



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, November 23, 2021

Day 130

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Second Session

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New Democrat: 24

Independent: 2

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Nathan Neudorf	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Parks for Water Stewardship
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Lovely
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Pancholi
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Carson
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Dang
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Dach
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Guthrie
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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

[The Speaker in the chair]

Statement by the Speaker

Former MLA Manmeet Singh Bhullar

The Speaker: Hon. members, today I'd like to take a moment to remember a friend and colleague, Manmeet Singh Bhullar. Today is the sixth anniversary of his sudden passing. He was known for his kindness, his sense of humour, and I know many of you would have had the pleasure to hear him say: nice to Manmeet you.

Manmeet was killed in a car accident six years ago when he stopped on the side of a highway in a snowstorm to help someone. It was what Manmeet did. Elected at age 28, he accomplished so much before his death at the age of 35. He left us doing what he did best, helping others. He made Alberta a better place through his character and his service and, most of all, through his kindness. May he rest in peace.

Please be seated.

Members' Statements

COVID-19 Response

Ms Renaud: Mr. Speaker, they are all complicit, each and every member of the UCP caucus. They sat back and did nothing while their own constituents got sick with COVID-19 and thousands died. Others will live with the after-effects of long COVID for potentially years to come, maybe longer, yet we have a government that won't even acknowledge their pain and suffering. We hear reports of 15,000 surgeries cancelled because the Premier vacationed in Europe rather than leading and stopping a preventable fourth wave, but we know the number is much, much larger. The aftershocks of this government's monumental failures will be felt for years to come.

Their war with doctors has killed recruitment efforts and cut off access to family physicians in places like Lethbridge and Fort McMurray. Their attempts to cut nurses' pay destroyed morale, has driven up anxiety, and fast-tracked worker burnout at the very time that we could least afford it. Then we found out this morning at Public Accounts that the fourth wave was far from the government's first failure. There was an early warning system that predicted the second wave of COVID, but the Premier waited for weeks after he was briefed to act. He went into hiding. Then with the fourth wave he hid again. He is no leader.

But it's worse, Mr. Speaker, so much worse. The Premier is horrible at his job. We know that. He's the least trusted Premier in the country. He's had the lowest performance rating for the duration of the pandemic, but the even bigger shame should be felt by the 60 individuals on that side of the House, who sat back and said nothing. The people they claim to represent had loved ones get sick, their businesses close, their children's learning suffer, and people died, but those 60 individuals did nothing, choosing instead to save their jobs rather than their constituents. I am sickened by their inaction. I am disgusted by their continuous attempts to hide facts. I can't wait for 2023, when real change comes.

Coastal GasLink Pipeline Project Opposition

Ms Rosin: Mr. Speaker, a year ago violent protesters barricaded rail lines and highways and shut down our entire Canadian economy for

days, threatening the safety and livelihoods of all the hard-working people in our commodity and transportation industries over a pipeline that will transport natural gas, clean, low-emissions natural gas.

Fast-forward a year, and they are at it again. Last night the High Level Bridge in Edmonton was shut down by protesters, burning propane I might add, in the middle of rush hour. The irony. Mr. Speaker, our country is one that claims to take Indigenous rights and emissions reduction very seriously, but the actions of certain political leaders suggest they take neither Indigenous rights nor reaching net zero very seriously at all. Natural gas is a clean fuel, and this pipeline has the full support of every single one of the 20 First Nations along its route.

Facts don't seem to matter, because yesterday this House learned that the NDP opposition passed a motion, with 85 per cent, endorsing these illegal barricaders who flout the rule of law and the decisions of the Supreme Court of B.C. They even went so far as to call on the RCMP to withdraw from the situation. It's shocking to think that a party who seeks to govern the province of Alberta, of all places, would take such an extreme position against our very own natural gas workers and industry. Given their position it almost makes you wonder if any of the members opposite were present at last night's bridge blockade in Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to support Alberta's natural gas industry, and we will enforce the rule of law to ensure the safety and prosperity of all workers is not put at risk by radical, anti-Alberta views of the NDP and their extremist supporters. We passed legislation to protect these industries and workers from acts like these, and to no surprise the NDP opposed it. The Coastal GasLink pipeline is in the best interest of our country's economy, workers, environment, and Indigenous peoples, and on this side of the House we will defend it.

Vaccination Policies

Mr. Guthrie: Mr. Speaker, last year we commissioned an all-party panel called the Select Special Public Health Act Review Committee to explore the outdated Public Health Act. Those members returned recommendations, including the removal of all references to and the power of government to subject its citizens to mandatory vaccination. This committee consulted with Albertans, and it was determined that this was not in the best interest of constituents as it did not reflect their values; hence, the health act was amended to reflect those convictions. We must be cognizant of this consultation as we navigate a very difficult time in our province's history.

Mr. Speaker, I support the committee recommendations and oppose any organization directing mandatory use of an active medical procedure, including vaccination, on the citizens of this province. Unfortunately, over the course of the last few months we have seen government organizations, institutions, and businesses implement vaccination policies with termination as a result of noncompliance. I unequivocally disagree with this approach.

I am fully vaccinated, and I believe it to be our path forward, but I also hold dear the rights and freedoms of those to choose in matters pertaining to their bodies and their personal health. We as a governing body stated countless times over the course of almost two years that we would not mandate vaccination, so we should hold strong to that position.

Mr. Speaker, a viewpoint shared by many Albertans is that we should have less government interference in our personal and business lives, not more. Creating legislation or supporting policy that may well be unconstitutional and acting based upon societal views at any moment in time, even if one agrees with those views,

sets a poor precedent and, in my opinion, has governments going down a slippery slope.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Drug Harm Reduction Strategies

Ms Sigurdson: Four Albertans are dying every day in Alberta from preventable drug poisoning deaths. Four lives each day. These Albertans are loved by their families, friends, and communities. This tragedy warrants commemoration, but most importantly it demands action. Sadly, the UCP has not acted. In June I stood with Moms Stop the Harm as well as a daughter who had lost her father. We called on the UCP to do three things, including expanding harm reduction services and offering drug testing. We also highlighted the need to provide safe, legal, and regulated alternatives to highly toxic and illegal street drugs.

But the UCP have spun these calls inaccurately. This weekend the Premier described our plan as delivering dangerous drugs to people's homes. Yesterday the associate minister tweeted asking why "the Alberta NDP want to take us back to the OxyContin era." That statement is completely false and dishonest. Providing safe and regulated alternatives to toxic street drugs is a targeted approach for only the people at greatest risk of death. There are dozens of such programs across Canada, including in provinces with Conservative governments. They are used only for patients who haven't found recovery after many, many sincere attempts at different types of treatment, yet the UCP purposely just mischaracterizes this in a ridiculous manner.

Last week a UCP member asked the associate minister about an "NDP drug site." He was, in fact, referring to a supervised consumption site. This harmful language was not condemned by the minister. In fact, the Premier campaigned on promising to close these life-saving services, services the minister himself now says he wants to expand. This purposeful branding of harm reduction services stigmatizes people receiving support. The NDP absolutely support recovery, but people cannot access recovery services if they're already dead. We must start where the person is at, not where we want them to be.

1:40 Stollery Children's Hospital

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, the health of our province begins with the health of its children. Today we are hosting Stollery day to celebrate the world-renowned expertise at the Stollery children's hospital. As the second-largest children's hospital in Canada, the Stollery sees more than 317,000 patients each year. Nearly half of those kids come from outside the Edmonton region. As one of the busiest hospitals in Canada, it specializes in pediatric care, particularly in cardiac care and organ transplantation.

The Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation is committed to investing in the best professionals, programs, and equipment to care for kids for generations to come. The Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation has the vision to transform children's health care so that every child can get the best possible care no matter where they live. The foundation is proud to fund the Awasisak program and its first-of-its-kind program for Indigenous children and their families. The foundation is also the primary funder of pediatric research, \$40 million over 10 years through the Women and Children's Health Research Institute at the University of Alberta. With donor support the foundation is helping to give kids the best chance anywhere in the world to live a long and healthy life.

The foundation also believes in equity and fairness for children. That's why it's investing in mental health, Indigenous health, transitional health, and virtual health to expand the Stollery's

growing care network. The Stollery foundation is partnering with the Alberta government to explore the possibility of a new hospital, and when the time comes, the foundation will raise up to \$250 million towards the cost of building it.

Stollery day is a chance for all of us to reflect on the tremendous impact this hospital has on our province's quality of health care. I encourage my fellow members to think about the importance children's health plays in the future of our province and consider innovative opportunities to invest in and improve pediatric care in our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

FIFA World Cup Game Hosting in Edmonton

Ms Goehring: Goal! Edmonton hosted two World Cup qualifying matches last week, with our national team earning historic victories over Costa Rica and Mexico. Soccer fever went country-wide. I was happy seeing Albertans draped in Canadian flags cheering and walking from Commonwealth across the city.

In 2018 Edmonton submitted a bid to host World Cup matches in 2026. These two matches showed FIFA that this city's bid is serious. Hosting a World Cup match could bring in estimated earnings between \$60 million and \$480 million U.S. per city. This money would certainly help Edmonton's businesses to thrive, and neighbouring cities would receive a fair amount of tourism as well. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

However, to get the deal done, FIFA required the Edmonton bidding committee to work on some enhancements to the city's existing infrastructure: public transportation, security, accommodation for attendants, and training facilities, among others. These improvements are only possible if all levels of government co-operate. The problem is that the UCP government has abandoned municipalities and cut their funding. They're making moves on infrastructure with legislation that cuts the priorities of municipalities out of the planning process. Without proper support for cities, I fear Edmonton's World Cup bid is at risk with this UCP government. We are talking about losing the biggest sports event in the world.

The City of Champions deserves to see our boys playing against Neymar's Brazil, Cristiano Ronaldo's Portuguese team, and, of course, to see our Canadians themselves take to the pitch. Next year in Qatar our team should be focused on the possibility of playing against Messi's Argentina, not on the possibility of losing the chance to play a World Cup game in Edmonton because of the UCP's messy public policies.

Thank you.

Weyerhaeuser Company Milestone

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, on November 16 at 1:52 a.m. a major milestone was achieved at the Weyerhaeuser Edson OSB mill as the mill completed its 4 millionth press load. This is a significant accomplishment for the team at Weyerhaeuser. Before I became an MLA, I worked in the forestry sector for almost 15 years and can speak personally to the magnitude of this accomplishment.

I'd also like to commend the mill for their ongoing efforts maintaining the highest standards of forestry to ensure a sustainable future for the industry. For example, the Edson mill uses nearly 100 per cent of every log, even down to the ashes. Mr. Speaker, this commitment to sustainability is no doubt a factor in the mill's longevity. This December the mill will celebrate 38 years in the Edson community. For those that aren't aware, OSB stands for oriented strandboard, which functions the same as plywood though produced differently.

The Edson OSB mill continually supports community initiatives. In the past three years alone they've given \$50,000 to community organizations such as the Edson recycling society, the Edson community learning society, and the Edson Food Bank.

The mill's continued success can largely be attributed to Natalie Peace, the mill manager. Besides managing an incredibly successful mill, Natalie is a trailblazer for women in the workforce and a stalwart community leader and contributor.

Weyerhaeuser's commitment to community is not just specific to Edson. Weyerhaeuser operates mills across the province and are generous contributors to every community they operate in. This past August Weyerhaeuser celebrated planting its 250 millionth tree in Alberta. This is more evidence of their commitment to sustainability. Whenever the company removes a tree, they plant two more to make up for the one removed.

Our province needs to do more to promote the efforts of sustainability by those in our forestry sector, especially those of the Edson OSB mill. I want to thank you for your contributions to Edson and Alberta. I hope the members of this Assembly will all join me in celebrating this 4 millionth press load milestone.

The Speaker: The Member for Highwood.

Highwood Community Volunteer Award Winners

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to take the chance to acknowledge two pillars of the Highwood community, starting with Bill Jackson, who has recently received a Stars of Alberta volunteer award. Bill has served as a leader in the Millarville Racing and Ag Society since he was 16 years old, when he joined as the beef cattle committee director. Later he served as president for four years as a member of the financial stability committee and just recently was instrumental in fund raising \$50,000 for the legacy mural project to honour legacy volunteers. Bill has been actively volunteering for over six decades, supporting a wide array of committee organizations and events, including the local 4-H beef clubs, starting at age 12, and from the age of 14 Bill has lovingly cared for the grounds of the Christ church of Millarville. This includes his participation in the church's beautification project for their hundredth anniversary.

This now brings me to Malcolm Hughes. First and foremost, Malcolm is an individual that we all owe a debt of gratitude to for his service to this country in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Malcolm has spent decades committed to passing on Canadian military history to next generations to ensure that the awareness of the sacrifices that have provided us our peace and freedom today do not go unheard. It's important to note that Mr. Hughes was instrumental in re-establishing Legion 291 in Okotoks in 2014, an accomplishment that will continue to serve veterans and the community in Okotoks for decades to come. For his service Malcolm has been awarded the Foothills Canada 150 medal and the palm leaf, the highest award available in the Royal Canadian Legion.

Bill Jackson and Malcolm Hughes have never shied away from getting involved in projects that have made and continue to make a difference in their community. Their example should always serve as a beacon to inspire all of us and others.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

COVID-19 Response and Vaccination Policies

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has devastated the world for almost two years. People's lives have been lost, people's livelihoods have been ruined, mental health issues are skyrocketing, supply

chains are in complete disarray, and hope of a better tomorrow is waning.

The other night I was privileged to sit with an 85-year-old war vet, who shared some wise words with me. He said that he was concerned about our ability to deal with calamity. In the war years he remembered how neighbours were willing to support each other, watch out for each other, and care for each other. He felt that's how we can get through this calamity. Mr. Speaker, instead, he saw a darker side of humanity emerging.

You only need to turn on the nightly news to see the disturbing trend of normally law-abiding citizens joining with the always angry left to march against the police and governments. Don't we remember world history, Mr. Speaker? Don't we remember that socialists for 130 years have been trying to destabilize societies by turning one group against another? Socialists used differences between groups to sow division, and right now they're working overtime. As the people that have benefited and prospered from the rule of law, we must call out and reject the socialist onslaught that leads to only one path, poverty and loss of freedoms and liberties.

I want to talk about a specific concern. Our health care workers have been throwing themselves on the proverbial COVID grenade for over 20 months now. However, those who have chosen not to get vaccinated have been told that their services are no longer accepted. These are the most trained people in our society on how to effectively protect themselves and their patients from passing on disease. We brought in the Labour Mobility Act to attract skilled labourers, not to push them away.

Mr. Speaker, freedom and liberty are not free and never have been. Let us never forget the reason why our fallen soldiers gave their lives because the cost of forgiving and forgetting is a price that no one should have to pay again.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

COVID-19 Vaccines for Children

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, as we await the plan for pediatric vaccines, the Premier has been citing research showing that 50 per cent of parents won't vaccinate their kids. While this should be perceived as the starting gun for a renewed education effort, he seems to be taking this as an excuse to limit the public health effort. He's giving up at the starting line. Last December a survey said that only 48 per cent of Canadian adults would get the shot. Today 85 per cent have two-dose coverage. Why is the Premier refusing to actively promote vaccines amongst children?

Mr. Kenney: Well, all of that, Mr. Speaker, is inaccurate. We are pleased that Health Canada has after rigorous review, following exhaustive clinical trials, provided compelling evidence of the efficacy and safety of pediatric vaccines. I would note for parents that the doses are much lower than they are for adults and that they can be helpful in preventing infection and transmission and can be particularly important for children who have serious chronic conditions to prevent severe outcomes. We would encourage parents to use this, but ultimately parents will have to make the right choice for their children given their circumstances.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the vaccine misinformation campaigns have an ally in this Premier's apparent laissez-faire attitude. Every time that he refuses to give parents information, the antivaxxers on Facebook win. Yesterday the Premier stated that

only about 4,000 kids signed up for in-school vaccination last fall while failing to mention that his program rolled out in the final weeks of the school year. We know, actually, that this number would have been higher today if the timing had been different. Why is the Premier still aiming for rock bottom when it comes to vaccinating kids? Why isn't 85 per cent his stated target?

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is not a choice that the government makes for children. It's a choice that parents make for children. The starting point has to be to provide accurate information to inform the choices that parents make. Parents know what's best for their kids. We're providing accurate information about the safety and efficacy of pediatric vaccines. We'll be there to facilitate those. We hope that a significant majority of parents will choose to get their five- to 11-year-olds vaccinated. One thing that won't help is being shouted at by the NDP.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, public education and access are choices that government can make for all Albertans' public health.

Now, the Premier claims that kids don't get the virus, and other times he says that they don't get it in schools. He claims that the risk is low and that the flu is more dangerous. Here is Dr. Simon Parsons in Calgary. Quote: every day we have a child with MIS-C in the ICU post COVID, and often we have children with COVID pneumonia as well. Sixty-one cases of MIS-C and more of COVID pneumonia – now, we campaigned to move the dial on adult vaccination, and we can and we must . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier has the call.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, not only does the NDP try to play divisive wedge politics on an issue that should unite Albertans, which is the importance of vaccination, but they make things up along the way. I have never said that children don't get infected or don't transmit or don't get severe outcomes. I've said that children are at a much lower risk than adults for severe outcomes. That is not an opinion. It is a scientific fact supported by studies and data around the world. As Dr. Hinshaw has said, younger children often have a higher risk of severe outcomes from the flu. That's not to say that the risk is zero, which is why we encourage parents to get their five- to 11-year-olds vaccinated.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition for her second set of questions.

Ms Notley: They're letting down kids, Mr. Speaker.

Surgery Wait Times

Ms Notley: Now, yesterday the Premier refused to offer a plan for Albertans who are waiting for their surgeries. This is on top of his refusal to take responsibility for his government's accelerated fourth wave causing historic damage to the health care system, damage that is growing on a daily basis. Based on the Premier's 76 per cent figure, we can estimate that an additional 1,200 surgeries are being cancelled every week, so the backlog of fourth wave cancellations is getting close to 20,000 cases. To the Premier: is this number accurate, and if not, will he release the correct number, and will he do it on a daily basis?

Mr. Kenney: Well, no, it's not accurate, Mr. Speaker. In fact, about 15,000 surgeries were postponed during the fourth wave, but we're now at 76 per cent, approaching 80 per cent, of our full normal baseline of surgeries performed. As I said yesterday, within a few weeks we expect to be at 100 per cent. I want to thank the folks at

our hospitals with Covenant and AHS for helping to transition from the surge ICU beds back in to conventional surgical service. We'll continue to work very closely to ensure they have the resources to do that quickly.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, 15,000 was the number over two weeks ago. His own Health minister acknowledges that that number goes up each and every day, and Albertans have a right to know what that number is.

Now, Akeema Smith is 21. She has cancer. Her surgery was postponed in August, rescheduled for November, and then postponed just this month. So cancer surgery is not back on track. Albertans need to see the details around how this crisis is being both tracked and managed. Why is the Premier hiding this information from Albertans?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, as we've said, all critical cancer care surgery is being performed within the clinical guidelines, 100 per cent.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Kenney: And, Mr. Speaker, it's true that many surgeries which were not immediately urgent were delayed, as they were in every jurisdiction in Canada and as they have been all around the world. We are working to transition the ICU surge capacity back in to surgical service, and we hope to, as I say, within a few weeks be back to 100 per cent and then next year to launch the Alberta surgical initiative, substantially to reduce surgical wait times in Alberta.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 1:56.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, for two weeks now the Premier and his minister have been giving select but incomplete answers to these questions, and that was no different. Today tens of thousands of Albertans are anxious, in pain, and watching their conditions worsen, and they have a right to know. How many Albertans are being added to the backlog every day? What kinds of surgeries are cancelled every day? How and when are we projected to catch up? You created this problem. You owe Albertans a solution. You have answers. Stop hiding them.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that in the minds of the NDP the Alberta government created COVID; the reality is that we did not create COVID. The reality is that challenges such as this have been faced all around the world. Now, Alberta Health Services performs approximately 290,000 surgical procedures every year, just to put some context in that. This government has added \$900 million to the baseline budget of AHS to support the Alberta surgical initiative, which we believe will by the beginning of 2023 have achieved our campaign commitment of having the overwhelming majority of surgeries performed within the recommended clinical periods. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

A point of order is noted at 1:57.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is the only one with the call.

COVID-19 Modelling and Early Warning System

Ms Pancholi: Today at Public Accounts we discussed documents released through a FOIP showing that Alberta Health directed AHS

not to conduct projections to prepare for the second wave of the pandemic. Thankfully, AHS didn't listen as they needed to plan for staffing and PPE levels. As the FOIP reveals, it was leadership in government that didn't want the projections, but Dr. Hinshaw couldn't recall who made the decision. To the Premier. People died while the ministry was flying blind. Who made the decision to forbid Alberta Health from doing projections ahead of the second wave?

Mr. Kenney: No one because no such decision was made. I know that Dr. Hinshaw, the chief medical officer of health, responded comprehensively to the false allegations of the hon. member at committee earlier today. Mr. Speaker . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. It's very difficult for me to hear the Premier, and I think the House deserves the opportunity even if we don't like the answer.

Mr. Kenney: So, Mr. Speaker, of course, Alberta Health Services found, like, for example, that this notion of six-month modelling serves no useful purpose, neither here nor has it in any jurisdiction. We do rely on the early warning system's short-term projections. That's exactly the point that Dr. Hinshaw made at committee today.

Ms Gray: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 2 o'clock.

Ms Pancholi: The same FOIP shows that AHS developed its own early warning system as leadership in government actually forbade Alberta Health from conducting its own projections. Officials then presented these findings of this early warning system to the Premier in late September 2020. It was flashing red alert – emergency action needed – but he did nothing. Mr. Speaker, cases soared through the second wave in October and November, but the government didn't take serious action until November 24. Did the Premier learn anything from his incompetent management of the second wave? There was no evidence of it when the fourth wave hit.

2:00

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the chief medical officer of health at committee. She said:

It's important not to interpret the statements that you've read out . . .

referring to that member,

. . . as a ban on all [forward-looking work] . . . there are so many assumptions built into a long-term projection . . . [so] we were looking at tighter time periods because that was more reliable, and that's similar to what other provinces have [duplicated] recently.

We respect the advice of the chief medical officer and the greater utility and accuracy of shorter term projections.

Ms Pancholi: Sounds like the Premier willingly ignored that early warning system. The AHS early warning system hit the worst of crisis intervention triggers on October 30, 2020, but still this government delayed action for more than three weeks, leading to an ICU system over capacity, tens of thousands of cancelled surgeries, and needless additional deaths. Then this government also failed to prevent the fourth wave because the Premier was vacationing in Europe and no one was in charge. Mr. Speaker, there are now reports of a possible fifth wave in Europe, and I fear that that can happen here. How can this government possibly be trusted to deal with a potential fifth wave responsibly when it's been one catastrophic, incompetent error after another?

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, I had some difficulty hearing all of the hon. member's rant, but what I can assure the member of is that this government has taken action as and when necessary to protect our health care system. We'll continue to do so. One thing we will not do is to follow the NDP's prescription of a hard, Australian-style lockdown that would have indefinitely, for most of the past 20 months, shut down businesses, schools, and places of worship. We know what the NDP would have done to destroy this province had they been in place during this time of crisis. Thank goodness they were not.

School COVID-19 Response

Ms Hoffman: Today we heard from Dr. Hinshaw at Public Accounts that COVID-19 is airborne and that she gave advice to the Minister of Education to prioritize improving school ventilation a year ago. This government likes to claim that they spent \$250 million on capital to make schools safer, but we know that isn't true. At Public Accounts two weeks ago they admitted that it was less than a fifth of that to improve school ventilation. To the Premier: why didn't his government follow Dr. Hinshaw's advice to make schools safer?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the chief medical officer has given guidance to school boards that includes ensuring that their HVAC systems are in good working order, just as the government provided a quarter of a billion dollars in capital maintenance and repair funding, with full flexibility to school boards to use that as necessary on upgrading HVAC systems to improve the air quality within classrooms. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Ms Hoffman: The Premier refuses to take responsibility for his failures. The government knew that COVID-19 was airborne and that improving school ventilation was essential to keeping kids safe. The government released the schools plan and said that they would do that work, but they didn't. Government incompetence led to mass school closures multiple times, Premier. The easiest thing the government could have done is follow Dr. Hinshaw's advice. Will the Premier be up front with Alberta parents? Can the government stand up and actually say the words "COVID is airborne," and will the Premier do anything to take action to reduce risk in schools?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, while the NDP is once again trying to frighten parents and children, the reality is that out of our 2,400 schools there are only 32 with active COVID cases right now. I think Alberta parents have had enough with a relentless fear campaign being led by the NDP; 2,400 schools, 32 with active cases. Could they please try to ask thoughtful questions about COVID instead of trying to scare parents and children?

Ms Hoffman: What we're trying to do is get this government to take action and some responsibility for their terrible failures.

The government allocated \$250 million in capital funding to schools to prepare for the second wave, but the government was ineffective because this minister failed to follow Dr. Hinshaw's advice. Some kids got sick from COVID-19 at school and transmitted this deadly virus to their families, and there were tragic outcomes, Premier. Ultimately, people died because of the decisions of this government. To the Premier: will the government apologize to Albertans for knowingly failing to act to prevent COVID-19 in schools and take responsibility?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's sad and pathetic that the member opposite continues on this fear campaign when her own board, the Edmonton public school board, would not allow parents to purchase individual classroom air purifiers because it interfered with the operation of their HVAC. Forty-four million dollars out of \$250 million, over \$1 billion accessible to school boards, \$363 million in reserves, now over \$400 million accessible to school boards to use for HVAC or anything else they need to.

Energy Industry Update

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, as the global economy recovers from the economic impact of COVID-19, demand for energy is surging across the world. From Asia to Europe to the United States there's an increasing demand for oil and natural gas to fuel economic recovery. We know that in the past year Alberta's oil and gas industry has been recovering, with increased drilling and investment. To the Premier: can you tell us what the outlook is for new activity in Alberta's oil patch to help satisfy global demand?

Mr. Kenney: I'd like to thank the Member for Calgary-Cross for the thoughtful question about more encouraging news for Alberta's economic recovery today, from the Canadian Association of Energy Contractors announcing its forecast for next year. They foresee a 27 per cent increase in drilling activity next year. That means more rigs. That means, they estimate, 7,300 new full-time, good-paying jobs for oil field workers in this province, Mr. Speaker. You know what? Last month we produced and shipped – I know the NDP will be upset with this – the largest amount of oil ever in Alberta, and it's only going to go up next year. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that wonderful news, Premier. It's good to see a government that's actually creating jobs. Given that this surge in drilling is not only good news for Alberta's customers but also for Alberta's workers and given that every active drilling rig creates dozens of well-paying jobs for Albertans, to the Premier: can you tell us how many jobs this will create?

Mr. Kenney: In fact, I can, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned it; an additional 7,300 jobs. That would take the number of people employed in the drilling sector to about 35,000, supporting 6,500 wells, an increase of nearly 1,400 wells from this year. While we are supporting those hard-working women and men, many of them Indigenous, going out there in cold Alberta weather to drill for new oil, to drill for new gas, the NDP is attending rallies with Extinction Rebellion, and they are endorsing illegal shutdowns of the Coastal GasLink project. Shame on them.

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, given that today we heard that President Biden is ordering the release of 50 million barrels of oil to satisfy demand and given that new production will increase the supply of Alberta oil available for export both to our friends in the south and around the world, to the Premier: can you update us on the progress to increase the capacity to export additional barrels that will be produced through increased activity in the oil patch?

Mr. Kenney: A great question, Mr. Speaker. With the completion of the line 3 expansion, Enbridge is now shipping 700,000 barrels a day through that project. TMX is on schedule although, of course, there has been a delay in service for the main Trans Mountain because of the events in British Columbia. While we are doing

everything within our power to get those pipelines done to ensure a future for working men and women in Alberta, what is the NDP's priority? Passing resolutions to endorse illegal blockades of pipeline construction to put Indigenous people out of work. Shame on the NDP.

Surgery Wait Times

(continued)

Mr. Schmidt: Today at Public Accounts we heard from the Ministry of Health that the situation is much worse when it comes to delayed surgeries than is commonly understood. As of March 31, 2021, the government reported a backlog of 30,000 surgeries, but that estimate excludes all the misdiagnoses resulting from the mismanagement of this pandemic. To make matters worse, Health officials don't know the real numbers, but they did promise to follow up in 30 days. To the Minister of Health: why wait 30 days? Why not tell Albertans the real number of backlogged surgeries today?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. member for the question. As indicated a number of weeks ago, we had 15,000 surgeries postponed, and to all those families and individuals who had their surgeries postponed, I understand the challenges and difficulties that that faced. But there is good news. AHS continues to work, as we reduce the number of COVID patients in ICUs, to reassign those resources to surgeries. As indicated in this House, we're up to 75 per cent. We're not at 100 yet, but we're still working towards that.

2:10

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the single most important thing that Albertans are looking for is honesty from this government and given that honesty has been hard to come by throughout this pandemic as this government hid data and information as they lurched from crisis to crisis and given that Albertans with delayed surgeries just want to know what's going on with the health care system for their own mental health, to the Minister of Health: how many delayed amputations, surgical cancer operations, knee replacements, hip replacements, cardiac operations, transplants are there really right now in Alberta? Albertans deserve answers.

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, the focus of AHS – and I want to take this opportunity to thank all health care workers for their tremendous work not only in helping us get through the fourth wave but actually now to accelerate and provide the focus on getting surgeries done. That is what their focus is in AHS in terms of increasing the numbers as we reduce the resources that are associated with dealing with COVID. As indicated in this House before, we will come forward with numbers and a plan moving forward, a framework to be able to explain to Albertans where we're going to be able to catch up on the backlog. Part of that was the ASI, and I look forward to speaking to the House . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that Albertans who are waiting for life-saving or life-altering surgeries deserve honesty and transparency from their government, not these kinds of excuses and obfuscation, and given that this Premier and his government have an unblemished record of excuses and obfuscation – Albertans are getting tired of it – and given that this record is why this Premier is the least trusted and the least popular in the country and given that we had more than

30,000 delayed surgeries seven months ago, which, absent additional waves, would take nearly a year to get through, can the Minister of Health tell Albertans waiting for a knee or hip replacement just how much longer they have to wait?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, I know that AHS is concentrating on rebooking those surgeries as quickly as possible. In terms of when we're going to be able to get to that, it will depend. The numbers are coming down out of the fourth wave, but we still are sitting at 120 per cent of ICU capacity. When we've had to deal with it in the past in the previous waves, we cancelled 30,000 surgeries. We were able to catch up on those surgeries by August of this year. Unfortunately, we had to cancel 15,000 several weeks ago and counting, but we will be focused on delivering on the surgeries and delivering the health that Albertans need.

COVID-19 Long-term Effects

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, from day one during this pandemic the UCP has tried to do as little as possible during COVID-19, and now we see that this Minister of Health is ignoring the very real pain and impact of long COVID. In fact, when asked only a week ago, he refused to acknowledge it was real. Front-line workers got COVID on the job trying to care for sick people and save lives. Now some will carry those effects forward with them through their lives. Will the minister stand up today, publicly acknowledge that long COVID is real and requires support? A clear statement would mean so much to the many people struggling and afraid right now.

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, COVID causes lasting effects in some patients, and we acknowledge that. It's called long COVID by some. We acknowledge that there is an issue. Our understanding of the phenomenon of long COVID and how best to respond to patients with these symptoms is still very preliminary. If and when dedicated services are needed, AHS and clinicians will determine what those services are and how they should be organized. We are continually watching this very closely, and as we get more information on this, our system will respond to be able to protect the health of Albertans.

Ms Gray: Given that our Health critic is in Fort McMurray talking about the effects of long COVID today and given that AHS north zone had over 45,000 confirmed cases of COVID and given that AHS estimates that 20 per cent of those diagnosed will experience long-term symptoms – this means approximately 9,000 cases of long COVID in the north – and given that these people are likely to need support, will the Minister of Health commit to enacting our action plan to support the people in the north zone and all Albertans suffering from these lasting effects, or will this government continue to abandon Albertans when they need them most?

The Speaker: It almost sounded like the Opposition House Leader referred to the presence or the absence of a member. I'm not entirely sure if that happened, but if it did, it'd be unparliamentary.

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's government and AHS will support the health needs of all Albertans. We understand that long COVID is still being studied at this point in time, and we're recognizing and looking at how best to address those particular needs. My job is not to tell AHS how to organize themselves to be able to respond to this. I understand that the Official Opposition has made a suggestion for establishment of a strategic clinical network. These networks are for very large issues associated with cardiac, PCN, and cancer, but this is up to AHS to make a decision how best to organize themselves.

Ms Gray: Given that some of these victims of long COVID got the virus while they were working on the front lines of hospitals, homeless shelters, teaching in schools, working in seniors homes, and more, given that AHS has said that they are not tracking long COVID patient symptoms and given that we've repeatedly pushed for legislation to enshrine presumptive WCB coverage for those who got COVID on the job, will the minister commit to immediately launching tracking and reporting of long COVID symptoms to ensure Albertans have a full view of the situation, and will he commit to supporting our bill for presumptive coverage? The impacted workers are heroes and deserve it.

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, as indicated already, we, our government and AHS, commit to providing supports for Albertans and their health across the entire province in regard to all issues. We're continuing to study the effects of long COVID, what the impacts will be on our health system, and we will watch this carefully. I'm sure that AHS and Alberta Health will make recommendations to us to be able to provide the funding that we need to be able to support this and all of the diseases that Albertans face.

The Speaker: The Member for Highwood has a question to ask.

Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past two years it has become blatantly obvious how critical our health care system is. In addition to our hospitals, we are now seeing an increase in call volume combined with manpower issues that are affecting our emergency medical services. With the increase in demand combined with rural ambulances routinely being tied up in large municipalities far away from our communities, there is a deep concern coming from our rural residents as a result of rising response times. To the Minister of Health: what steps are being taken to protect Albertans' health with respect to the EMS system?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. EMS is currently seeing an approximately 30 per cent higher call volume since the summer. We can all imagine the stress this puts on paramedics and first responders. Albertans know that when they call for an ambulance, they'll get one. Our government is protecting Albertans' health. AHS has added over 200 more paramedics over the last two years. We've expanded overtime and introduced mobile integrated health teams to help address the issue. Even today AHS is launching the hours of work project to ensure care is delivered while addressing the issues of fatigue at stations.

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Minister. Given that you are working on a lot of these pilot projects in order to be able to deal with the rural stress that we are seeing within our areas such as Okotoks, High River, Black Diamond, and Turner Valley and given that these initiatives will help keep critical resources more available in our rural communities but given that this growing demand will still require additional EMS trained personnel, what is the Minister of Advanced Education doing to support institutions to increase EMS graduates?

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

Mr. Nicolaidis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the member. We're working very closely with our postsecondary institutions, especially at this time, when we have

significant shortages in a number of professions, including the one that the member mentioned. We also have shortages in skilled trades and in other professions, so we're working very closely with them to develop targeted initiatives. One of those initiatives, as an example, that I can highlight includes the development of new apprenticeship programs. We've recently received 18 submissions from postsecondary institutions to develop new programs, and we're looking at them thoroughly.

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you to the minister for that answer. Given that EMS and Alberta Health Services are looking into pilot projects and increasing service into EMS that especially focus around rural communities and given that there is a strategy coming from the Minister of Advanced Education to help increase EMS graduates and given that when it comes to EMS care, a continued focus is critical to reducing response times, to the Minister of Health: in addition to any of the above strategies, what else is our government going to do to continue to support EMS and reduce response times in the future?

2:20

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. AHS is working on a provincial service plan that will evaluate the needs in the medium and long term to manage future EMS growth. This work will include stakeholder engagements and feedback opportunities along the way to help address concerns regarding ambulances as a shared provincial resource and how to balance collective health care needs with local interest. The bottom line is that the public can be confident that EMS will always respond. EMS continues to ensure the most critical patients are prioritized for receiving immediate care. We'll make sure that they have the resources to keep doing that. I am pleased to state the numbers are coming down and the response times are improving.

Small Businesses and Supply Chain Disruptions

Member Loyola: As with all Albertans, our caucus continues to send our support, prayers, and wishes to the people of British Columbia coping with the natural disaster they are facing. The impact of these floods on our supply continues to impact Alberta's small businesses, with some restaurants reporting having to close early due to lack of supplies or having to pay higher and higher prices for supplies. What specifically is the minister doing to help small businesses get through this crisis? Does he realize the danger that they are in, and why won't he act?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Jobs, Economy and Innovation.

Mr. Schweitzer: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to work with CP, CN, the big trucking companies as well on transportation and logistics issues. We're monitoring this on a daily basis both between my ministry, the Minister of Transportation, and the Premier's office to make sure that we help provide support to the people of British Columbia as they get through this. Transportation routes are starting to get back up and running. Obviously, it's going to be a process to get everything back up to full steam. We're continuing to diligently work through this every single day.

Member Loyola: Observing but no action.

Given that many of these small businesses had already been struggling due to the fourth wave of COVID-19, which hit Alberta harder than anywhere else in Canada due to this government's incompetence, and given that we've highlighted for weeks the

failure of this government to get supports to businesses that need them and given that it is unclear how long it will take to clear the backlog, what is the minister doing to ensure that small businesses struggling to get back on their feet can survive? Specifics, please, Minister. Talking points won't keep the doors open.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, that comment is uncharitable. When he says "inaction": actually, I spoke to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure yesterday. I asked him: exactly what action do you expect? Because all of our colleagues and Premier were talking to them and engaging them. He said: "We've got things under control. Stand by. We'll let you know." That's the answer I got. If he knows anything more than that, I would be happy to sit down with that member and want to know what you expect me to do. I'll connect with our counterparts in B.C. and the action they request.

Member Loyola: Given that many of these businesses lived through the 2013 Calgary floods and understand the difficulty of restoring supply lines after a disaster and given that food-producing companies here in Edmonton are being forced to suspend production because of lack of supplies and given that neither the ministers of agriculture, Transportation, jobs, or Infrastructure have laid out anything close to a plan to support these businesses, will one of those ministers stand up and commit to either providing support or even just a plan to ensure that more businesses aren't forced to shut down on their watch?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, that question is completely ridiculous. My colleagues the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Infrastructure continue to diligently be on this file.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about Alberta's economy right now. The *Financial Post* commented about the fact that Alberta has got its swagger back. That's the *Financial Post*. Let's go back and take a look at the NDP legacy tour bus. Let's go back in time. Did we ever hear about Alberta having its swagger back under the NDP? Let me give you the answer: never. Never is the answer. [interjections]

Thank you.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Indigenous Relations

Ms Goehring: Mr. Speaker, all of the members of this Assembly should be united in actions of reconciliation with Indigenous people of this province. Doing so means taking a look at our actions and being willing to make a change. This includes acknowledging the importance of Indigenous culture, traditions, art, and customs. How many Indigenous people has the Minister of Culture spoken to that have told him they view Canadian culture and Indigenous culture as one and the same?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, preservation of the ancient Indigenous cultures of these lands is critically important and a part of the path to reconciliation, but you know what else is important? Economic rights and the rights of First Nations, Indigenous people to be able to put food on the table for their families, to have a future, to move from poverty to prosperity, so why is the NDP backing an illegal campaign that would throw hundreds of Indigenous people out of work in northern British Columbia, the biggest employer of Indigenous people? To help them fund the preservation of their culture is the oil and gas industry. Why are they attacking Indigenous people working in that industry?

Ms Goehring: I guess the answer is: none.

Given that the legacy of residential schools includes cruel and calculated efforts to destroy Indigenous culture and Indigenous

traditions and force assimilation and given that true reconciliation requires an acknowledgement of what Indigenous people have endured, the long-term systemic issues that trauma has caused, and then making substantial change to the systems and structures that allow these atrocities to occur, what specific work is the Minister of Culture doing to see through real truth and reconciliation? Can he tell us exactly which calls to action he has been tasked with accepting and implementing?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I know the Minister of Culture is working on the Alberta identity initiative, which will celebrate the central role of Indigenous peoples in these lands for millennia, but it's really the Minister of Indigenous Relations who is taking tremendous leadership. But you know what I hear from Indigenous people? It's this. They won't have the resources to preserve their culture, transmit their language, or maintain the integrity of their communities if they don't have jobs, if they don't have economic opportunity, and in many parts of Canada that means developing resources. The NDP passed a motion to block a project supported by 20 elected First Nations councils in British Columbia. Why are they attacking Indigenous people?

Ms Goehring: Given that last night I put forward an amendment to include Indigenous traditions and culture in the definition of artistic training in Bill 75 and given that this amendment would have directly acknowledged the importance of Indigenous art and given that the minister denied this amendment because he owned some beadwork and some other ridiculous excuses that aren't worth repeating in this House, I'd like to give the minister another chance. To the same minister. I'd be happy to work with him to put together another amendment to Bill 75 to ensure respectful and modern language that acknowledges and respects Indigenous people and their art. My question is simple. Will you . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Premier has risen.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the proposed Arts Professions Recognition Act to which she refers includes a very clear and beautiful articulation of the centrality of Indigenous culture to Alberta's identity and history. By the way, it's a bill that the NDP never brought forward. But what we hear from Indigenous communities is that cultural preservation is not terribly helpful when people are stuck in perennial poverty. They need to be able to have the dignity of employment. The NDP passed a motion this week attacking the wishes of 20 northern B.C. First Nations to move their people to prosperity. Why?

Repeat Violent Offenders

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, my constituency was recently shocked by the tragic deaths of 24-year-old Mchale Busch and her 16-month-old son Noah McConnell. They were murdered by convicted sex offender Robert Major. When Major was released in 2017, he was banned from leaving Edmonton and flagged as highly likely to reoffend against women and children. Despite these warnings, his conditions were lifted in 2020. In September, after 10 days of living next door to Mchale and Noah, he did offend again, and now Cody McConnell has lost his partner and his son. To the Minister of Justice: what steps can our government take to ensure Albertans are protected from repeat offenders?

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

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for this very important question. Let me first express, through you,

my deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those affected by this incredibly tragic case. While I cannot comment on the specifics of the case, I will say this, that my heart goes out to all of those affected, their family, their friends, and their communities. We take this issue of repeat offenders incredibly seriously, and I can assure that we will get to the bottom of this.

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that our government has committed to reviewing gaps in the Criminal Code to protect Albertans from repeat offenders and given that the Member of Parliament for my constituency is introducing a private member's bill on this issue based on a petition online and given that society should not be held hostage by criminals exiting the system that have not been rehabilitated, will the Minister of Justice work together with his federal counterpart to protect Albertans?

Mr. Madu: The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. I have been advocating to my federal counterpart about the need to fix the revolving door of the justice system, institute mandatory minimums, and ensure that dangerous criminals are kept off the streets and communities. I will commit to this member here and now that I will continue to work with my federal counterparts to protect Albertans. As we move to do our part to fix this problem, this government has not shied away from looking to address rural crime and bring us away from the soft-on-crime approach of the previous NDP government.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Minister. Given that in February 2020 we introduced legislation to create an Alberta Parole Board with the explicit intent of stopping repeat offenders from targeting Albertans and given that the federal Parole Board has proven ineffective in preventing major crimes and violence again and given that the Alberta Parole Board has been created and active since this past April, to the same minister: what can the Alberta Parole Board provide in the future in terms of preventing attacks from repeat offenders?

Mr. Madu: Mr. Speaker, this United Conservative government is proud to have established Alberta's very own parole board, which has been reviewing cases now since the spring of this year. We are ensuring that Albertans have a fairer, more responsive justice system and reducing the revolving door by bringing Albertan values into this process, but we know that there's still more to be done. We know the federal government must step up by enacting laws that put a stop to the revolving-door justice system. That law is called the Criminal Code, and it's a federal legislation.

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

Postsecondary Education Legislation and Funding

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 74 is a perfect example of just how far this UCP government is willing to go to push through devastating changes to our postsecondary system that no one was asking for. Under pressure to justify cuts, the UCP is looking to set up some kind of perpetual MacKinnon panel on postsecondary education to advise the minister to further dismantle our universities. To the Minister of Advanced Education: how much will his advisory council be directed to cut from postsecondary schools, and how much more will Albertans have to pay?

Mr. Nicolaides: Wow. I have heard a lot of ridiculous things in this Assembly, but I think that one is pretty high up there. I can't understand how creating an advisory council to develop more

strategic vision for our postsecondary education is something that we shouldn't pursue. The member asked, you know: who's asking for this? Our postsecondary community is asking for this. They see the need to come together and build a common vision to strengthen our postsecondary system. The bill will do precisely that. Unfortunately, the members opposite don't approve it and don't want this to happen because – you want to know why, Mr. Speaker? – they want to micromanage every single aspect of postsecondary education.

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, given that the UCP has already cut more than \$690 million in funding to postsecondary, leading to a loss of almost 1,500 jobs and an increase of \$400 million to tuition fees just this year, and given that these changes are making Alberta's postsecondaries less attractive to Alberta, national, and international students and given that the UCP is already seeing Alberta students leaving the province, for the first time in decades, to look for better opportunities that are available elsewhere, to the same ministry: how is increasing our tuition and reducing staff levels in our institutions actually . . .

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, perhaps another good opportunity to provide more information to members in the Assembly regarding tuition levels. As it stands today, tuition levels are relatively comparable with that of British Columbia and below the national average.

You know, what's more important, Mr. Speaker, what's more interesting to me: I want to know where the member opposite stands when it comes to illegal blockades of important infrastructure. I know that that member's party supports illegal blockades and illegal activity. In fact, the member opposite himself stood on the very steps of this Legislature chanting: no more approvals.

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, given that this minister has made it clear that cuts will just keep on coming and has refused to listen to Albertans and given that postsecondary board members, voting members, staff, or students are all ineligible to be appointed to his special council, meaning that anyone with current, relevant experience will not be involved, and given that these limitations make it clear that this minister is not interested in hearing from a diverse, broad collaboration, which UCP insiders and friends do we expect to see appointed to his advisory council, and will you include anyone who is opposed to your changes to our postsecondary system?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, it certainly won't have people like Tzaporah Berman, whom I know the NDP love to appoint to special committees. Mr. Speaker, when we're looking at the future of postsecondary education, we need to ensure that we have broad representation. It's quite interesting that the member raises this point. I remember in Committee of the Whole during debate on this legislation the NDP brought an amendment forward, but it had nothing to do with what the member is now talking about. He had the opportunity. Why didn't he make an amendment to the bill to provide those changes that he is seeking? I can't understand it, but then again I have a hard time understanding the logic of the NDP on many issues.

School-based Mental Health Supports

Ms Hoffman: It's no secret that the mental health of Alberta youth suffered during this pandemic. The government's failures to take the pandemic seriously meant that thousands of students were forced to transition repeatedly between in-person and online learning. The Minister of Education fired over 20,000 education

workers during the first wave, and this especially hurt disabled students. Our caucus put forward a common-sense plan to have a mental health counsellor for each and every Alberta school to support students. Has the minister reviewed the proposal, and will she implement it?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question in regard to mental health for students. We know that COVID has affected our students adversely as well as our staff members, and we are working very diligently to ensure that we bring forward programs. We have programs in place, but we want to enhance them. Yes, we are looking to make sure that we enhance the programs that we have in place for our young people because they deserve it.

Ms Hoffman: Given that months ago we proposed a mental health therapist for each and every school and given that despite the very real stress students have been under, the government has not invested enough to meet the mental health needs of kids and given that the former UCP Minister of Health once declared in this very House that there was no youth mental health crisis in Alberta and then proceeded to cancel the child and adolescent mental health centre for Edmonton, will the Minister of Education for once stand up, put students first, support their mental health, and work to put a counsellor in each and every school? Yes or no?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, to put a mental health counsellor in every school would require 2,415 mental health workers when we don't even have capacity to deal with the issues that we have on hand right now. We know that there is a shortage of specialized training right across the province. We're working very closely with the Minister of Community and Social Services, the Minister of Children's Services, the Minister of Health to ensure that we provide authentic wraparound services. That's what we're going to deliver for the students, because they deserve it.

Ms Hoffman: Given that the minister claims to want to support academics but, rather than actually doing that, she's promoting a curriculum that will impair students' ability to succeed and given that one thing she could do is listen to the teachers and students who are asking this government to make provincial achievement tests optional again this year, will the minister show sympathy for the stress and mental health needs of Alberta students, which her government helped cause, and make provincial achievement and diploma exams optional again this year?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, I am listening. I'm listening to the students. My minister's youth advisory council had actually advised me that they wanted to have the experience of writing their diploma exams, but they felt that the 30 per cent weighting was too much. That's why we introduced the 10 per cent weighting, so that they could have that experience yet still be able to lower the stress levels. I'm always listening to the students. I'm listening to the parents. I'm listening to the teachers. In fact, we are doing what the system is requiring.

Thank you.

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

2:40

Homelessness Strategies

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the start of this pandemic there was a heroic effort by our now Transportation

minister and municipalities and local shelter providers to ensure that there was increased shelter capacity, improved distancing, the offering of isolation shelters to create a safe shelter experience for those experiencing homelessness in our province. We are now facing another blistering cold Alberta winter and the continued pandemic. To the minister: can you update this House on emergency shelter availability and what we are doing to make sure that people aren't left out in the cold this winter?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, hon. member, for this great question. As of the last week we have new additions to the shelter system. The Premier and I announced \$21.5 million in additional support for shelters, isolation support, and women's shelters. With all that, the community stakeholders received a very strong response. Let's have a few quotes here. Sandra Clarkson from the Calgary Drop-In Centre: "We are grateful to our partners at the Government of Alberta for the additional funding." Bruce Reith from the Hope Mission in Edmonton: "Thank you to the provincial government for helping us with extra capacity to serve everyone . . . [this] winter." We're working hard to ensure that our most vulnerable are protected.

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

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the answer. Given that we know that emergency shelters are temporary by nature and certainly not ideal for anyone and given that we know the longer that people spend in shelter on the streets, the harder it is for them to beat the streets and further given that homeless shelter and outreach funding has more than doubled in the last 10 years, to the same minister: what efforts are being made to partner with municipalities and our civil society partners to help end people's experience with homelessness?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the time we announced additional resources but also established a provincial task force. That task force will work with municipal leaders, civil society, business, and treatment recovery agencies. The task force will be tasked with coming up with a made-in-Alberta solution that is comprehensive, co-ordinated, that will have opportunities to give a warm place for those who need a place but also connecting them to address some of the root causes.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister for his efforts. Given that one of the most significant barriers that I still hear from my former colleagues in shelters and in outreach programs is that of mental health and addiction and given that our government is clearly committed to making a difference for people experiencing chronic homelessness in our community, to the minister: how is your ministry collaborating with our partners to help address these concerns around mental health and addictions in our communities?

The Speaker: The associate minister.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. First of all – the member is probably acutely aware of this – we were the first jurisdiction in Canada to

eliminate user fees. That is a huge, huge, huge thing that we did here in Alberta. I can tell you that right now. Four thousand newly funded spaces for treatment, five world-class recovery communities that are currently under development: that is a fantastic effort being done by this government.

I'm going to tell you what we're not going to be doing. We are not going to be following the policies that have destroyed the cities of San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver. Those are the policies of the NDP.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period. In 30 seconds or less we will return to the remainder of the daily Routine.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table the Northern Alberta Development Council's annual report. The council did great work in the last fiscal year. It partnered with Alberta Advanced Education and Alberta Education to provide 227 bursaries to Alberta students. These bursaries helped to attract and retain skilled professionals in Alberta's north. Working with the secretariat at Jobs, Economy and Innovation, the NADC prepared a report based on a survey of 636 northern employers. This report provides insights into the difficulties of northern recruitment and identifies the types of jobs they need to fill.

The council met with stakeholders to inform the development of a northern strategy, which the Fair Deal Panel identified in its report. The NADC also continued to attend meetings with several stakeholder groups – for example, the Northern Alberta Elected Leaders, Labour Education Applied Research North, Water North Coalition – to encourage awareness of northern perspectives, labour market trends, training needs, and delivering of safe drinking water.

The Northern Alberta Development Council aims to advance general development in northern Alberta and advises the government accordingly. I'd like to thank the council for its contribution to northern Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the five copies of the report.

The Speaker: At approximately 1:56 and 1:58 the Deputy Government House Leader rose on points of order.

Point of Order Allegations against a Member

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it is allowable, both points of order pertain to the same member and are done in consecutive questions. I'd like to roll them into one.

At the time, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was speaking to the Premier, saying, "Why is the Premier hiding this information from Albertans?" In the second set of questions the opposition leader said something very similar, saying, "You have answers," referring to the hon. Premier, "Stop hiding them." I rise on this point of order under 23(h), (i), and (j) as it certainly makes allegations against another member, imputes false or unavowed motives, and I would suspect that this language or language similar to this would create disorder in the Chamber. I believe this is a point of order and ask that that member apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I submit that this is not a point of order but a matter of debate given that we are talking

about a backlog of 15,000 surgeries that this government chose to announce on a day where they also introduced three bills and left for constituency break. They continue to now not be able to provide updated information despite repeated requests from the opposition, from civil society, from experts looking for data that this government should and likely does have. I would submit that this is a matter of debate, that the Leader of the Official Opposition is looking for information that this government should be providing on a daily basis and should be tracking for the benefit of all Albertans. I look forward to your ruling.

The Speaker: This is a matter of debate, not a point of order. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

I also have been informed that points of order from 1:59 and 2 o'clock have been withdrawn. I believe that concludes the points of order for today.

As such, we are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Oil and Gas Pipeline Opposition

104. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

1. condemn David Suzuki's comments on pipelines as reported by the *National Post*,
2. condemn any comments made calling for the intentional destruction of energy infrastructure, and
3. unequivocally condemn incitements of violent eco terrorism.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise today. I move this motion in this Chamber today, first of all, because I think all Albertans and, in fact, I would go as far as to say that I think every single Canadian should be appalled by any comments that could be used to incite violence, that in any way refer to the blowing up of a pipeline or any type of infrastructure. In fact, any comments calling for the blowing up of anything, I think, are unacceptable. These kinds of comments are appalling and not something that we should expect from anybody within our society, let alone a public figure.

I also want to make a clear statement with this motion as the minister of environment, one, to stand up for the incredible environmental record inside of our province and for the incredible, hard work of the women and men who work in our energy industry even today, as we speak. Certainly, no call for violence against those individuals should ever be accepted. But, on top of that, we want to call today immediately for David Suzuki to apologize for what he said and to stop any remarks that can in any way be used to support eco terrorism of any kind inside our country or anywhere. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear, full stop: that is completely and utterly unacceptable.

2:50

I also have concerns with the fact that we saw the Official Opposition, the NDP, who claim to be a mainstream party inside our province, right here in Alberta, take a disturbing stance this weekend. The NDP passed a motion, with 85 per cent support, supporting the illegal blockades of important pipeline projects in B.C. Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. That is the NDP, the Official Opposition in this province, passing a motion condoning illegal acts.

Now, it's important to note that at this juncture the David Suzuki Foundation has said the following about their founder and their namesake. "When David speaks publicly, he speaks on his own behalf – not for the David Suzuki Foundation." Now, clearly, the organization that is named after him is trying to distance themselves from their very namesake. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the opposition will distance themselves to the same extent, because so far it has been nothing but silence across the way.

The David Suzuki Foundation was also quick to endorse the former Premier's announcement, though, Mr. Speaker, of a carbon tax almost exactly six years ago. That is the now Official Opposition leader, the leader of the NDP in this province, who enjoyed David Suzuki's support for their job-killing carbon tax and for the climate change policies that caused devastation all across this province and, ultimately, portions of this country, utilizing the support of an organization whose founder and namesake has used language inciting violence or asking for violence in some ways when it comes to pipelines.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of extreme views were normalized by the previous government on that day as well. We saw them standing on the stage with Steven Guilbeault that day, who also endorsed their carbon tax, the now environment minister of this country. The actions of his group, Équiterre, and the David Suzuki Foundation were documented in the Public Inquiry into Anti-Alberta Energy Campaigns' final report. The inquiry into anti-Alberta energy campaigns confirmed that hundreds of millions of foreign dollars were used specifically to block our province's oil and gas developments, which has impacted the lives and the livelihoods of Albertans.

Prior to endorsing the former NDP Premier's carbon tax, the David Suzuki Foundation gladly accepted the donations of proceeds, Mr. Speaker, from a video game called Pipe Trouble in 2013, that depicted protesters blowing up a pipeline in northern B.C. These are appalling things, but even more shocking is that a government of the day, now Official Opposition, would in any way be associated with somebody who would allow their name in any way to receive proceeds from a video game that called for violence like blowing up a pipeline, even more appalling given Dr. Suzuki's comments this past weekend.

In this day and age it is completely and utterly unacceptable for anyone in public life to call for people to be illegally blockading projects or in any way to be condoning acts of violence or saying that acts of violence would take place when it comes to infrastructure, and this Chamber needs to stand united in that message, that this is wrong and David Suzuki is way off base.

Alberta is, of course, the third-largest producer of oil and gas products anywhere in the world. Certainly, when it comes to environmental and social governments, we are amongst the best in the world, Mr. Speaker, and we should be proud of that. It goes without saying that on the social side the Alberta jurisdiction and the Canadian jurisdiction are amongst the best in the world when it comes to human rights and ethics. The fact that these types of organizations continue to advocate against Alberta and Canadian oil and would rather go to places like Russia to be able to buy products like that is absolutely appalling just in and of itself.

But these critics are also wrong when it comes to our environmental record in Alberta. Alberta was the first jurisdiction to take emission management seriously, way back when Ralph Klein sat in my seat as minister of environment in the province of Alberta, and ever since I have become the minister of environment, our government has worked tirelessly with our industry to continue to make our products as clean as possible when it comes to emissions management. Over the last several years we've announced hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of projects to help us keep

our environmental record strong and, most importantly, to keep our energy industry working.

Through the technology and innovation program in our province and through technology and innovation in our province we have kept thousands of people at work on these types of projects in our province, a sharp contrast, Mr. Speaker, to the Official Opposition's approach, to the NDP's approach inside our province, who focused on a job-killing climate policy and moving forward to try to destroy the energy industry in our province, working closely with their allies like David Suzuki, who supported their attempt to do just that inside this province, or the close personal ally of the NDP, the federal Liberal government inside our country, who, sadly, continues to attack repeatedly our largest industry.

But we in this province do take our environmental record seriously. We're proud of our province, and we're proud of our environment. We know, Mr. Speaker, for example, that we produce water for much of North America. We also have some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world, that people come to visit each and every year, and we have expertise and know-how to ethically produce oil and gas and still keep our region beautiful. If anyone doubts that, I encourage them to come and visit our beautiful province, north to south or east to west. It is absolutely ridiculous to hear David Suzuki and others continue to disparage what is one of the greatest industries and certainly the largest employer of people in our country and the largest producer of GDP inside the country of Canada, never mind just the province of Alberta.

It certainly is my hope, Mr. Speaker, with this motion, that the entire Chamber will unanimously condemn this type of language and make clear that we – we Albertans and Alberta's Legislature – expect the rule of law to be followed inside our province and inside our country. I want to make clear that we support the right to protest, but there are rules in place to protect infrastructure and protect people. Law enforcement has an important job to do as they enforce those rules. A statement that would imply anything along the lines of blowing something up is just absolutely unacceptable, dangerous, and completely and utterly inappropriate and something we should never ever hear from anybody in public life, and anybody within public life should race to the microphone to condemn such language.

At the end of the day, though, Mr. Speaker, standing up to characters like David Suzuki, who would disparage this industry and the men and women who work in it, the oil and gas industry, I should say, is absolutely critical. We're proud of our industry, and we depend on the energy industry inside this province and our country. We're proud of them, and we will continue as a government to support them. I truly hope all parties inside our province's Legislature will take a stand for our industry because it is one of the core foundations that brought our province into prosperity and will bring it back yet again.

We will never accept any language that implies that some sort of violence or destruction should take place when it comes to that industry or any issues that matter, and certainly we will never accept any party inside this Chamber, Official Opposition or government, or anywhere else that will support their party members voting to illegally blockade projects in B.C. or anywhere inside the country.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday in my ministerial statement, to provide an opportunity for the entire Chamber to have a chance to be able to rise and speak to this very important issue, which is another reason why I moved the motion, but most importantly it's very important for the Official Opposition to stand today and condemn the remarks from their convention, from their policy people, that were passed this weekend, to make clear that they do not support any inciting of violence when it comes to pipelines or any type of infrastructure and to stop dog whistling to

extreme eco terrorism types of organizations here inside this province or anywhere inside this country and to stand with the government and make clear that David Suzuki's comments are wrong, unacceptable.

We will never ever tolerate anybody trying to break the rule of law, and we'll continue to stand with the hard-working men and women that work in our energy industry each and every day. Because of that, I hope that this motion will enjoy the support of all 87 members of this Chamber.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others wishing to join in the debate? I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, and we'll follow that by the hon. Minister of Energy. The hon. member has the call.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in favour of the government motion before us. I think all members of the House and, frankly, we as a society can agree that violence or threats of violence are not the way to resolve our conflicts in a civil and democratic society, and such behaviour and such threats must not ever be normalized under any circumstances. I also think that we must not only condemn violence and terrorism, but we must also take action so that acts and threats of violence do not fall on fragile grounds.

3:00

Mr. Speaker, we recognize and support everyone's right to protest. This includes civil disobedience, but violence is not a legitimate form of protest. The right to protest cannot and must not ever include dangerous or violent actions. It cannot include incitement to dangerous or violent actions. It is for this reason that on this side of the House we condemn the statements made by Dr. Suzuki as they were reported. These statements were risky, unhelpful, and dangerous. We condemn them.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

We must actively work through constructive processes of meaningful negotiation and dialogue and respect the rule of law: the rule of law, Mr. Speaker, that recognizes the rights of Indigenous people, including rights held by the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation. We are also concerned about the heavy-handed and violent nature of the enforcement action taken in Wet'suwet'en territory last week and hope that future actions are rooted in an approach focused on meaningful negotiation and reconciliation now and into the future. We urge all governments involved to work in the spirit of reconciliation and through the memorandum of understanding signed in February 2020 with the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs to establish dialogue and alternatives to a standoff around this project.

Unfortunately, however, we don't have to look too far, where we saw the government showing disrespect for the rule of law by introducing Bill 1, which impacted Albertans' right to protest and is actively being challenged in the courts as a violation of the rights of Albertans to free association, expression, and protest. We have seen this government again and again undermining Albertans' rights. Bill 1 was, of course, the government's answer to the protests of Indigenous and environmental activists. We at the time warned the government that enabling itself to make protest illegal was wrong and illegal. This has proven true. Arthur Noskey, grand chief of the Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, said about Bill 1, and I quote: the intent of this bill is racially targeted towards First Nation treaty partners in this country. With all of the racial tension happening today, the government should realize this bill is not going to work. Under treaty we have collective, inherent rights.

When people come together to protest, it's because of their collective rights. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, I think Albertans have the right to question the sincerity of this government. We have seen this government flout the rule of law whenever it suits their interests. Tearing up signed contracts with teachers, nurses, and doctors; ramming through legislation to fire the Election Commissioner while members of the government caucus are under active investigation; threatening to establish a new police force while the Premier is under investigation by the RCMP and quite a few members . . .

Mr. Rutherford: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, a point of order has been brought forward. I see the hon. deputy government whip.

Point of Order Relevance

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under 23(b)(i), I would appreciate if the member opposite could get back on to Motion 104. I think there's enough content in that motion to speak of it. He's clearly off topic and getting into matters that have nothing to do with this motion.

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has risen.

Mr. Sabir: Mr. Speaker, it's not a point of order. I'm speaking directly to the motion, which relates to the rule of law, and when I stated that the Premier is under investigation by the RCMP, it's a fact reported by the RCMP. It's not a point of order at all.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. I have taken into account both sides with regard to this potential point of order. I would remind all members that staying on topic with regard to what is being debated in the House is always something that will lead to effective debate. However, at this stage I do not find that this is a point of order. I do think that the hon. member was on topic.

I would ask him to please continue with about 14:38 remaining if he so chooses to take it all.

Debate Continued

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was talking about the rule of law and how this UCP government flouts that from time to time, which is not helpful. One example was that they are threatening to establish a new police force while the Premier is under investigation by the RCMP.

Mr. Rutherford: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Another point of order has been brought forward.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder Relevance

Mr. Rutherford: Section 23(h), (i), and (j), Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The hon. deputy whip.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite under 23(h), (i), and (j) has just accused the government of flouting the rule of law while being investigated by the RCMP, suggesting

that they are actively attempting to remove a jurisdiction to cover something up. I mean, he's clearly talking about the Premier. It has to stop because it is language that is causing disruption in this Assembly, and it is off topic, completely off topic.

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has risen to respond.

Mr. Sabir: Again it's not a point of order. I think the deputy whip summarized it correctly, that what I am suggesting is that when the Premier, head of the Alberta government, is under investigation by the RCMP, an attempt to replace the RCMP with an Alberta police force is questionable. That's exactly what I said. It goes against the principles of rule of law, which I was talking about. So it's not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker: This is by my estimation, unless there is something new to add to the point of order, clearly a difference of opinion. It is not a point of order.

That said, I would just take this opportunity now to remind that we are debating what I thought was a government motion that seemed to focus more on pipelines, condemning any comments made calling for the intentional destruction of energy infrastructure. I would just remind all members that that seems to be the topic of this government motion and if hon. members could please direct their comments at least somewhat towards what we are discussing. Obviously, members in here historically have had a wide berth with regard to the comments that they make. With that, I consider this matter closed.

The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall with about 14 minutes and 12 seconds now should he choose to take it all.

Debate Continued

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think another important issue with respect to the rule of law is duty to consult and the doctrine of free, prior, informed consent. This is a well-established principle in Canadian jurisprudence. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada in *Tsilhqot'in Nation versus British Columbia* – it's a 2014 case – made it clear that free, prior, informed consent is an essential part of this land title litigation process. I quote what the Supreme Court of Canada said.

After Aboriginal title to land has been established by court declaration or agreement, the Crown must seek the consent of the title-holding Aboriginal group to developments on the land. Absent consent, development of title land cannot proceed unless the Crown has discharged its duty to consult and can justify the intrusion on title under s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. The usual remedies that lie for breach of interests in land are available, adapted as may be necessary to reflect the special nature of Aboriginal title and the fiduciary obligation owed by the Crown to the holders of Aboriginal title.

3:10

Mr. Speaker, industry in Alberta, including the oil and gas industry, need this UCP government to take its duty and the law seriously. They need this government to take the constitutionally protected rights of Indigenous people seriously. I think we can agree that if we work together with Indigenous communities, respecting these principles, respecting their rights, we are all better off.

We did see respect for rule of law and a responsible approach to Indigenous rights and land development with the consultation work, with the progress we made when we were in government and were able to get the Trans Mountain pipeline through. We worked with Indigenous communities and made sure that the province did its part to move this project forward in a respectable, respectful way.

We also worked with Indigenous communities to develop new Canada-Alberta oil sands environmental monitoring that brought affected communities back to the table and ensured that we had a program that respected science, Indigenous rights, and Indigenous partners. Mr. Speaker, the current government suspended a significant portion of this program without consulting with Indigenous communities. They only learned about this from the press. These communities not only rightfully criticized the government for this, but also the investment adviser Morningstar wrote:

The Alberta government has become the oil patch's own worst enemy by weakening environmental monitoring and oversight to the extent that foreign investors and foreign companies alike face reputational risks by investing in oilsands companies and projects.

We can see how we sometimes must question this government's record again. This is the government that is trying to establish ESG and a strong investment profile for the province, but they cannot do that by failing to come to the table with Indigenous communities and on climate change. Like, everything they touch they seem to want to destroy, any progress that Alberta, industry, and Indigenous communities are making. This includes any progress on climate leadership.

The government hasn't even followed the advice of the failed Steve Allan inquiry. The inquiry recommended not to use the term "anti-Albertan," but the government continued to do so. The report also recommended scrapping the government's embarrassing war room, that has brought Alberta nothing but bad press internationally and embarrassment internationally, yet the war room is still up and running, Mr. Speaker.

We believe that economy and environment must go hand in hand, that it's possible to do so. If the government wants to show leadership by ESG criteria, they must reverse course and make meaningful action and move forward with a real climate plan and not the war room embarrassment. Instead, what we've seen from this government is that they invested \$1.3 billion into an imaginary asset. They spent our money, Albertans' money: \$1.3 billion on KXL. Instead of taking meaningful action, the Premier invested in this project and lost \$1.3 billion of Albertan money, and we did not get anything in return. Nothing. This money could have been used for many things, including building relationships with Indigenous communities, new energy and economic partnerships, but it wasn't. Instead, we saw cuts to Indigenous communities, their programs, and the Indigenous Relations department budget.

We have not seen meaningful progress on treaty lands entitlement claims and have seen little to no progress on reconciliation under this government. They even have stopped acknowledging treaty lands before making public statements – they made it optional – which was the recommendation and call to action from Indigenous communities. Government's curriculum is another example in a series of conflicts between this UCP government and Indigenous communities. We have seen the government make racist Chris Champion a key adviser under the curriculum, and it shows. It removes all mention of residential schools from kindergarten to grade 4. That's what happens when you put Chris Champion in charge of curriculum. This is no way of moving forward on reconciliation. The government got this wrong. ESG requires a government that sees itself as a partner to Indigenous communities, and we have not seen that from this government.

As I said, we support the government motion. We stand firmly against violence, threats of violence as a means for anyone to achieve their goals. In a free democratic society people have a right to protest. They may choose to exercise that right, but violence is not a legitimate form of protest, and these statements are against the

rule of law. These statements and this behaviour cannot and must not ever be normalized in our society or any society for that matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I see the hon. Minister of Energy has risen.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this motion, and I'm thankful that the opposition party is supporting the motion though it seemed like they wanted to talk about everything except the motion, so I think they're perhaps reluctantly supporting it. But anything that can be interpreted as encouraging blowing up pipelines as an act of environmental activism is incredibly irresponsible and shameful. It's an incitement to violence, and David Suzuki should apologize unreservedly.

3:20

I've had the privilege of working in the pipeline sector – I worked in it for approximately 13 years – and have learned that pipelines are the most reliable and safest way to transport the energy we need – oil, natural gas, gas liquids – and it delivers it safely, with a 99.999 per cent safety record. With all of our pipeline companies safety is at the heart of everything they do. Safety is their priority and preventing damage, monitoring, inspection, emergency response. They spend billions of dollars to move energy safely. But in the last decade environmental activists have introduced a new and incredibly dangerous threat that can't be addressed in anything these companies do to make sure pipelines operate safely. It's sabotage. It's vandalism. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's terrorism when it escalates to blowing up pipelines, and it's always criminal.

Let me walk you through what blowing up pipelines looks like. Let's tell you. Let's walk you through some examples. In 1999 the Olympic pipeline in Bellingham, Washington, which was carrying gasoline from the Cherry Point refinery, sprung a leak. A valve surged and exploded. Mr. Speaker, it sent a fireball down the creek. It killed two children, age 10, and another 18-year-old. It destroyed all the homes and buildings along the creek and amounted to \$58 million damage to those structures. Two boys were killed, 10 years old.

In Nigeria in 1998 a gas pipeline explosion killed over 500 villagers. In Belgium in 2004, near Brussels, 24 people were killed when a pipeline exploded. More recently, in Mexico in 2019 a gas line pipeline exploded, killed over 130 people. Mr. Speaker, these people were incinerated. They were burnt to the bone. People could not recognize them. They had to be sent for bone examination. This is pretty serious, blowing up pipelines. Even oil pipelines when they spring a leak cause environmental damage. We all remember the Kalamazoo spill in 2010 near Marshall, Michigan. That leak caused over \$1.3 billion environmental damage to clean it up. It's unacceptable when we have promotion of violence and acts of vandalism that could lead to that.

Mr. Speaker, there are serious consequences here, yet we see growing vandalism now escalating to blowing up. Most vandalism and sabotage to date has been more centred around shutting valves and trying to stop the flow of oil and gas moving in our pipelines, but the reality is that it's always consequential. These things are dangerous. They're highly pressurized. There's risk. The trans-Alaska pipeline in 1978, in an act of violence and vandalism, blew up; 16,000 barrels of oil spilled, causing extreme environmental damage.

More recently, in the last decade, line 9B project going through Ontario had an occupation of a pump station during construction where vandals and criminals turned off the valves and they occupied a pumping station, chained themselves to the pipeline,

intended to stay there for the long run, grew a garden, set up shop, set up a tent. They ultimately had to be removed by police officers, arrested, and criminally charged.

Just south of there, in the United States, on a repair job to the line 6 pipeline in 2013 in Michigan a guy actually occupied a pipeline. It was open during construction, with the pipe laying there, and this guy decided it would be a statement for him to occupy it. He went down the pipeline on a skateboard with a few supplies, intending to live there for days, perhaps weeks. Well, it's toxic. It's dangerous. He had to be given oxygen. He didn't last long; he came out because apparently it was his birthday. The guy later ran for a Senate seat in the United States in a state election, came second to last at 1.2 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you these things on vandalism because it used to be about stopping the flow of pipelines, about making a statement, about occupying things. It's turning dangerous. The statements by David Suzuki are extremely dangerous and irresponsible and shameful. It's carried on, the pipeline vandalism.

In 2016 protesters turned off valves on five cross-border pipelines from Canada to the United States, an attempt to shut off the flow of oil. Four people were arrested. They intended that their actions would be in support of the Dakota access pipeline, but really, Mr. Speaker, their actions were dangerous. They could have caused loss of life. Speaking of the Dakota access pipeline, similar protesters used a torch to burn a hole in the pipeline. It's incredibly stupid and dangerous, and it's escalating. We all here remember Wiebo Ludwig, who here in Alberta had a series of pipeline bombings.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely, extremely concerning to see this type of escalation coming from encouragement by a leader in the environmental movement. Pipeline bombings and these types of acts of terrorism we expect in war zones like Iraq, in areas in the developing world like Colombia. We don't expect that in Canada. Blowing up a pipeline is an enormous escalation of any sort of activity. It cannot be linked at all, whatsoever, with acts of protest. I found it very concerning when the NDP spoke about protests in the same speech as talking about escalations of violence and acts of terrorism like blowing up pipelines. It's dangerous, and it's stupid. It's lethal. It's deadly. It's criminal. David Suzuki would have to have known that. He's also saying it at the same time that the Coastal GasLink pipeline is being constructed, and there are acts of protest along that line.

If there's any environmental organization that is encouraging these types of acts of violence and criminal activity and encouraging blowing up pipelines, I think we should talk about and look at who their donors are. Who's funding these organizations that are leading to acts of violence? Who's encouraging it? Mr. Speaker, this is beyond sabotage and vandalism; it's terrorism. Foreign funding of these terrorist organizations is something we should look at. My hon. colleague the minister of environment pointed out some of that, the importance of understanding where the funding of these organizations comes from.

I think we all can condemn any sort of incitement to violence. What David Suzuki said was completely and terribly irresponsible. He should apologize unreservedly. I walked you through, Mr. Speaker, some of the consequences of blowing up pipelines. People die, they're incinerated, they're torched if it's a natural gas pipeline. If it's an oil pipeline, the environment is devastated to the tune of billions of dollars. It's irresponsible. I think everyone in this Chamber should condemn that, and everybody should join us in demanding an apology from David Suzuki.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. member who caught my eye was the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister of Environment and Parks for bringing forward this important motion. I'm happy to support Motion 104, calling for the Legislative Assembly to condemn comments made by David Suzuki. Any comments calling for the intentional destruction of energy infrastructure and the incitement of violence or eco terrorism have to be condemned, including any call for violence just in general.

I'm sure by now everyone in this Chamber and folks at home watching have heard the comments made by David Suzuki in response to the RCMP clearing out antienergy activists who are blocking the work on the Coastal GasLink pipeline. RCMP officers were simply doing their job, enforcing a court injunction and using the power of the courts and following that injunction and doing the work that they are asked to do. Dr. Suzuki said, quote, there are going to be pipelines blown up if our leaders do not pay attention.

Now, it's important to mention at the outset that I believe every Canadian has the right to protest. I believe in that and the right to free speech as well, but those rights have never given anyone the right to trample the rights of others by trespassing on or destroying private property or causing physical violence to another person. Calls for violence and terrorism have absolutely no place in our society. I feel like that should be obvious, frankly, and should be obvious to everybody in this Chamber.

3:30

Part of the reason we are discussing this issue today is because opposition Provincial Council delegates from the NDP voted 85 per cent in favour of standing in solidarity with these activists, with those who are illegally blocking construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline, and they have also called for the project to be halted. The entire situation is completely mind-boggling to me. It is depraved and twisted. Dr. Suzuki's comments have to be apologized for. The opposition NDP and a group of antienergy activists, all of whom claim daily that they support human rights, that they support Indigenous communities, and that they care about the environment, are not listening to the 20 elected Indigenous groups in northern B.C. who support this pipeline.

They are working to block and undermine a natural gas pipeline project that will significantly lower emissions, a natural gas pipeline project that is supported, as I had mentioned, by every single Indigenous community whose territory it crosses and is set to provide wealth and jobs and opportunity for those communities so that they can lift their standard of living and escape poverty with good-paying jobs. They are undermining the democratic will of these Indigenous communities that voted to elect the leadership that supports this pipeline project, and they are calling into question whether or not they think Indigenous communities should even have the same democratic rights as other Canadians have. Now these activists are calling for violence to enforce all of this, Mr. Speaker.

For some context and background, in case the folks at home aren't familiar with the Coastal GasLink pipeline, it's a proposed 670-kilometre natural gas line running from the Dawson Creek area in B.C. to the LNG Canada project in Kitimat. It is important because the use of clean-burning natural gas needs to be a key part of Alberta's and Canada's plan to lower energy emissions, both here in Canada and around the world. Natural gas is abundant and the most viable fuel for reducing domestic and global emissions. Life cycle GHG emissions associated with liquid natural gas can be 20 per cent lower than diesel, 50 to 60 per cent lower than coal, and

15 to 20 per cent less than gasoline. It also reduces other air pollutants, Mr. Speaker.

The International Energy Agency projects that the average global energy demand will increase by approximately 30 per cent by 2040 as world populations and economies expand. The equivalent of adding another China or India to the current level of global energy consumption will have a dramatic effect, and natural gas is projected to meet a third of this energy demand. As currently the fourth-largest natural gas producer in the world, Canada can help meet that demand.

The Coastal GasLink pipeline, Mr. Speaker, will be an important part of that. It has the initial capacity to move 2.1 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day, with the potential to expand to 5 billion. The entire project will create up to 2,500 jobs during the construction phase and amounts to over a \$6 billion investment in our country. A significant amount of that investment in job growth will be in Indigenous communities.

Now, it is disturbing at any time when someone calls for the bombing or the blowing up and violence to block energy infrastructure, but it is especially twisted, to me, when those doing it say that they are doing it to help Indigenous communities. It is completely backwards that these antienergy activists and the opposition NDP publicly claim that they are working to help Indigenous communities to address real, crippling poverty and socioeconomic challenges and barriers facing them while they deliberately use every possible means to block financial opportunities for them and undermine all of their efforts to work and secure agreements to benefit their communities, their youth, and their future.

I have to mention that I am equally disturbed by some of the shoddy work that the media is doing in reporting this. Last night a bunch of antienergy activists blocked the High Level Bridge to protest the Coastal GasLink pipeline. Once again, these people claim that they are doing it in solidarity with Indigenous communities. Here is the headline I read this morning: Edmontonians March in Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en People who Oppose Coastal GasLink Project. It's as if none of these people could be bothered to actually talk to the members of the Indigenous communities that are affected.

Here's what some of the members of those communities have said. Hereditary Chief Theresa Tait-Day of the Wet'suwet'en Nation says, quote: in the case of the Coastal GasLink pipeline 85 per cent of our people said, yes, that they want this project. Chief Larry Nooski of the Nadleh Whut'en Nation says, "Coastal GasLink represents a once in a generation economic development opportunity for [our] First Nation." Bonnie George, a Wet'suwet'en member who formerly worked on the contract for the Coastal GasLink, says, quote: "It is disheartening now to see what is happening. Protesters across Canada should ask our people who are out of work what they think. As the matriarch I am embarrassed." The fact is that all 20 of the locally affected Indigenous communities along the pipeline route and their elected band councils have signed the benefit agreements with Coastal GasLink. They support the pipeline project.

Coastal GasLink will generate \$1 billion in employment and contracting opportunities for local Indigenous communities, and \$620 million in contract work has been awarded to Indigenous businesses for the project's right-of-way clearing, medical, security, and camp management needs, with another estimated \$400 million in additional contracts and employment opportunities for Indigenous and local B.C. communities during the pipeline construction. To date more than one-third of all the work completed on the project has been conducted by Indigenous people.

This project is good for the environment. It is good for the Indigenous communities who want it, and it will generate wealth

and opportunity for them and many other Canadians. I support this project, and I stand with these Indigenous communities and their democratically elected leadership against antienergy activists and David Suzuki and our opposition NDP. I wholeheartedly condemn the actions of these activists that are calling for violence, Mr. Speaker.

I look forward to supporting this motion. I hope it is a unanimous vote in support of it because this pipeline is needed. It is good for Alberta, it is good for our country, and it is good for the democratically elected Indigenous communities that support it.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you to the hon. member.

I believe I see the hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore has risen.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. This is what we've come to; the next stage after this there are going to be pipelines blown up if our leaders don't pay attention to what's going on: that was a statement. My question, I guess, for Dr. Suzuki would be: does he understand what's going on? Does he understand the incredible work that has been done within the sector?

I mean, as a nation we're trying to grow our nation. We are trying to restart our economy after COVID. We are trying to empower people towards prosperity. Especially when you look at the environmental and social governance, not only in Alberta but in Canada, North America, as a jurisdiction, I think what is most disturbing about the comments – and I'm so grateful to be able to speak to this motion and to also condemn those comments – is the fact that Dr. Suzuki has chosen to use an opportunity that could have been talking about unity amongst Canadians around our corridors that promote prosperity for our country.

Albertans are already fighting, as it is, to stand up for the prosperity of pipelines and oil and gas and manufacturing and many, many other things, and to have somebody who is supposed to be respected – I mean, I wish we could go back to the days of *The Nature of Things*. I don't know if anybody ever watched that in here, but it used to be a really, really sweet program talking about science to children. I remember that I used to watch that and think: wow; this is a wonderful program. To see somebody who has been able to leverage that amount of notoriety, really, and being somewhat of a celebrity come forward and then promote the potential of violence is so disconcerting.

You think about – there are a couple of things. I mean, it's perilous and unsafe and hazardous to talk in this way but especially – especially – when we are in the midst of trying to build pipelines in this country, let alone going into other countries in order to get our products to other parts of the world. I've said this before. One of the things that frustrated me most about our Prime Minister was – I remember that when he was first elected, he talked about being a feminist government. Probably one of the most offensive things from that comment was the fact that there are so many women and children in other countries that have zero accessibility to energy, and that lack of accessibility to energy, Mr. Speaker, denies them education. It denies them the ability to have jobs and any sort of future. Yet the federal government was bound and determined to use Alberta as the bad player as opposed to looking at the environmental and social governance that is here.

The minister of environment had spoken about it earlier with regard to the specified gas emitters. Specified gas emitters have been around for 17 or 18 years, long before there was ever a carbon tax, because the energy sector in this province cares about its earth, air, and water, Mr. Speaker. I've said this before. We have families that live close to these pieces of infrastructure, that are drinking the water that is close by, putting their children in those schools.

Let's talk about another thing that I think Dr. Suzuki has also forgotten. We're in the midst of a COVID crisis globally. When you think about all of the families in this province that have been impacted, those that we have lost and those who are intubated right now, what are they intubated with, Mr. Speaker? The pieces of technology that are keeping them alive right now come from the oil and gas sector directly, and so do the syringes that provide the jabs for all of the Albertans right now who are vaccinated at this point in time. All of those things come from the oil and gas sector.

3:40

The movement to actually change globally what is happening with COVID right now comes because of diversification in this sector. What we use to build the clothes that we wear, the things that we are sitting on, the instruments that we play, the cars that we use to drive to go and see the opera or the football game, the masks that we wear on our faces right now to protect us from the virus are made from products from the oil and gas sector, Mr. Speaker. To not understand fundamentally where those are coming from not only is a disaster on behalf of Dr. Suzuki and those who support him but is a complete misunderstanding of what this sector is capable of doing and the prosperity and the protection that it provides for every single person in the world.

Mr. Speaker, when you think about the new technologies that have come forward, where have those technologies come from? They've come from right here in Alberta. In fact, some of the most important environmental changes that have happened in the oil and gas sector have come right from this province. In fact, federal governments have stopped us from being able to send that research overseas in order to be able to help other governments do better. I mean, we've talked about this before. Other countries are building coal refineries every single day in order to be able to manage electricity.

I would bring up electricity as well. This was an issue that we had when the NDP was in government. The specified gas emitters were actually more adept at making sure that the electricity that was provided in this province was done under the specified gas emitters regulation in order to reduce emissions. It had already been under control. Then when the power purchase agreements came in, it triggered the clause in the electricity file that actually started the process where the power purchase agreements were taken back by the companies.

I know the Member for Calgary-McCall was talking about the \$1.3 billion on the pipeline, but we might want to talk about the \$1.2 billion that were wasted on them suing themselves over a power purchase agreement that was already enacted in this province in order to reduce emissions in the electricity file, something actually, Mr. Speaker, that every single Albertan is paying off right now. I think every single person in this House has probably heard about the cost of heating their houses and the cost of electricity right now. Let me guarantee you that some of that is the impact of bad policy because people didn't understand the environmental policy that was already in the province and then triggered ripple effects due to the lack of understanding of environmental policy in the province.

That lack of understanding is exactly why people like Dr. Suzuki are allowed to get away with saying the things that they are. The Minister of Energy already spoke about some of the absolutely horrible things that have happened as a result of a very polarized conversation. Technically it's wonderful that we're all standing on the same side of this discussion, but shouldn't we all be standing on the same side on pipelines, on the energy from this province, on the women and men who work in this province?

The other thing that one of the other members brought up was about the Indigenous file. I would love to know – it was brought up

by the opposition about reconciliation. I think it was the Member for Calgary-McCall who was talking about it. What I would like to know is: what did they do in their government in order to project First Nations and Métis prosperity? What? Yet any opportunities that have come forward by our government are seen as less than. I can't put my finger on it. Then we wonder why people like Dr. Suzuki are empowered to make these kinds of statements. They're empowered because there's misinformation because of ideological issues versus what's in the best interests of the people who are actually being impacted. Heaven forbid that our First Nations and Métis areas should have prosperity in this province and, even more so, do even better, do more – the Premier had said it earlier – be able to put dollars into their cultural heritage, into their language, into the things that matter. You cannot do that without prosperity. The assumption that our First Nations are less than versus being talented, amazing, competent, phenomenal human beings who not only are our First Peoples and people that we should respect but are adding so much to the energy portfolio, Mr. Speaker, who have so much to offer in talent and wisdom, who deserve to have every bit of prosperity as the rest of us.

When we look at trade-exposed businesses, like in Alberta, that have been impacted by bad policy, the reason why the carbon tax in particular, the way that it was implemented in Alberta, didn't work is because it created a trade exposure to the sectors that were here in the province, which created carbon leakage elsewhere. That carbon leakage: you know what that means? Other entities and organizations, countries, and others who do not have the same level of environmental and social governance as we do in this province, Mr. Speaker, were able to produce at higher levels than we were, sell it back. In fact, it was purchased in Quebec and then sold to our own people in our country, when we are the third-largest resource in the world. Yet we have people in this House who would prefer to see it shut down as opposed to supporting those pipelines and supporting the women and men in this sector.

I remember that I did a post a while back about I Love Oil and Gas – I do those things all the time – or I Love Alberta Energy. There are so many of us. I think we all own a sweatshirt somewhere in our closet. I remember posting it, and I remember that there were a whole bunch of really horrible comments that were said just from this one post. Some of it is unparliamentary. I can't speak it in the House, but needless to say the premise behind it was that I was selling myself for oil and gas. That was what was coming from people in this province and supported by the opposition, those comments that somehow women are not honoured in the oil and gas sector.

We can talk again about all of the renewable projects that are going on in this province. There's something called the environmental return on investment, Mr. Speaker. On my house I have 40 solar panels, photovoltaic and the regular mainstream ones as well. They all were made in China with a tremendous amount of heat that was used in coal-fired technology to create the solar panels. Then they were shipped over to Canada, and in fact all of the infrastructure used to build them onto my house came from jurisdictions outside of Canada. They've more or less paid themselves off, which is great because I'm a huge believer in solar power and wind and all of the things that are wonderful to add into the grid of power that we have the opportunity to have here.

However, I ask you, Mr. Speaker: where do I recycle those? What's going to happen to those pieces of humungous technology that I have hanging off my house right now in 10 or 15 years when that technology no longer works anymore? There is no environmental return on that investment on the recycling or the reuse side of that technology, yet we never talk about that because everybody just

wants to pat themselves on their back and say that they're doing solar energy. There's so much more to it than that.

We had a project – I believe it was in Medicine Hat – that actually shut down because it was cost prohibitive, and now that entire piece of technology is not even producing anymore.

The other thing, too, is the wind turbines that are in this province. Did you know that the wind turbines have to be double-built here, Mr. Speaker? Do you know why they're double-built? Because sometimes the wind blows too much, and they actually have to slow them down, or it's not blowing enough, so that has to be double-built by natural gas, natural gas flowing through a pipeline, something that Dr. Suzuki evidently believes that, not given enough consideration, should be blown up. The windmills that are in this province are built with technology that comes from the oil and gas sector. Every bike that I'm sure Dr. Suzuki has ever ridden or any of us, I'm fairly certain, is not made out of air. I'm fairly certain that they're made out of products that come from the oil and gas sector. I'm fairly certain that all of the flights that all of the environmentalists are taking all over the world are fuelled by products that are not just air and clean.

3:50

It doesn't mean that we shouldn't do better, Mr. Speaker. Did you know that there are so many opportunities going on right now, even in our province, to reduce emissions on bunker fuel, flight fuel? We are so – and I'm sure the opposition would agree. We hear about these amazing projects going on all the time because the sector wants to do better. I would think that a scientist like Dr. Suzuki would understand that. He has a responsibility to all of the people, not only those of us – I'm 51 years old – but to the next generation to, at the very least, tell the truth about what's going on. If he paid attention to what was going on and understood that everybody everywhere in the world should have access to cheap energy, should be able to just turn on a light – what a privilege. You know, I hadn't really thought about it until I was elected. I'm so lucky to live in a country where I can flip on a switch for energy every single day.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Next I see the hon. Member for Camrose has risen.

Ms Lovely: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today because it's my duty as an MLA to protect the livelihoods of Alberta's hard-working families. Nothing is more damaging than attacking the very sectors that provide for so many Albertans. The Alberta NDP Provincial Council did just that over the weekend. They overwhelmingly passed a resolution that supports illegal pipeline blockades. By doing so, they are not just blocking a pipeline; they are blocking everything that this pipeline can deliver. The Coastal GasLink pipeline will bring economic prosperity, jobs, and opportunity to many Indigenous communities, including the Wet'suwet'en and their elders, that fully support this pipeline, not to mention other Indigenous peoples who are employed through the project and dozens of other communities along the pipeline route.

Today I'm calling on the NDP to stop supporting special-interest groups that often receive foreign dollars to land-lock our energy. They are the ones trying to prevent Alberta's oil and gas industry from succeeding. Alberta has the most responsible and ethical oil and gas industry in the world. It's time would-be eco terrorists like David Suzuki and his friends in the NDP realize that.

The NDP's ally David Suzuki has also compared our oil and gas industry to slavery and has recently made comments about our pipeline blowing up if they're not shut down. This is a threat to the livelihoods of Indigenous people and Albertans in addition to

encouraging violence in small communities. These are threats that will harm our neighbours, our friends, and our families. I cannot stand for this, and I will not stand for it.

In my Camrose constituency the Gibson Hardisty terminal alone sees 1 in 4 barrels exported from western Canada. I had the pleasure of meeting the fine men and women that work in this plant with the Minister of Energy when she came to visit this summer. Instead of meeting with everyday hard-working Albertans, the NDP chose to ignore them. Why do they focus on the destruction of critical facilities that Alberta families rely on instead of finding pragmatic solutions to complex issues? Albertans are tired of it. I'm tired of it.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP can't even make up their own minds on how to support the environment. They alone have caused hundreds of job losses in the Camrose constituency alone by their careless coal ban. These families needed help from the NDP when they were in government, but they were turned away. Legislation that the NDP introduced had a very devastating outcome for Forestburg, in my constituency. Many lost their jobs, being forced to relocate just to provide for their families, having devastating impact on the community. Getting those jobs back has been very difficult, but we've seen a lot of progress.

One major project that the NDP seemed to overlook is Heartland Generation, switching to natural gas fired generation, creating more than 50 jobs – that's 50 more than the NDP created – and an actual realistic environmental plan. This shows the massive benefit natural gas can have for jobs and a very effective way to dramatically reduce GHG emissions around the world. Their quest to protect the environment just increases the demand for higher emitting resources from other countries with fewer human rights and environmental standards than Alberta.

The NDP alliance with the federal government: both leaders seem keen on sourcing natural resources from other countries with inhumane labour laws and little care for the environment. We have some of the cleanest resource development in the world, and that means nothing to Alberta's NDP. Harming our workers, land-locking our resources, and not listening to Indigenous communities seems to be one of the many things Alberta's NDP and the federal Liberal government have in common.

The NDP states they're for jobs, yet – you know what? – they have no solution to create them. They say that they support Indigenous communities, yet they want to harm the economic prosperity of Indigenous communities that supported this project. They want to slow climate change, yet they support killing a pipeline of ethical gas that will allow major countries to make the shift to a cleaner burning resource and drastically reduce their emissions. They say that they care about Alberta, yet they stand in support of a man that is okay with the demise of our critical infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, this is simply outrageous.

Statement by the Speaker

Reflections on a Nonmember

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members. Prior to seeing the next speaker, who I do see, I would just like to make a few comments of caution with regard and respect to the language being used in remarks made in connection to David Suzuki. While members enjoy freedom of speech within this Assembly, they should obviously take great care in exercising this right. As quoted in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* on page 98, Speaker Milliken, a different Milliken, I should obviously add, states that "it is incumbent upon all members to exercise fairness with respect to those who are not in a position to defend themselves."

I would also refer to a ruling by Mr. Speaker Cooper, made on November 4, 2020, when he implored members to desist from making allegations against members of the public who are unable to defend themselves. Specifically, what I'm referring to is that when specifically calling an individual in the public an eco terrorist, that could be seen as perhaps going a bridge too far. I call on all members to be mindful of the language that they use in this Chamber.

With that, I believe I see the next speaker willing to jump into the debate on this Motion 104. I see the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon has risen.

Debate Continued

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Motion 104. Motion 104, for those that are listening to today's proceedings, is a notice that's been given by the hon. minister of the environment to propose the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

1. condemn David Suzuki's comments on pipelines as reported by the *National Post*,
2. condemn any comments made calling for the intentional destruction of energy infrastructure, and
3. unequivocally condemn incitements of violent eco terrorism.

I will keep my remarks to this motion that is before us today. For those that have not paid attention to the news lately, TC Energy has a natural gas pipeline that is running from Dawson Creek, B.C., to Kitimat, B.C., and as is sometimes the case, that can be a little bit of a controversial issue for some people.

This pipeline is called the Coastal GasLink pipeline, and along its route they've managed to secure the support of 20 northern First Nations communities and their elected councils who support this because they see the value of this pipeline. They see the value of the jobs that are created for their communities and the capacity for their people to take care of their families. This pipeline is going to be exporting to Asia natural gas and is almost 50 per cent completed; 100 per cent of the route has been cleared, 200 kilometres of pipe have been installed. Now we find ourselves in a situation where antidemocratic, I would argue, and antiprosperity eco activists are now creating an issue for the workers and for the company and for the First Nations peoples that are working to see this pipeline completed.

4:00

Now, we've seen this before by many eco activists and climate activists and environmental activists, that they will often try to disrupt the legal activities of a legal company with the support of the provincial governments, with support of the federal governments, with the support of the courts from moving forward. Critical supplies, for instance, have been stopped from going to the workers and into their camps, been disrupted such that they have not been able to have the vital supplies that they need to continue.

Martin forest road has been cleared of obstacles recently. The RCMP have taken steps to ensure that there's lawful access to the Morice River drill site. Morice forest service road has been cleared so that 500 workers who were stranded for four days would have the capacity to receive water and food and other critical supplies.

Environmental radicals have damaged forest service roads, including the Lamprey Creek Bridge, ripping it up. They have felled trees across the Morice creek forestry road. Remember that this is a project that is authorized and permitted by the federal government, by the provincial governments, with agreements with all 20 elected Indigenous boards along with its entire length of 670 kilometres. These individuals that are disrupting the completion of this pipeline are in fact breaking the law.

On November 20, 2021, just a few days ago, the infamous Extinction Rebellion held a protest on Vancouver Island, and at that event, at that protest, a very famous Canadian climate environmental activist, some might say radical, Dr. David Suzuki, was in attendance, and he is quoted as saying: there are going to be pipelines blowing up if our leaders don't pay attention to what's going on. Dr. Don Goodeve, an organizer of that event with Extinction Rebellion on Vancouver Island, is quoted as saying: we need changes in policy; no more investment in fossil fuel infrastructure.

Here we have what would appear to be one environmentalist supporting, apparently, violence against the pipelines and another who is very clear. This is all about shutting down the oil industry. In fact, Dr. Suzuki was quoted as saying at this same protest: "We're a northern country. Why the hell are we able to buy fresh tomatoes and lettuce and fresh fruits 12 months of the year? We've got to start living in a way that reflects the place that we live in."

Now, I don't know, but often the environmental movement and the people that support some of the more radical strains of environmentalism like to cast themselves in the light of being progressives, that they want to progress and move forward and create a better world, but I think Dr. Suzuki here is pretty clear on what kind of a world he wants to bring back. I don't know what we're going to eat if we go back to living the way we did for millennia in a land that's often 40 below and then has winter for sometimes six or seven or eight months of the year. What does that mean to people's quality of life and to their standard of living if that's the measure and that's the vision of where he wants to go?

It's always been a bit of a conundrum to me because these pipelines are actually, probably the best way of addressing climate change and the problems that they're so concerned about. Right now China is building hundreds of coal plants that are emitting incredible amounts of carbon into the air. Presently much of the oil that we produce out of Fort McMurray and our oil sands is being piped down to southern Texas and to Houston, where it's then upgraded and it's loaded onto vessels and it's shipped into Asia.

Yet when we in Alberta suggest that, you know, we could cut off – and it's just a matter of geography here, folks. This is just a matter of fact that the Earth is round and where we are and the geography of the Earth that if we shipped that same product to Vancouver, it cuts about half of the distance, half of the carbon that's needed to transport that natural gas, which is going to be an upgrade on the coal that they're burning in China, which itself, by using natural gas, will reduce the carbon. If we shipped it up to Alaska, take another 25 per cent off the transportation cost and the production of carbon. If you're really an eco environmental activist, support of these pipelines is the best thing that you could do internationally for addressing the environmental issues that are created by the production of carbon.

Yet we see the left side of the spectrum, the NDP in this province, supporting the thinking that was going on in those radical environmentalists that are on the lines at the Coastal GasLink pipeline and on Vancouver Island. In fact, the Alberta NDP Provincial Council passed a resolution endorsing the illegal pipeline blockades this past weekend, quote, for the ANDP to express its solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en First Nations, denounce the violence enacted against members of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation and land defenders by the RCMP, and call for the immediate withdrawal of the RCMP from the Wet'suwet'en territory and call for the halting of the Coastal GasLink Pipeline project. End quote.

Let's break that down just a little bit. Number one, they're concerned about the violence against the Wet'suwet'en. Well, they should be. We should all be, but let's understand who is cutting off supplies of food and water to 500 workers and breaking the law in

the process. Who has been damaging the roads and the bridges and the infrastructure? Again, breaking the law. If we're going to be concerned about the violence, I would suggest that we be concerned about the violence of people that are actually breaking the law.

They're concerned about, in this statement straight from the Alberta NDP Provincial Council, violence by the RCMP. I quote: the violence enacted against members of the Wet'suwet'en First Nations and the land defenders by the RCMP and call for the immediate withdrawal of the RCMP from the Wet'suwet'en territory. Well, let's understand something. The RCMP have a very difficult job. All law enforcement officers in this country have a very difficult job. They're called to uphold the peace and to protect the rights of the citizens of this nation. It's not always easy. It's a very difficult job. But for the RCMP to withdraw from that situation of upholding the law, you are asking them not to do the very job that they have been called to do: to uphold the rule of law. In the process of upholding the rule of law, they are protecting all of the rights of the citizens of Alberta and B.C. and Canada.

4:10

And, especially, they're protecting the rights of the workers. I would think that the Alberta NDP Party would want to protect the rights of the workers, to protect the rights of the workers to have food and water. They are, I would argue, in the process of upholding the rule of law, actually protecting the environment and the property of the citizens and the companies that live and work in this country.

Let's understand something here. The halting of the Coastal GasLink pipeline is not without its consequences. They are consequences to the environment. They are consequences to the quality of life and the standard of living of all of our citizens in this country. I believe that once again the NDP are showing their true colours. Once again their support for radical environmentalists that are willing to break the law is in direct opposition to the interests of the people of Alberta, to the people of Alberta and to the First Nations communities that live here and in B.C. and even for those who are truly concerned about climate change and the future of our children.

Support for these actions is diametrically opposed to all of those good things. By supporting activists like Dr. Suzuki and Extinction Rebellion and a whole host of other environmentalists and environmental groups, the NDP, rather than growing the economy in an environmentally responsible manner, would instead tear down the most environmentally responsible energy industry in the world along with all of the jobs and the standard of living that go along with that industry. They'll tear down the largest industry in this nation that provides jobs and hope and a future for Canadians across this great nation. By supporting activists like Extinction Rebellion and Dr. David Suzuki, they threaten the rule of law, they undermine the role of the RCMP, and they place workers' safety on the job site at risk.

None of these are acceptable, and I believe that the NDP should reconsider their position.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View has risen.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Violence is not the answer. I believe that on both sides of the House we can agree on this. I do not believe that we should ever use violence to achieve our political objectives. I condemn the use of violence or incitement of violence to make any point as well as the risky and potentially dangerous comments of David Suzuki as reported by the *National Post*. I also condemn the use of violence to destroy energy infrastructure.

However, that in no way negates the duty of every government in this country to engage in good-faith negotiations with Indigenous

people and to engage in good-faith negotiations and conversations about the very real concerns about both Indigenous rights and climate change. We must absolutely engage. We must do the hard work to address the realities of climate change. That is the hard work that this government has refused to do. Refusing to do that work does not help the economy; it hurts it. It doesn't justify violence, not on anyone's part, ever. Violence is not the way to create change, however valid your perspective may be. I condemn any use of violence to make any point. However, as I have said, we must engage with the issues we face. That's not an easy conversation.

Mr. Speaker, we don't need to look very far to see the damage that climate change is doing: the changing weather patterns; the incredible heat incident we saw over the summer, heat that killed people; increasingly destructive storms; the tragic mudslides we just witnessed in British Columbia, that took lives, that displaced people, that killed livestock and crippled our food chain; forest fires that affect our very ability to breathe. The effects are severe and are increasing, and they will be felt disproportionately by countries and communities least able to afford it. Climate change is real, it is human caused, and we must take action. Lives are at stake. The consequences are real. We must act, and we must act soon because the problem is getting worse.

The UCP may not accept these things, but the international investment community does, so the words and the choices of the UCP are impacting our economy as well. They have been forced to reverse themselves on so many of these positions, but still they drag their heels on action. The Premier referred to ESG factors as a passing fad. According to this government, ESG and investor confidence will be achieved through their failed fight-back strategy, through a war room that has seen nothing but scandal – stealing logos, impersonating journalists, attacking children's films – and through an Allan inquiry that spent years and wasted millions to find no wrongdoing, despite the absurd attempts to spin by the Minister of Energy and the Premier.

While we see the vast majority of our oil industry making net zero by 2050 commitments, still this government will not, and that impacts investment. A year ago we suggested exporting hydrogen by 2030, and the associate minister of natural gas laughed, said that it was absurd, said that we couldn't have green hydrogen without bottled water. He was forced to back down, citing his extreme surprise that these things had gone precisely the way we suggested, but we will never know how much investment Alberta lost out on.

Mr. Speaker, the use of violence to make a point is abhorrent, but we cannot ignore the real consequences of our actions. The way forward means engaging in the issue. It means doing the hard work to take real action on climate change with the economy, and it can be done. The transformation of our economy does require that we look at a new way to do business, that we make real progress, but it also produces opportunity for growth and for diversification.

This government has stood many times and spoken about upholding the rule of law. It's a principle I take incredibly seriously, but it is very difficult to take this government's commitment to the rule of law seriously. This government has fired the Election Commissioner while he was investigating them. What could be more fundamental to the principle of the rule of law than everybody being subjected to the same laws, nobody having the right to choose who investigates them and why and when? But not the UCP. They don't like the person investigating them, so they replace him.

The UCP has demonstrated continued contempt for the law. After firing the Election Commissioner while he investigated them, they now threaten to replace the RCMP while under investigation by them. They have shown contempt for elections law. They have ripped up negotiated contracts and tried to legislate away people's rights. This UCP government likes to pick and choose when it

thinks the rule of law is important. On this side of the House, we believe in respect for the rule of law at all times, Mr. Speaker, always.

Mr. Speaker, I condemn violence . . . [interjection] I'll recognize you in a moment, sir. I condemn violence, but the peaceful protest is a right. This government refuses to do the hard work to engage with people.

Sorry. I'm confused.

4:20

The Acting Speaker: You are the individual with the call right now.

Ms Ganley: I'm going to keep going. That's what I'm going to do.

The Acting Speaker: There is an individual who is looking to intervene. However, as always, that is a choice that the individual with the call can make.

Ms Ganley: Not at this time, Mr. Speaker.

This government's response to very real concerns about climate change, about the rights of workers, about the safety of our children was to pass a law to outlaw protest, to give themselves the ability to outlaw anyone's presence anywhere by executive order. Mr. Speaker, that is not doing the hard work; it's the opposite. That is not engaging respectfully with different points of view. That is not respecting people's rights. That is not doing the work necessary to preserve our economy, our environment, and our democracy.

On this side of the House we will continue to do the hard work. We will listen to Albertans, and we will come to the table and stay there with Indigenous communities, councils, and elders; with industry; with municipal governments; and with workers.

Concerns about the environment are real. We see the impacts of climate change all around us. We absolutely must address them, but I condemn the use of violence or anyone advocating the use of violence to achieve this end. Both sides must do the work to engage respectfully and meaningfully to build a world that advances a healthy environment and a strong economy. It is possible, but neither denying legitimate concerns nor using violence will advance that cause.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I see the hon. Member for Highwood has risen.

Mr. Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Motion 104 today: I'm not sure I can say that I'm excited to speak to this. You know, I find that it's a bit disgusting that comments like this are made and that we are in a position where we are having this discussion. I would hope that these comments don't happen in the future. Having said that, I want to thank our Government House Leader and the Minister of Environment and Parks for moving this motion stating:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

1. condemn David Suzuki's comments on pipelines as reported by the *National Post*,
2. condemn any comments made calling for the intentional destruction of energy infrastructure, and
3. unequivocally condemn incitements of violent eco terrorism.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues know that I started my working career in the oil and gas industry, working on a drilling rig up north actually doing core test wells in what is now the expanse of our oil sands in northern Alberta. I think it's important to state and clarify that being a worker in the oil and gas industry back then, there still were instances of violence towards the oil and gas industry, not nearly what it is right now. But having said that, I remember – and I think that what people like David Suzuki don't

understand is the severe impact of these statements not just on the industry as a whole but how it affects the people in the industry itself, their families. Not just the workers in the industry. Think about the wives, the sons, and the daughters that have to worry about their father when they go to work every day wondering if somebody is going to do an action that could potentially put their lives at risk.

As well, I would like to acknowledge that, sadly, from some of the comments that I've heard so far in this debate, the members opposite in the NDP caucus refuse to believe or really stand behind the oil and gas industry in the manner that I feel they should when it comes to this motion. It seems as though they're kind of putting it out there but standing on an edge. They're not committing to either side, and that's not what I will do here today. I will tell you unequivocally that I stand behind our oil and gas sector, and I will condemn comments like this every day.

Now, in Alberta historically we've always worked to build our relationship with our Indigenous partners. I'm not saying that it's perfect. We need to do better. We need to be stronger in that. We will continue to do so. I know this government is doing exactly that by building things like the AIOC to be able to have our Indigenous be partners, especially in our energy sector. This industry that we have in Alberta has strict environmental standards, set out by industry professionals, that ensure our environment is protected.

I have to state that the actions of the NDP, either directly or indirectly – what is happening right now is support of organizations like Extinction Rebellion and ultimately leads to comments like David Suzuki's, which put Albertans' lives and our economy in jeopardy. The minister has explained the severe impacts and what the results are of acts of violence on pipelines or wells. To be clear, Mr. Speaker, on the weekend the Alberta NDP Provincial Council voted 85 per cent in favour of a resolution endorsing the illegal pipeline blockades. Having said that, it's unfortunate to hear that some NDP MLAs have also added their support to this. While that was happening, another NDP ally, in my personal opinion, because of this, David Suzuki, was talking about pipelines, and he stated that there are going to be pipelines blowing up if our leaders don't pay attention to what's going on. He then went on to say: I saw the power of civil disobedience.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's oil and gas industry is a key employer in our province that injects wealth into our economy across all its sectors. This industry is a critical contributor to our health care system, schools, roads, helps us pay for things like AISH and others. I think it's important that an industry that supports us – we should be clear in supporting them and protecting them from threats of violence and eco activism that is engaged in illegal blockades. No one here, no matter what – we all believe in the right to be able to lawfully and peacefully protest. In no way would we ever stand for, if somebody didn't like what a hospital was doing, putting barricades to prevent ambulances from access to a hospital, nor should we be in support of allowing eco activists to block pipelines.

Now, threats towards the destruction of infrastructure, like the ones that David Suzuki has claimed, are an attack on an industry but also an attack on every Albertan that works in the oil industry and gas sector. Now, I would contest that his intentions of these threats is directly to impact the industry due to his notoriety. I think that comments like this really will affect their foreign direct investment. [interjection] I will cede the floor to an intervention.

Mr. Williams: Thank you to my colleague from Highwood. I just wanted to ask the member if he could expand a bit more on this idea of the responsibility we all have to the rule of law and what that means. It seems to me that the left, the eco terrorists, the David Suzukis aren't the only people that don't like something the other

side is doing. There are certain positions that my members opposite have that I disagree with. There are things that I disagree with very fundamentally, that I think are cataclysmically bad for our society in the future. Nonetheless, I must respect the rule of law. I must respect that in Ottawa Prime Minister Trudeau is the Prime Minister of the day, that he does have that legal authority, and that my recourse must be within the parameters of the law.

If it's not, not only will we see destruction, not only will we see hurt with the individuals involved, with that violence in itself; we will also see the denigration of the rule of law, which all sides must respect because those are the rules which we play by in a free society, where free men and women organize together for the common good.

4:30

Mr. Sigurdson: I would like to thank the Member for Peace River. I'm not sure I can actually respond to the rule of law as well as you just have. That really is the best explanation, something we need to support. We're elected officials, and we all believe in the right for those to have the freedom of speech to be able to protest against something that they don't believe in, but it has to be peaceful protests. That is the rule of law. That's the law which we live under and that we all exist under so that we can exist peacefully.

Now, Mr. Speaker, David Suzuki clearly fails to heed this. What I think he also fails to see is that the oil and gas industry in this province is not only a leader in environmental protection and technologies; they are a key contributor to wealth and prosperity in this province and across Canada. Now, these projects have potential to provide wealth for our First Nations and a large percentage of Indigenous Canadians, and I would say that if you seek to destroy infrastructure or unlawfully blockade any of these pipelines, that will really harm Indigenous Canadians across our country.

I'll also comment that with that, if environmentalists really wanted to have an impact, if they really wanted to have that positive impact, if they actually focused as much of their time and energy on working with and applying strategies and technologies, working together, directing that money, much like we have through our TIER plan, in which in our term we've done a better job than the members opposite at reducing carbon emissions, if they work together, they would probably have a far more positive impact on the environment.

Now, projects like Coastal GasLink are a great example of that. They can contribute to helping carbon rejection. The members opposite talk about hydrogen. Yes, you're right, but also natural gas is a path to reducing global emissions world-wide. The largest decrease we're seeing in carbon emissions right now is largely in part as a result of the transition of power generation to natural gas. Projects like Coastal GasLink can provide and establish a reliable resource to other countries to allow them the confidence to do this transition to natural gas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that David Suzuki is engaging in any method possible, including verbal threats of violence, to hinder the oil and gas industry, an industry that supports Indigenous First Nations and so many families. Now, moving forward, I think the members opposite need to think about how they approach comments like this, and I feel that they should be stronger in standing up with us against the comments like this and eco activists, eco terrorists like Extinction Rebellion, not supporting them. It is absolutely disgusting to me that anybody would even hedge on this at all. They need to be stronger.

Now, I condemn all acts of violence and hate brought forward by David Suzuki. I condemn anyone's desire to destroy critical infrastructure. It puts individuals and their families at risk. Mr. Speaker, I hope that as we move forward in this, the members

opposite will think about joining us and being stronger to stand up against these acts of what I would consider terrorism towards such a critical industry and families within our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to join debate? I see the hon. Premier has risen with the call.

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise in debate on Motion 104:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly

1. condemn David Suzuki's comments on pipelines as reported by the *National Post*,
2. condemn any comments made calling for the intentional destruction of energy infrastructure, and
3. unequivocally condemn incitements of violent eco terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, David Suzuki is a Canadian media celebrity. He's not actually a climatologist. He doesn't have any particular expertise in climate science. I understand that he's an insect biologist. But that hasn't stopped him from becoming a national celebrity. This past week, two days ago, Mr. Suzuki said at a rally in front of Victoria's Legislature, quote, that there are going to be pipelines blowing up if our leaders don't pay attention to what's going on. Unquote. Those comments are on video. They are incontrovertible that he made these remarks.

Now, I believe that it is worth the urgent time and attention of this Legislature to address this because we have a prominent Canadian celebrity and opinion leader who helps to form the opinions of millions of Canadians, including many members of our elites, who is creating an opinion environment that could be seen as justifying, rationalizing, or excusing eco terrorism, political violence, violence that could cost lives. This is not a joke, nor is it a distraction. If we are a democracy, we believe in the peaceful resolution of our differences, the peaceful and democratic resolution and reconciliation of our differences. We do not believe in violence, in the threat of violence, or the intimation of violence.

Now, I gather that Mr. Suzuki has come out and said: well, of course I don't actually support violence. A very nice, clever partial effort to spin his way out of the hole into which he dug himself, Mr. Speaker, but effectively what Mr. Suzuki said is like that great line in – well, to paraphrase a line in a lot of gangster movies: nice little pipeline you've got there; be a terrible thing if something happened to it. That's exactly the sentiment this is trying to convey. I have no doubt that there are some young, overcaffeinated green zealots who really do believe people like Mr. Suzuki that the entire world is about to implode in an inferno because of climate change and that if all the pipelines are not shut down immediately, they and their generation are being left to a hellish future. Some such young zealots could very well draw from his words, this respected international celebrity and scholar, as they see him, and they could very well see in that the nudge and the wink but also the rationalization of violence. That is why these comments are so outrageous and deserve the sanction of this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, let's put this in any number of other different contexts. Imagine if a prominent pro-life leader were to say that if abortion doesn't stop, clinics are going to get blown up. That person, I think, would probably be subject to criminal investigation. They would be universally condemned, and rightfully so. I would lead that condemnation because in words like that is found the rationalization of dangerous and potentially lethal violence. Imagine ascribing the same sentiment to any other political context. You know, imagine saying that you don't like country X and that if country X doesn't stop doing such and such, well, sooner or later

their embassies are going to start to be blown up. It would be an unacceptable international incident. It would be seen as an incitement to targeted violence. Imagine saying this about any particular ethnocultural community, that if that community doesn't stop doing such and such, well, maybe some of their community centres will be blown up. This is the line that he has crossed.

Regrettably, we know that there are people to whom he is speaking who believe that the end of, in their view, saving the planet justifies virtually any means, including violence. We do know. I mean, the term "eco terrorism" is not some kind of a conservative talking point; it's a reflection of a philosophy and real actions that have really taken lives, Mr. Speaker.

4:40

Do you remember the spiking of trees that happened in the British Columbia forestry industry in the 1980s and, I think, in the upper northwest of the United States, where fans of David Suzuki would go into older growth forests that were targeted for harvesting, and they would pound spikes so that when foresters came along with their chainsaws, the spikes would get mangled in the chainsaw, which would then kill the forester? People died with this kind of eco terrorism, Mr. Speaker. We've had targeted violence against pipelines in this country. This is not a joke. This is not abstract. It's not theoretical. It's very visceral. It's very real. Now, I have to say that this is not some kind of a one-off coming from Mr. Suzuki. This is a man who has a long track record of odious views that would have caused virtually anybody else in the public square to have gone down the memory hole of cancel culture.

Mr. Speaker, on July 1, Canada Day, 2013 Mr. Suzuki was quoted in the media as saying on the question of immigration:

Canada is full . . . Our immigration policy is enough to make you sick: we pillage the countries of the south by depriving them of their . . . professionals, and we want to increase our population . . . It's crazy.

Mr. Suzuki said that Canada is full and that our generous immigration policy is sick and crazy. Now, is there anybody else in a prominent public position who could get away with that and continue to be regarded as some kind of a saintly figure beyond criticism? This is xenophobia. This anti-immigrant sentiment being spread by him is bigoted, and it is xenophobic, and I don't say that under the cover of the privilege of this place. I say it publicly. I just did in a news conference. I was the minister of immigration when he said these words, and I was appalled and condemned them then, as I do now.

Let's do a mental exercise. Imagine that in 2013 Don Cherry, who was then on Coach's Corner on *Hockey Night in Canada* at CBC, had said that, quote, Canada is full and that immigration is sick and crazy. He would have been cancelled in a New York minute, Mr. Speaker. He would have been out the door of CBC faster than you could count. But what happened to David Suzuki? Eight years later: millions of dollars in additional performance contracts to his production company from the very same CBC, with its \$1.6 billion taxpayer subsidy. Don Cherry says something about "you people" with respect to not wearing poppies, and then he's fired by Rogers at *Hockey Night in Canada*. David Suzuki says that immigration is sick and crazy and that Canada is full and that we shouldn't take any more immigrants, and what is the CBC's response? Millions of dollars to help him pay for his five houses, including the island that he owns in the B.C. Gulf Islands that he co-owns with an oil company.

Not only is he creating an opinion environment that could lead to dangerous violence, not only is he an anti-immigrant zealot; he is Canada's biggest environmental hypocrite. Why does the NDP, why does the Canadian left continue not just to tolerate this man but to worship everything that he says? Why does he continue to be a

figure of such widespread respect in the Canadian left when somebody with his track record with a different set of political views, they would demand that they be subject to the most severe sanctions?

Now, speaking of which, Mr. Speaker, the same David Suzuki who's now inciting people, at the very least indirectly, to potential violence said in an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine in February of 2016, quote: I really believe that people like the former Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper should be thrown in jail for wilful blindness. Quote, unquote. He called for the Prime Minister of Canada to be thrown in jail not for corruption, not for violation of the law but for disagreeing with David Suzuki's political views.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can all just maybe roll our eyes and say, "Oh, he just overspoke," and "He was being colourful," and "It was a joke." Well, when former President Trump said that his opponent Hillary Clinton should be locked up, he was widely condemned, ridiculed, and mocked and rightfully so, including, by the way, I'm pretty sure by pretty much everyone on the CBC. They pointed out rightly that in a democracy you don't lock up your opponents; you try to defeat them at the ballot box. When some yahoos started chanting out in the front of this Legislature back in I think it was August of 2016 "Lock her up" with reference to our Leader of the Opposition, the then Premier, I immediately denounced and condemned those remarks, saying that we don't lock up our political opponents in this democracy; we seek to defeat them at the ballot box.

But when David Suzuki says that the Prime Minister of Canada should be locked up, what happens? He continues to be regarded as a hero by the NDP and the Canadian left. He continues to get millions of dollars of taxpayer-subsidized CBC contracts. When will it end? He gets an honorary doctorate from the University of Alberta with this track record.

Mr. Orr: They should retract it.

Mr. Kenney: They absolutely should retract that, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely. I would call upon the chancellor of the University of Alberta and their board to revisit his honoured status at that institution that they granted him following what is very clearly at least an indirect incitement to violence. Does the University of Alberta want to be associated with that? Is that the value that the institution stands for? Does the University of Alberta honour people with anti-immigrant sentiments who say that Canada is full? Does the University of Alberta honour people who advocate locking up their political opponents? Would the University of Alberta consider for a nanosecond granting an honorary doctorate to Donald Trump? I daresay not, so why does David Suzuki's name continue to hang in honour at that place?

Words have consequences, Mr. Speaker, especially for people in such an influential leadership role as Mr. Suzuki. He's not some random protester. He's not some random loon. He has a national profile, almost unparalleled in the country. With that must come some concomitant responsibilities. We all know, all of us who are in politics, that we sometimes misspeak. We say things that we regret. Sometimes we overstate our case. I've certainly done so on many occasions in my years in public life. None of us are perfect. But to incite people to violence, even indirectly, I think is a whole other category.

Mr. Speaker, I think I've made my point, but there's a deeper one here, really, and I think the member who just spoke, from . . .

Mr. Sigurdson: Highwood.

Mr. Kenney: Highwood. I was going to say High River.

. . . Highwood, was making this point. The Suzuki comments here fall into a broader pattern of increasingly febrile rhetoric from

the green left which I think is creating a dangerous opinion culture in some quarters. Several of my friends across the House, and I see at least two of them in this House – I'm not mentioning anybody who's here or not here. [interjection] Oh.

4:50

Mr. Williams: I just wanted to ask my hon. colleague the Premier about something that I saw on social media recently at a recent climate summit, where there were two wooden boxes next to each other that had the label on top of them: climate confessional. Lineups of individuals going back on either side, waiting to confess their climate sins. The caption was "Man is a religious animal." I wonder if you could comment on the recent trend in the radical, progressive, environmental left of not being focused on the science but instead on what, to my mind, has become theological for this group, with Prophet Thunberg and Bishop Suzuki and the saintly figures that inhabit their icons of where they go. It concerns me that this direction is undercutting what they believe is an important message, that they ought to rely on the science and the facts but instead have a hypertheocratic direction.

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Member for Peace River may be on to something, because I do believe that human beings have by nature a spiritual disposition and seek transcendent meaning. More and more I think we see people pursuing that transcendence through radical green politics, and you can see so many of the patterns of sort of conventional systems of religious belief there incorporated into those political views of sacrifice and redemption and so forth. What concerns me – what concerns me – is that in that kind of context where people who have not been well formed, where they really believe they are in a kind of Manichean fight of good against evil, where they really are driven by a kind of quasi-religious conviction, that is very easy for the end to begin to justify the means, and we see that. We see that in those kinds of violent extremism that are motivated by kind of deformed religious views, and we can see radical violent extremism informed by distorted political views. That's why leaders have a very important responsibility not to use language that can lead to violent extremism.

On the question of extremism, we had Greta Thunberg visit us here in Edmonton and attend a rally outside this place I think two years ago, a rally co-organized by a group called Extinction Rebellion and attended by several members of the NDP Official Opposition caucus, elected members of this place. Extinction Rebellion and the other cohosting organizations, Mr. Speaker, are explicitly dedicated not to an energy transition, not to a sensible reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, not to simply achieving emission reduction targets; they are explicitly committed to the elimination of the entire modern industrial economy.

They are opposed to effectively all of the transitional green technologies that are now in play as engines of emissions reduction. They are opposed to, for example, liquefied natural gas development and exports, which can help us massively to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by accelerating the shift from thermal coal-fired electricity plants around the world to much lower emitting natural gas. They are opposed to hydrogen broadly, blue hydrogen in particular, which holds out the process for a massive decarbonization of the global economy. They are opposed to carbon capture, utilization, and storage and carbon sequestration, which we believe here in Alberta is the game changer that could help us to reduce the emissions intensity of the Canadian oil sands by at least 50 per cent in the 20 years to come. They are opposed to natural gas as a lower emitting energy altogether.

[The Speaker in the chair]

They insist that the global economy go cold turkey to unreliable renewables, which would mean incalculable human misery and suffering. It would mean locking billions of people in the Third World into endless energy poverty, families that would have to continue to heat their dinner over dung and twigs. How would we light this building and heat our homes in this cold northern country with electricity produced by unreliable, intermittent sources like wind and solar? Frankly, to coin a phrase, it's nuts. It's nuts, and that is the agenda that the Official Opposition, the NDP, implicitly endorsed and supported at that Greta Thunberg event. How is it that they don't get called out on this, Mr. Speaker? Oh, I know. They're probably playing a cynical game – right? – going out there and kind of nudge, nudge, wink, wink to their most radical green left supporters that they support this completely unscientific, extreme, and backward agenda. It would cost lives. The inability to heat homes and transport people and goods safely: it's ridiculous. This effectively is the sentiment that led Mr. Suzuki to make his implicit rationalization of political violence.

Mr. Speaker, I'll wrap up just by saying that I hope that the Official Opposition will join us in voting for Motion 104 so that we can speak with one voice although we have differences. We have legitimate differences on issues around energy and the environment, but surely there's one thing we can all agree on in this place, and that is the rules of the game in a liberal democracy, resolving differences peacefully and not violently, and that it is irresponsible for leaders to rationalize political violence. I therefore urge the house to vote in favour of this motion.

The Speaker: On Government Motion 104 are there others? The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein has risen.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to speak to this. Hard to follow the hon. Premier. I believe he had a lot of really great points and so have my colleagues this afternoon. One in particular, of course, is just highlighting Alberta's environmental record and the fact that these actions put at risk the great work that so many Albertans have done in regard to developing technology and improving upon that record and the opportunity that we have and the opportunity that gets put at risk because of these types of actions.

One of the other things that I thought was just so important in this conversation was the prosperity that our oil and gas sector brings for all Albertans, including Indigenous communities, and that's why this project is supported by 22 Indigenous elected bands across B.C. Again, the fact that these actions and statements by Dr. Suzuki and others are putting at risk that prosperity for so many Albertans: that's why I just wanted to talk a little bit about that today. We often get lost on the E in the ESG when I also think we need to make sure that we emphasize the S, the social good that takes place because of the prosperity that's created by our oil and gas sector. Of course, that's something I've had a lot of experience in, just seeing the generosity of Albertans from the prosperity that's been created through that.

In my time with the Mustard Seed and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary as well as with Canadian Mental Health I have often seen oil and gas companies open up their pocketbooks and give generously. In fact, we wouldn't be able to do the work that we do without the generosity and the commitment of so many great companies across Calgary in serving the poor. One of the examples I think about is actually Vermilion Energy. When I was with the Boys & Girls Clubs, they did an annual tournament that the Boys & Girls Clubs got to be a part of. Every year they raised hundreds of thousands of dollars that supported not only the work we did with Boys & Girls Clubs but other programs, including domestic violence

and other shelter programs in the city. Year over year we relied on those funds to be able to make major improvements to our shelter program and just create a better living space for our youth.

5:00

I wanted to bring that up because, again, you know, we've heard about what type of violence such comments could enact and the risk that this puts to people's lives and the livelihoods and the prosperity for so many Albertans, for our environment, frankly speaking, but it also puts at risk the prosperity that is being used to help bring people up in our community and that philanthropy and the generosity of so many. I was a United Way impact speaker for five years and literally went from every office building to office building across downtown Calgary and met with hundreds if not thousands of employees in the oil and gas sector who wanted so much to help and be able to help contribute and give to that.

I just thought it was important that we added that perspective to this conversation. Just the thought of inciting such violence and putting at risk our oil and gas sector is disturbing, but putting at risk that prosperity that helps create opportunities to help our most vulnerable in our community is also very disturbing.

The last thought on this is that during the last election I remember hitting doors and talking to many of my constituents who said that they were likely going to vote NDP, and they were often in the oil and gas sector. But at the time they were led to believe that the NDP had the oil and gas sector's best interests in mind, that they were supportive of our industry. I'll say this. The silence from the other side on this issue is deafening and very disturbing. I think that they've let a lot of those constituents down in my community that put their faith in them, that honestly believed that the NDP was going to stick up for their sector, their jobs, their livelihoods, and their ability to feed their families. Again, I think it's appalling what these statements are, this motion that was passed at the NDP AGM, and the absolute silence on this issue from members opposite.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 84

Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021

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

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today on behalf of the Minister of Service Alberta to move second reading of Bill 84, the Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021.

The amendments that the Minister of Service Alberta is proposing will ensure that Alberta is the destination of choice for innovators, entrepreneurs, job creators, and investors. We know that Alberta is a land of opportunity. We got away from that for a bit under the previous government. They raised taxes, chased jobs and investment out of the province. With no pandemic in sight they took Alberta to the highest levels of unemployment outside of Atlantic Canada. In fact, one of their ministers even encouraged Albertans looking for work to go to B.C. But it has been exciting to watch Alberta's economy start coming back under this government. There's no denying the effect the pandemic had on our economy; it had a negative effect on every economy. But Alberta's economy is recovering, and Alberta's recovery plan is working.

I'm sure you already know, Mr. Speaker, but let me remind you of some of the ways that Alberta is already the best place in North America to do business. We have the best taxes, we have a young

and talented workforce, we have a low cost of living, and we have a regulatory environment that enables job creators to do what they do best. The result: an economy that is diversifying more every day.

At the beginning of October Dow Chemical announced plans to triple the size of a petrochemical plant in Alberta's Industrial Heartland that experts estimate could be a \$10 billion investment. A month later, at the beginning of November, we had a \$7 billion week, including a commitment of over \$4 billion from Amazon Web Services to build a new state-of-the-art data centre in Calgary and a \$2.5 billion carbon-neutral petrochemical plant up near Grande Prairie. We've seen our tech sector grow from 1,200 companies to over 3,000. We've seen companies like Infosys, Plug and Play, 500 start-ups, and Mphasis set up shop in Alberta, and we've seen record-setting growth in venture capital investment. We've seen nearly \$1 billion worth of production costs in the film and television industry since January 2020, including over \$200 million of investment thanks to the largest TV production in Canadian history, HBO's *The Last of Us*. We've seen a blue hydrogen investment of \$1.5 billion in Edmonton, and I'm confident there's more to come. That's why the amendments being proposed in this bill are so important. This government will leave no stone unturned in attracting private-sector investment to Alberta that will create good-paying jobs.

In order to strengthen our hand even further and solidify our foundation, we need to update and modernize our Business Corporations Act. From incorporation to investment and from operation to growth, we want to be sure that Alberta businesses have every advantage possible. As part of these amendments, we're clarifying the roles of and protections for directors and shareholders. We're adding some flexibility to financial reporting, extending revival timelines, and in some cases we're making shareholder approval more timely and streamlined. Each of these is important for maintaining and improving Alberta's attractive business environment.

Let's look at shareholder approval times for a moment. In this legislation we're proposing that in a couple of very carefully chosen situations we move from a need for unanimous approval to a threshold of two-thirds shareholder approval. There are times when it can be difficult to get hold of a shareholder. They might be on holidays, they might be travelling, and that can hold up business. However, by maintaining a high two-thirds approval threshold, we are ensuring that shareholder rights are protected while making sure that businesses can work and function.

Another amendment to this bill is that we change revival timelines for businesses from five years to 10. There are a number of reasons that a company may need to reactivate or revive; for example, they may go back into business, they may need to collect assets, or they may need to work through legal issues. By extending that timeline to 10 years, we're making it easier for businesses to do the work that they need to do. At the same time, we are fully removing revival time frames for nonprofit companies, societies, and co-operatives.

We're also introducing something new that will ensure Alberta is on the leading edge of corporate legislation: corporate opportunity waivers. Mr. Speaker, these waivers are a really exciting development for Alberta and for business. As you know, I'm not the only one who's excited. Yesterday afternoon I was able to read an article in the *Financial Post* about these corporate opportunity waivers. I'd encourage you to read it, but let me share some in the interim.

Grant McGlaughlin, a private equity and venture capital lawyer, said when asked: I think Alberta is actually being very proactive and smart in adopting these changes because I think it will facilitate private equity and venture capital to look to use Alberta corporations versus other jurisdictions in Canada; it gives them flexibility when

they're structuring their various different portfolio companies. End quote. This is what the government is trying to do to attract private-sector investment, and it's great to hear others see and validate the work we're doing. I'm really excited about this legislation because it reinforces to investors and job creators that Alberta is serious when it comes to enabling them to do what they do best.

I want to take a moment on behalf of the minister to thank all those who helped shape this legislation. Over the past year Service Alberta has been speaking with hundreds of business experts across the province and outside our borders, including owners and investors, lawyers and accountants, and members of the banking and academic communities. It was important to the minister that conversations were held with the people who specialize in advising clients not just in Alberta and not just in Canada but around the world because Alberta is open for business. Wherever those job creators and investors are now, we want them to look at Alberta as a place where they could set up shop. What the Minister of Service Alberta heard was that it was critical for Alberta's government to modernize its legislation so that businesses are better able to succeed and our province is better able to attract even more private-sector investment.

I'm looking forward to debate on this, and I hope that all members of this Assembly support this bill as another important step by this government in making Alberta the destination of choice within Canada to do business.

With that, I'm pleased to move second reading of the Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there others who would like to join in the debate today? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday would like to provide some comments on Bill 84, Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021.

5:10

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise this evening to speak to Bill 84, the Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021. Looking at what we have in this legislation and through the technical briefing, there are pieces within here, and some of it is relatively straightforward in terms of some of the modernization of the language that we're seeing in here. I completely understand the need for that and can appreciate that.

There is a piece around the allowance of letting organizations revive such organizations after 10 years instead of five; I think that I would be interested to hear from the minister or anyone on the government side in what instances they may have seen that. I can appreciate certain circumstances where that might be needed in terms of not wanting to have stranded assets and around that. I would appreciate some clarification on what kinds of organizations are using them specifically, nonprofits that the government has seen or talked to in their discussions around Bill 84.

You know, what we're seeing here is interesting because, of course, that piece is quite different and quite separate from the discussions that we're hearing around corporate opportunity waivers, and I think that is where the majority of my conversations and questions will be here this evening. We see corporate opportunity waivers outlined in section 5 of the bill, which created section 16.1 of the act, allowing corporations to indicate, while either incorporating or through unanimous shareholder agreement, that they will allow for waivers of specific types of corporate opportunities. Namely, what we see is investments and directorships to be held in more than one corporation, Mr. Speaker.

Again, this is where the majority of my questions are going to be aimed. First of all, I think that this is quite a substantial change, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not here to necessarily take a position on this at

this point. I think that there is a lot of conversation that still needs to happen around the idea of corporate opportunity waivers. We see in other jurisdictions – well, none across Canada, of course. As the member just stated, we would be the first province to move forward on the idea of corporate opportunity waivers and the idea of moving away from fiduciary duty of loyalty to a corporation or a board that you may be the director of.

While I can appreciate that what we've heard from the government so far is that this is going to be all good news and that venture capitalists have given it the green light at this point – I can appreciate that – I think that there are some important questions to be raised around such a substantial move, especially in the climate that we see ourselves in here in Alberta.

I guess my first question would just have to be: who has the government heard from that this is necessary? Again, I appreciate that they tell us that this is important, that it's going to bring investment to the province, but I think that it is incredibly important that this House and the public understand exactly which stakeholders, who in the community has been consulted. While I can appreciate hearing a few testimonials from venture capitalists, who no doubt will benefit from such a process of being able to potentially be directors on multiple boards, I think it's important that a what-we-heard document is released to this House and to the general public.

I think a substantial or extensive list of the stakeholders that were consulted on this should be brought forward to this House, and just as important, I would say, is that through the Alberta lobbyist registrar we are able to understand who has lobbied this government on an official basis around this legislation. As a member of this House I think it's necessary that we hear who has been consulted on this and, more specifically maybe even, Mr. Speaker, who is asking the government to move forward on this.

There is a lot to take in here, Mr. Speaker, around the idea of corporate opportunity waivers. There have been some articles that have come out regarding litigation that has happened around the idea of corporate opportunity waivers specifically, and I would be happy to table an article from March 11, 2019, regarding a Delaware Supreme Court order. In this instance it was affirming that the decision would be upheld to essentially not support that what the people were bringing forward was a conflict of interest.

In this instance it was an organization called Alarm.com Holdings, Inc. versus ABS Capital Partners, Inc. Through this process Alarm.com Holdings – and I want to try and get this right – had brought forward that they were concerned about a perceived conflict of interest that these venture capitalists were able to get onto their board, essentially, and that they were able to gather information that was then used to support a competitor, a competing organization or association. Again, in this instance the court found that this wasn't the case, that there wasn't enough substantial evidence to prove that this indeed happened, that there was a conflict of interest. But the fact is that there have been some findings that have come out regarding this idea and regarding the fact that if we are going to move forward with corporate opportunity waivers, it needs to be done effectively.

Unfortunately, within Bill 84, the Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021, what we see is a framework to say that we are going to move in this direction, but unfortunately everything, essentially, is left to regulations. I know that this has been commonplace in this Legislature, you know, under this government and, I'm sure, under past governments as well, but when we're talking about something so fundamental to the future of corporations and boards, whether we're talking about venture capital or private equity firms and how they're able to invest in our province and how accountability is upheld, we need to do everything we can to support that.

Unfortunately, again, without seeing the minister being able to bring forward regulations or ensuring that they are provided within this legislation, it's going to be very hard, whether we support this in principle or not, to support something that is not finished. I really look forward to hearing more from the minister regarding why there is so much missing, why the minister wasn't able to come to the table with those regulations in place already or ensure that they are included within the legislation so that we have a full picture and ensure that that accountability is there.

You know, just looking back to this article – and it is from the Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance – it talks about some of the takeaways from that court case. There have been a few others as well, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker. It discusses the idea of confidentiality carve-outs “to ensure that board designees may properly communicate with the fund about its investment,” whether private equity or otherwise, and to “ensure that . . . confidentiality obligations in governing transaction documents permit disclosure of company information to the fund,” again, something that isn't necessarily included in this legislation. We're being told to trust that the government is going to get this right after the fact, and it's really hard to do that, especially when we don't see any true proof of consultation on this process. Hopefully, we see a willingness from this government to do that as we continue these discussions.

Another takeaway from those proceedings was around accountability of the board and ensuring that avoiding dual fiduciary problems – the article goes on to say, “To help avoid a finding or pleading-stage interference of misappropriation” these firms “should designate different representatives to the boards of competing businesses,” ensuring that there isn't, again, a perceived conflict of interest from having potentially one director sit on multiple boards, especially in a situation where it might be a company or two separate companies that potentially have the same goal or are trying to get to the same market, maybe even have proprietary technology that by no means do they necessarily want to share with another organization. This is, you know, a very interesting idea to consider moving forward with and being the first jurisdiction in Canada to move forward with.

5:20

I think that, you know, there is always something to be said about the fact that we should be looking to find ways to bring venture capital to our province to enable companies to bring new investments to their organizations and how that might benefit Albertans, but there are a lot of questions here, Mr. Speaker, again, going back to the idea of contracting out the fiduciary duty of loyalty, to ensuring that you are working in the best interests of both boards if you find yourself as the director of more than one and if you find yourself as the director of two boards that may be focused on the same market share, focused on the same technology potentially, and that sort. Again, there are other court cases that have arisen from this.

I look forward to bringing some of those concerns forward again and the idea of: if we are going to move forward with this, there needs to be accountability. I look forward to hearing from the minister his thoughts if there is a willingness to share a full, detailed list of: who has been bringing this forward that may be signed up under the lobbyist registry here in the province? Who has had those conversations with his office or anyone's office? I think it is going to be important, as we move through this process, to see full transparency.

The fact is that in many instances, when we see such a substantial change happening, we see it done in tandem with other jurisdictions, other provinces that have potentially signed on to the idea of moving forward with this. Again, especially with something that is going to have such a major impact on the companies, this act

itself, and other pieces of legislation that are going to be potentially affected by this legislation – again, I support the idea that we see in other parts of this legislation about modernizing the act. I think that there were some very clear instances of wording that could be updated, potentially processes that needed to be updated. Instead of having it to be, you know, handwritten, we see some changes in terms of how processes can be handled without having to be handwritten. I think those are, for the most part, straightforward, Mr. Speaker, but it is interesting to see such a substantial change tied with much smaller changes.

I imagine that as this debate continues – and, hopefully, we hear from the minister – I will have more questions and more comments. I know that during the technical briefing the minister or ministry staff described that they had consulted with 200 business owners. That sounds like quite a substantial list, and I think that it would be beneficial to all of us if the minister was able to share that list.

We do see some other changes to director liability in this legislation. While I can appreciate that that is going to have to be updated, especially as we are talking about corporate opportunity waivers, I am going to need some more time to consider the minister's comments on that, when they come forward, because there are quite a few changes to the sections governing director liability as well.

These, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, are quite complex changes. Again, from the minister's comments and the previous member's comments, we are going to be the first jurisdiction to move forward with it. While there may be opportunities to bring new dollars into the province, being the first to do something can also lead to complications. If we don't get this right, I could see this leading to, again, litigation and companies having to go to the courts and perceived conflicts of interest, so we need to do everything we can to make sure that the accountability is there. Unfortunately, again, there are some pieces missing through that process within this bill. We need to see what the minister has for a vision in terms of how these corporate opportunity waivers are going to play out, because it's not currently here.

With that, I think I'm going to take my seat at this point, but hopefully we'll hear more from the minister very shortly. If the government is expecting us to vote on such a substantial piece of legislation, I think it would be respectful to provide those answers.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others that would like to join in the debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 84, Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021. You know, I appreciate the comments from my colleague on this bill. I'm always happy to see efforts to support our small, medium, and larger businesses to succeed. I appreciate the fact that this bill is proposing some solutions that are unique in Canada. Only, I believe, three U.S. jurisdictions have – sorry; I should probably premise this. I'm jumping right into the opportunity waiver for businesses.

I've been, you know, trying to do some reading. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that there are a number of parts of this bill that are making changes to existing legislation that I am supportive of. My overall support for the bill is still – I have a bunch of questions, like my colleague, that are being answered. We've also in our role as Official Opposition reached out to a number of organizations, entities, venture capitalists to hear directly from them if, in fact, the proposals being made in this bill are what industry is asking for. Again, we always want to be cautious that when we look to solve one problem, we don't create new problems, and I'll speak in more detail on that.

You know, I'm happy to see that some of this is, whether you want to call it housekeeping, just making some changes to legislation that update it. One great example is when we're looking at the approval of financial statements. This is 158(1) in the bill itself, Mr. Speaker. Essentially, up until this bill was tabled, financial statements had to be signed or approved, and directors would have to send in a fax of their signature as opposed to today being able to use e-signatures. That one change may be small in nature, but I'm sure it's significant for the business community.

There are a number of other sections that I appreciate. You know, sections 140(1) and (2) are talking about voting at a meeting of shareholders. Previously they could only use a show of hands. Now there is voice added, which, of course, I think, is just modernizing this legislation, with the new reality that many meetings, board meetings included, have been and are being done virtually.

Those kinds of modernizations to the legislation I'm in full support of because they make sense. You know, we also have – and it's interesting. The change – when we're talking about resolutions for shareholders, a resolution must be signed by two-thirds of the shareholders as opposed to all of the shareholders. Now, I appreciate that my colleague from the other side spoke of this. I do think that that would be at times a significant barrier for business, to be able to track down the signature of every single shareholder. Obviously, we want that threshold to remain high, so two-thirds as a change as opposed to all shareholders unanimously I think at the outset seems to make sense to me.

5:30

Again, as I mentioned, the Official Opposition has calls out to a number of different businesses and business entities to weigh in on this bill. My hope is that when we get to Committee of the Whole, we'll have a robust conversation with the minister. Hopefully, he'll be able to answer, well, all of our questions.

I do note that there are a number of details that will be left for regulations. I appreciate the difference between legislation and regulations and when regs are used as opposed to legislation. But I think what makes – where I'm going to need some assurance and reassurance, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that because Alberta is now proposing to make changes that are unique to the province, this doesn't exist in other parts of the country. We need to make sure that we get it right. I'm always a little hesitant to leave some of the larger decisions to regulations, which, of course, is just done with cabinet as opposed to being debated openly and publicly in the Chamber.

One of my early questions is again: who is asking for some of these changes? Now, I'm not talking about the ones that I've already outlined that I can get behind. I found another example. Section 137(1) is amended. Previously it read, "A corporation shall prepare a list of shareholders entitled to receive a notice of a meeting, arranged in alphabetical order and showing the number of shares held by each shareholder." It's striking out "arranged in alphabetical order and". That seems like a positive change for me. I wonder how much time businesses spent ensuring that names were in alphabetical order. That again is a minor change in legislation but probably substantial for some businesses. Those types of changes are easy enough to get behind, Mr. Speaker. It's pretty evident why they're being changed or modernized or updated.

The crux of the bill and what it's proposing – and I appreciate that the minister has spoken about how changes to the corporate opportunity waivers will in fact draw in additional venture capital and make Alberta corporations more attractive. Now, I'm not necessarily opposed to the fact that what Alberta is putting forward would be the first in the country. I don't necessarily think that always following behind other provinces or seeing it in other jurisdictions

is the best mode of practice. I mean, you know, we know that in the business sector being a first mover has its advantages, and that could very well play out here in Alberta.

I do think it's interesting that – and I can probably table it tomorrow – the *Financial Post* did write an article yesterday where they did interview a professor of law at the U of C who did question why no jurisdiction in Canada, no province or territory, has brought forward the corporate opportunity waivers. You know, he couldn't, in this article, identify why that might be. Now, I mean, I appreciate that we'll want to canvass a number of different stakeholder opinions. It sounds like much of the legal community is behind this type of change, but again I'm not sure to what extent different firms were engaged. I appreciate that the ministry did indicate that there were hundreds of businesses and industry experts, academics, et cetera, that were interviewed or engaged or consulted with over the past year. I mean, that's a positive first step. As my colleague pointed out, always curious to know who's been leading the charge on calling for changes.

Now, there is some caution that needs to be issued here, and that is again ensuring that providing the ability for investors and directors to be on multiple boards doesn't undermine their loyalty to one company if they are serving on two. I appreciate the fact that what this is trying to do is to allow especially venture capitalists to be able to, you know, invest in one company, especially if, let's say, they are an investor that comes with a background of expertise. I'll give an example. Let's say that they are very much into the health technology space, whether it's devices or otherwise. If they know that space very well and they are investing in and part of a director of one company, this would then give them the ability to be a director of another company within that space, which I appreciate, from the venture capitalist's point of view, might be fantastic. Again, if they know the space, they're now not limited with where they can help serve and direct their money.

But there needs to be, I think, assurances that their obligations, both loyalty and their fiduciary duties, are not either being questioned or that there's going to be real clarity. Now, I appreciate when a corporation would introduce the corporate opportunity waivers, and I'm guessing and I'm hoping – and here's a question to the minister. You know, there's talk of predefined circumstances or being very, very clear on when these would exist. I think that knowing that while we're debating the legislation will help provide the opposition with confidence that this is something that's being very, very carefully looked at.

I see that my colleague across the way was at one point interested in jumping in. I'm not sure if he still is. I will give way.

Mr. Jones: Thank you. While the proposed corporate opportunity waivers are new to Canada, since 2000 Delaware has granted companies the right to waive corporate opportunities with the consent of the majority of shareholders. Other U.S. jurisdictions, including Maryland, Georgia, and Washington, have also adopted amendments to include advanced waivers for the corporate opportunities doctrine.

It's worth reinforcing that this legislation permits corporate opportunity waivers; it does not mandate them. Yes, the regulations will lay out how and when they can be used and in what specific circumstances. The proposed amendments would allow corporations the option of adding waivers to their articles of incorporation or unanimous shareholder agreement to allow directors to participate in specific types of corporate opportunities. As the member opposite can certainly appreciate, this would be very useful for venture capitalists, who often choose to invest in corporations in the same lines of business. Large investors also frequently have diverse

portfolios and sit on the boards of corporations they invest in to monitor their performance.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Member. I'm guessing that the fact that the ministry is listening intently on this debate and providing some answers to the questions that I have – I appreciate that. I also understand that this provides the ability for corporations to pursue the waiver; it doesn't mandate them. I do get that.

Again, you know, the fact that we've only had a short amount of time to go through the bill – and it being in second reading, we do have a number of questions. As I mentioned, we have reached out to a number of stakeholders, which I think is the traditional way of going about bill debate. I know that when we were government, the opposition of the day would often reach out to many of the same stakeholders to get the feedback directly. Forgive me on this, but I don't necessarily – I'm not comfortable just necessarily taking the government's word that you've consulted with everyone and everyone's on board with it as I'm sure, if the tables were turned, you would say the same to us.

5:40

There are questions with this. I mean, I appreciate at the onset that this would be beneficial to venture capitalists. Again, we are talking about changing corporate governance or providing the ability for corporate governance to change, so we want to be extremely cautious that this is going to be beneficial and it won't be detrimental to corporations that may pursue this path.

I do recognize that there are a number of – well, I shouldn't say a number. There are a few states that have this in place. It does make me wonder why more states aren't pursuing this. I know that there is discussion. Those that are in favour of corporate opportunity waivers will talk about how this will inject new capital. I appreciate the fact that even the *Financial Post* talks about how this would help attract capital to Alberta and even help corporations maybe move their offices or set up offices or subsidiaries here in Alberta. Of course, we want our business sector to flourish. We want to continue to remain extremely competitive.

Really, it's getting a number of questions answered. Other areas of the bill . . .

The Speaker: Unfortunately, the time is allotted for the member's remarks. Otherwise, we could have provided an additional two minutes.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows now.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the House to speak to Bill 84, Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2021. The business plans some changes to corporate acts. It amends mostly the Business Corporations Act. Smaller changes are made to the Cooperatives Act, the Societies Act, the Unclaimed Personal Property and Vested Property Act, and the Companies Act. This bill also operates language and makes changes relating to the responsibilities and protections to boards of directors, shareholder approvals, and insider trading.

In this bill corporate opportunity waivers are outlined in section 5 of the bill, which creates section 16.1 of the act. It allows corporations to indicate while incorporating or in a unanimous shareholder demand that they allow for waivers of specific types of corporate opportunities; namely, investments and directorships to be held in more than one corporation. According to the government opportunity waivers are designed to help venture capitalists. If someone is part of one company which has decided that they did not want to act in a specific way – an example could be a company that did not want to develop a lot of land – that individual could be

part of another company and use an opportunity waiver to allow them the opportunity to act. A person or part of the company that did not want to develop the land could apply for the other company to use it. [interjection] Thank you, sir. I'll let you go ahead.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, hon. member. You now, this is the part of this bill – I mean, it's going to take a little while to absorb all of this, for sure. It's sort of suggesting that you can have an individual from one company who's breaking away to expand on or do something different from what the original company was trying to do, like land development or something like that. I mean, that seems fine, but it also seems self-evident to me because, I mean, if someone happens to have the wherewithal to choose to venture out themselves, like, is this new bill then protecting that person so that they can stay on the board of directors of that first company? It would seem to me that they probably don't want them, right? If they're moving, saying, "Well, we're going to develop that land and I'm going to do it with a new company," then it feels like that's the first indication of a relationship gone sour and that person gets the boot. I'm curious to know if the hon. member knows of any other jurisdictions that might be using this kind of idea of waivers. Yeah. Let me know.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, hon. member, for the question, actually, and to help me to expand a bit of my knowledge. Also, that's in regard to my answer to all the comments to this bill. As you raised this concern, yes, of course, a lot of stuff right now is subject to the regulations, the regulatory changes, and as such we don't know what it's going to look like until they are fully completed or developed. We do not really know how this is going to impact.

In exactly the way you raised the concern of an individual having the legal authority to participate in more than one corporation or to be able to, in this case, I would say, influence the decision-making, we don't know how this is going to bring or impact the current system or the corporations working in this province or in the country.

As such, Alberta is going to be the very first province if this bill goes ahead as it's being proposed in this Legislature. No other jurisdiction in Alberta or in Canada has actually implemented or legislated these kinds of changes. There have been some jurisdictions south of the border, and there's not a lot of information on how those changes in those jurisdictions have really made such a difference to the operations that corporations are taking in hand and broadly how those operations and changes are to be worked on, if corporations are really helping the society and the community in those jurisdictions.

I have been actually operating my business and dealing with business communities for the past decade and a half or more than that. During that time I've seen so many ups and downs, you know, boom-and-bust economies, and a number of clients and friends and those people involved in businesses, running their own corporations, dealing with their daily operations. What seems to me as a conflict of interest right here is that they're opening the clear door – I don't know if the minister can explain exactly, because we don't know, without the full regulatory changes, how this is going to impact the daily operations.

When I've seen those unethical behaviours and illegitimate influence . . . [interjection] Oh, thank you, Member. I'll give way.

5:50

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, hon. member. You know, there are a couple of sections of this bill where amendments are being made. Section 50 provides 10 years instead of five years for companies that have dissolved to revive themselves. As well, the bill removes the five-year limit for nonprofits to revive after dissolution. I'm

curious to know, I mean, yourself being a small-business owner, your thoughts on that window being extended so that again – and I would imagine that there are a number of businesses that, unfortunately, have had to close their doors because of COVID and the lack of supports that this government has rolled out to keep them afloat, but if there is an opportunity for them to come back, the window has now grown. From being a small-business owner, I'm curious if the Member for Edmonton-Meadows can comment on this change.

Mr. Deol: Thank you once again, Member, for asking the questions. That's where I was actually going to come around to, and those are the questions I do have on my mind.

Before that, I just wanted to say that one of the substantial changes this bill is bringing in is that one individual can be part of multiple investments and multiple corporations and then be able to influence the decision-making of those corporations. He will join as a member of the board and in many other ways.

From the year 2008 to 2015, when the economy was kind of up and down, I've really seen people losing basically everything. I have seen the companies, like, a million dollars disappearing by the unethical, illegitimate behaviour of the very influential individuals on the committees. They make decisions by using their influence – undue influence, I will say – or other powers to not take the best interests of the corporations to the forefront. I still know that there are a number of cases from 2008 up to now – it's 15 years – still going in courts in Alberta, in B.C., companies that came to our province to do business, to invest in our province, to help our province grow businesses and create jobs. Unfortunately, those turned out to be bad, bad experiences.

Exactly as the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview asked me this question . . . [interjection] Oh, thank you.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Member, for giving me the opportunity to intervene. As was mentioned, the member was a small-business owner. I think that I would really want the member to comment on this, to show these changes are important – some of these will streamline businesses – but how these government policies, in particular the policies they often boast about as giving billions of dollars to bigger corporations, have impacted small-business owners just like you in your experience. And your constituents' businesses in your constituency: what are they feeling about those policies?

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Member for Calgary-McCall, for asking your question. Definitely, the biggest concern is that the bill we are

discussing – I was going to ask the minister. It would have been much better if the minister was listening to these questions directly. Like, what makes him initiate these legislative changes? As the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview asked me in a question, the window for nonprofit organizations to revive their operations has expanded, so who did they consult, and where did they get their feedback from? What were the, you know, negative impacts of those legislations in hand that we are discussing the changes on? It is really important for us to know before we provide proper feedback on this bill, and Albertans need to know.

This is very important, what happened in the two and a half years since the UCP took this office, how this bill is going to undo those damages that have been done by the UCP government's wrong approach to our province, I would say. So \$4.7 billion: how many jobs did that bring in? We have seen the failed \$1.3 billion bet on the Keystone XL pipeline. A number of those issues. Has this bill in hand that we are discussing now – the fundamental of the Legislature is basically here, on behalf of the people, our constituents, Albertans, to discuss the best interests of the public. Whatever we discuss in here, whatever we are legislating here: how is this going to contribute to move our province further?

Basically, what we see here is not really addressing anything that Albertans are asking. What our constituents are asking in our ridings is how this will bring investment back to Alberta, how this will create jobs. More than that, we know that if these changes go ahead, definitely they can bring forward more profits for the shareholders. More than that, what other benefits can our province see from these changes, from the changes that we are spending our time in this very place on? What will be the outcome? What outcome is the government seeing? What was the reason behind this bill, and exactly what kind of study has this government done before bringing these changes in this Bill 84, amendment act?

Before offering any kind of support, there are a lot – a lot – tons of questions to hear from the minister. There are some small changes that do make sense as, you know, in a changing society, technology is adding a lot – yes, small changes. Now corporations need an e-mail address and phone number additions to their addresses. That does make sense, and we do support it. But this substantial change in this bill really needs a lot of answers.

The Speaker: I hesitate to interrupt, but pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) the House stands adjourned until this evening at 7:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]

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