to our energy interests, but also to workers. Absolutely.

Unfortunately, as we find in so many circumstances with respect to our energy industry, we don't get to call all the shots here in Alberta. Unfortunately, there are major international interests at

play, major international politics at play, and investment choices that are being made. We are seeing a drive and an understanding and a move globally towards more energy-efficient, more renewable resource development. That is not within our control solely in Alberta, to change the course of that.

So given the context of those situations it is imperative on a responsible government who does care about protecting our energy interests and also cares about protecting our dollars, Alberta's taxpayer dollars, to make responsible decisions. On Keystone XL, it is absolutely disappointing that it does not seem to be proceeding, but those cards were already on the table. Any responsible government would have read those cards, would have done their research and done their analysis and come to the conclusion that betting \$1.3 billion, as far as we know – it might end up being more. We still don't have full transparency on that, Mr. Speaker. But betting billions of Alberta's dollars on something that did not look like it was going to go ahead – even those with a very limited understanding of the political climate in the United States knew that at the time candidate Joe Biden had made it clear that if he was elected, that pipeline was not going ahead. Yet this government still chose to gamble away our dollars.

So that is a frustration that all Albertans must bear now, the nonsophistication of this government to be able to read what's happening internationally and globally to protect and to advocate for our energy industry. That nonsophistication – I don't even know if that's a word, nonsophistication. Unsophistication?

An Hon. Member: It is now.

11:40

Ms Pancholi: It is now. That nonsophistication is demonstrated once again by Bill 72.

How in the world was a piece of legislation that was so important to this government that it was the first act that they did – they proclaimed that bill almost immediately, yet they let it expire. It seems to be that they let it expire, well, maybe just as an oversight, Mr. Speaker. This government claims to care so much about our energy industry. It's supposed to be top of mind for them – it's jobs, economy, pipelines – but what we found is that they didn't even notice when this legislation that's so important to them expired.

Let's think. What was going on at the end of April, Mr. Speaker, that might have distracted this government's attention, just as it distracted their attention from handling the third wave of the pandemic in this province, when Alberta was the worst in North America with respect to rates? At that time what was going on with the UCP caucus that they didn't notice that this bill was expiring? I would guess that there was a little bit of an internal drama going on in their caucus. I believe that there probably is still a lot of internal drama going on in that caucus. The government of the day had plenty of time to spend a full day in a caucus meeting discussing which of their members were going to remain as part of the UCP caucus but, oops, forgot about this piece of legislation that they claimed was so critical.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is simply a clear indication of where this government's focus is all along. This entire fight-back strategy has been, unfortunately, a complete joke because it's all about fighting and it's not about any results. And I haven't even gotten into the great joy and pleasure that is the war room, that is sucking up millions of dollars picking fights with Netflix about animated Bigfoot movies and can't get a logo straight.

How about the Allan inquiry, with four extensions, a changed mandate based on stories the government – well, they took some questionable research and created a narrative and then established a public inquiry to investigate their own narrative that they made

up. First of all, I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I find that to be such a terrible injustice to the idea of a public inquiry. Just from a fundamental – perhaps a bit of my perspective of having respect for our judicial processes and the important roles that public inquiries can play in really getting to the heart of serious matters.

Not only is this not a serious matter, as has been abundantly made clear by my colleagues and the media and even the researcher who was the reason behind this whole inquiry to begin with – it is not a serious issue. But the idea that the inquiry is in any way being influenced by ministers of the Crown, as we are hearing that it is, to the surprise, unfortunately, of no one – but that's the place that we are at now in Alberta with this government, that Albertans are not even shocked to hear that ministers of the Crown or the government may be influencing a public inquiry. That is simply disrespecting a critical tool for transparency and the respect and impartiality and the necessary role that public inquiries should play in our system, Mr. Speaker.

This bill is, once again, evidence that this government doesn't even know how to do the thing that they claim to do, which is to fight back although fighting back – let's be clear – has not produced any results to date. No pipelines have been approved. Oh, by the way, the fight-back strategy also seems to include the incredibly tone-deaf diplomatic skills of the Premier in calling the Governor of Michigan, who holds, again, a lot of the cards with respect to line 5, brain dead. The Premier has demonstrated that he doesn't understand the diplomacy required to actually advocate effectively for our energy industry. He has demonstrated and the UCP has demonstrated as government that they do not understand how to read what is going on internationally to advocate effectively for our energy industry.

They let this bill expire – that's how much of a priority it is for them – and that's why we're in here today, Mr. Speaker, having to deal with it in this House, again, while there are very important things going on. Albertans are struggling. They don't have jobs, and this government has actually lost hundreds of thousands of jobs, 50,000 even before the pandemic hit for Albertans, and this is the kind of legislation that we're debating today because they forgot. They forgot to amend it to extend it. This government is not focused on jobs and the economy and pipelines. They are focused on useless, ineffective, fight-back strategies that are making Alberta the laughingstock of not only Canada but internationally. This is not the way that we should be advocating for our energy industry. This is not going to get pipelines built. This seems like a government of amateurs.

I believe that's what we're seeing with once again having to deal with a bill that is not only here before us because it expired but also is actually weaker than the legislation that they proclaimed two years ago. It actually removes refined oils from the bill. The bill that they believed was so wonderful that they proclaimed it right away, which was brought in by the NDP: they actually weakened it. I think one of my colleagues, the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, said it best: this is a whimper. This is what we're seeing. This is not a fight-back strategy. This is a whimper. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the most disappointing part . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

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

Mr. Guthrie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been just taking a few notes here this morning. I thought I'd hit on a few bits of subject matter here that might be of interest to some. You know, the CEC is a topic that comes up a lot. It seems as though the entire argument seems to rest upon a logo error from a year and a half ago. This is

an organization that's doing tremendous, tremendous work, and they are making great headway in the industry. I just took a look on Facebook. They've got 54,800 followers on Facebook. They have over 1 and a half million hits a month. The organization has thousands if not tens of thousands of e-mails, and these are from people around the world, in industry around the world, that are interested in the CEC's research and the great work that they are doing. [interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt. However, we have had some lively debate this morning, as I've been made aware of, and I think that in many of those cases all members, on all sides, have been afforded the opportunity to speak without being spoken over by heckling. I think that we have taken it a little too far with regard to heckling. The individual with the floor is the hon. Member for Airdrie-Cochrane.

Mr. Guthrie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just saying there that the CEC has tens of thousands of e-mails from around the world. These are individuals who are interested in the great research that they're doing there. So I hate to tell you, but the CEC is a hit. The industry loves the support. I know that the opposition here doesn't like the support, but that doesn't surprise me whatsoever. Really, if we want to look at it, why the objection? Why the objection? Well, there's objection because they're against the industry. They don't want to defend the industry. This is why they put and hired Tzeporah Berman. They believe that the best way to support industry is to implant or embed activists right into government positions so that they're able to sabotage from within.

They talk about a cartoon. I hear this quite a bit this morning. They talk about a movie. Why would the CEC object? It's only a cartoon, they say. But we're looking at cancel culture here, you know. These are the same individuals that want to cancel *SpongeBob SquarePants*. They want to cancel *The Flintstones* and *Bugs Bunny*. It's only a cartoon, Mr. Speaker, when it's a message that they agree with. When it doesn't meet the criteria, then they want to shut it down. It's abhorrent to them. This position, you know, only fits them when it's required for a certain narrative.

11:50

Now, on the matter of pipelines, earlier there was some sensitivity around the NDP's lack of support for Alberta's resource sectors. You know, prior to 2015 the NDP completely objected to everything to do with any aspect of the resource sector here in Alberta. They got about two years into their term and they realized: whoa; we had better make a change here; we're not going to get re-elected. So then they started coming out, at least on the surface, giving an apparent view that they do in some surface way support the resource sector. But here we are. Once 2019 hits, there are the objections again. They need to get back to supporting their base, one that's against the oil and gas sector, against forestry, against agriculture, against mining. I mean, the opposition here is a party that objected to Energy East. They objected to Northern Gateway. They support Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, yet they claim to support industry. Come on.

It's not surprising why many of them object to this bill. This was a bill put forward – well, actually, they put forward similar legislation. Yes. They've talked about that, but that was put forward, admittedly, by them as a bluff. They had no intentions of using it, and they despise the fact that we've utilized it. The NDP wanted it gone; hence, they put in a drop-dead date within the . . . [Mr. Guthrie's speaking time expired]

Well, unfortunately, I ran out of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, are there any members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for St. Albert has risen.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise after that and speak to Bill 72, Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act. I, unfortunately, didn't hear a lot of the debate earlier this morning, but I would like to comment on some of the recent suggestions made by the member across the way, just to correct the record a little bit because it is important as we consider this particular piece of legislation.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that the member said is that the CEC – and for those of you who aren't familiar with that acronym, that's the war room – is a huge success, awesome success, because there are, like, tens of thousands of followers on social media. Okay. Well, you know what? I'm sorry, but when you commit \$20 million a year, that wouldn't actually be the first thing that I'd measure in terms of success. I would actually look at the overall goal of jobs, pipelines, economy, or whichever order that was on your platform. You all are missing the boat on all three.

The other thing that I would like to say about this war room is that it's embarrassing. It's actually embarrassing. That that is a central pillar of your fight-back strategy is embarrassing. Now, I get that your fight-back strategy was part of your platform, and this particular piece of legislation, you're trying to explain, isn't because of, you know, leadership incompetence. It's because, actually, you want to fight back. The reality is that Albertans want to be respected. They want to be leaders in terms of resource development. They want to be leaders in terms of climate change. They want to be leaders in terms of job creation. They want to be leaders in terms of prosperity. They don't want to be leaders in terms of being humiliated by their government, and that is what continues to happen with this fight-back strategy.

Whether it's an Allan inquiry or the inquiry that is – what? – on its fourth extension – and who knows what is going on behind the scenes because, let's be fair, I think that there are a lot of assumptions that have been made. We've seen lots of evidence that's based on junk science. That's it. It is based in assumptions that are based on junk science. We know this to be true. So it's not just about a logo error; it's about an overall, general embarrassment about a strategy.

Albertans are serious about the oil and gas sector. They understand that our province relies on this particular resource. They also understand their responsibility in many other areas. So to suggest that this war room, or CEC, is actually a winning strategy when we know it is steeped in a lack of transparency, just like many other things, many other activities that this government undertakes – we know that we can't get clarity on who is getting what. Who is benefiting from this? Which lobbyists are benefiting from this? We don't get that information, because this government is afraid of the sunlight, but that's just one thing.

Anyway, I would like to point out some very real differences, because the members opposite like to stand up and say: "NDP bad. They don't like the resource sector. They didn't do anything." That is incorrect. We've done a great deal of things, and I would like to draw your attention to a few things. Due to the leadership of the previous government, the first pipeline to tidewater in 70 years was secured as well as line 3, easing pipeline bottlenecks, which significantly ensured that Albertans would receive better value for resources. That wasn't just magically done because we had a war room that was big and bad and that was going to take on a cartoon.

What we did was a thoughtful investment in speaking to Albertans and other Canadians about why this work was essential

and what we saw in terms of the future for this province and for the country. We ensured the province got built by showing advocacy. There was an advocacy campaign, Keep Canada Working – because that’s what it’s about – that raised support for TMX from 4 out of 10 Canadians to 7 in 10 Canadians. That is significant. I can remember hearing about a giant billboard outside one of the major airports in eastern Canada. That was a brilliant strategy, because it talked about the value to all Canadians.

When B.C. tried to obstruct our pipeline, we did stand up to that government, and we passed . . .

Mr. Guthrie: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order has been raised. The hon. Member for Airdrie-Cochrane.

**Point of Order
Relevance**

Mr. Guthrie: Yeah. Thank you. Under 23(b), speaking to matters other than those under discussion. Standing Order 29(2)(a) is where rebuttals can be brought forward here. The member hasn’t spoken

about the bill whatsoever, in fact hasn’t mentioned it. I think that this is more of a rebuttal to a 29(2)(a). I’m not sure if we have rebuttals to 29(2)(a)s, but if we could get back onto the actual bill, it would make matters a little bit . . . [interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, I believe there may be a response. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-South has risen.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that certainly the hon. member may be upset that the record is being corrected, and the hon. member may not appreciate that his comments were inaccurate, but I think that certainly this is a matter of debate. There was no standing order cited. It is perfectly acceptable for any member of this place to comment on matters under debate on this legislation.

The Acting Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. However, I don’t think he will be upset, at the end of the day, with me interrupting him. I do not find that there is a point of order. This was a matter of debate.

We are now adjourned until 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Prayers	5039
Orders of the Day	5039
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 72 Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act	5039, 5046
Private Bills	
Second Reading	
Bill Pr. 2 The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021	5045
Committee of the Whole	
Bill Pr. 2 The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021	5045
Third Reading	
Bill Pr. 2 The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021	5045

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