



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, March 10, 2022

Day 7

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature
Third Session

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

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Strathmore (UC)
Allard, Tracy L., Grande Prairie (UC)
Amery, Mickey K., Calgary-Cross (UC)
Armstrong-Homeniuk, Jackie,
 Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (UC)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (Ind)
Bilous, Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-West Henday (NDP)
Ceci, Joe, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UC)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (Ind)
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)
Dreeshen, Devin, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (UC)
Eggen, David, Edmonton-North West (NDP),
 Official Opposition Whip
Ellis, Hon. Mike, Calgary-West (UC)
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP)
Fir, Hon. Tanya, Calgary-Peigan (UC)
Frey, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UC)
Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
Getson, Shane C., Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland (UC)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UC)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UC)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP),
 Official Opposition House Leader
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UC)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UC)
Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)
Horner, Hon. Nate S., Drumheller-Stettler (UC)
Hunter, Grant R., Taber-Warner (UC)
Irwin, Janis, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
 Official Opposition Deputy Whip
Issik, Hon. Whitney, Calgary-Glenmore (UC),
 Government Whip
Jones, Matt, Calgary-South East (UC)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UC),
 Premier
LaGrange, Hon. Adriana, Red Deer-North (UC)
Loewen, Todd, Central Peace-Notley (Ind)
Long, Martin M., West Yellowhead (UC)
Lovely, Jacqueline, Camrose (UC)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luan, Hon. Jason, Calgary-Foothills (UC)
Madu, Hon. Kaycee, QC, Edmonton-South West (UC)
McIver, Hon. Ric, Calgary-Hays (UC)
Nally, Hon. Dale, Morinville-St. Albert (UC)

Neudorf, Nathan T., Lethbridge-East (UC)
Nicolaidis, Hon. Demetrios, Calgary-Bow (UC)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (UC),
 Government House Leader
Nixon, Jeremy P., Calgary-Klein (UC)
Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
 Leader of the Official Opposition
Orr, Hon. Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UC)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Panda, Hon. Prasad, Calgary-Edgemont (UC)
Phillips, Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Pon, Hon. Josephine, Calgary-Beddington (UC)
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UC)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UC)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)
Rutherford, Brad, Leduc-Beaumont (UC),
 Deputy Government Whip
Sabir, Irfan, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall (NDP),
 Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Savage, Hon. Sonya, Calgary-North West (UC)
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, Calgary-North East (UC)
Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UC),
 Deputy Government House Leader
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, Calgary-Shaw (UC)
Schweitzer, Hon. Doug, QC, Calgary-Elbow (UC)
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, QC, Calgary-Acadia (UC)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UC)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)
Toews, Hon. Travis, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UC)
Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UC)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UC)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UC)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UC)
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UC)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, Calgary-North (UC)
Vacant, Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche

Party standings:

United Conservative: 60

New Democrat: 23

Independent: 3

Vacant: 1

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Shannon Dean, QC, Clerk
Teri Cherkewich, Law Clerk
Trafton Koenig, Senior Parliamentary
 Counsel
Philip Massolin, Clerk Assistant and
 Director of House Services

Nancy Robert, Clerk of *Journals* and
 Committees
Janet Schwegel, Director of Parliamentary
 Programs
Amanda LeBlanc, Deputy Editor of
 Alberta Hansard

Chris Caughell, Sergeant-at-Arms
Tom Bell, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Paul Link, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Terry Langley, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Council

Jason Kenney	Premier, President of Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Relations
Jason Copping	Minister of Health
Mike Ellis	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Tanya Fir	Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction
Nate Glubish	Minister of Service Alberta
Nate Horner	Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development
Whitney Issik	Associate Minister of Status of Women
Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Education
Jason Luan	Minister of Community and Social Services
Kaycee Madu	Minister of Labour and Immigration
Ric McIver	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Dale Nally	Associate Minister of Natural Gas and Electricity
Demetrios Nicolaides	Minister of Advanced Education
Jason Nixon	Minister of Environment and Parks
Ronald Orr	Minister of Culture
Prasad Panda	Minister of Infrastructure
Josephine Pon	Minister of Seniors and Housing
Sonya Savage	Minister of Energy
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Transportation
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Children's Services
Doug Schweitzer	Minister of Jobs, Economy and Innovation
Tyler Shandro	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations
Muhammad Yaseen	Associate Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism

Parliamentary Secretaries

Martin Long	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism
Jacqueline Lovely	Parliamentary Secretary to the Associate Minister of Status of Women
Nathan Neudorf	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Parks for Water Stewardship
Jeremy Nixon	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Community and Social Services for Civil Society
Searle Turton	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy
Dan Williams	Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Culture and for la Francophonie

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Rowswell
Deputy Chair: Mr. Jones

Allard
Eggen
Gray
Hunter
Phillips
Rehn
Singh

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Neudorf
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

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

Select Special Committee to Examine Safe Supply

Chair: Mr. Jeremy Nixon
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Allard

Amery
Frey
Milliken
Rosin
Stephan
Yao
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Lovely
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

Amery
Carson
Dang
Frey
Gotfried
Hunter
Loewen
Reid
Sabir
Smith

Select Special Information and Privacy Commissioner Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Walker
Deputy Chair: Mr. Turton

Allard
Carson
Dreeshen
Ganley
Long
Sabir
Stephan

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Rutherford
Deputy Chair: Mr. Milliken

Allard
Ceci
Dach
Long
Loyola
Rosin
Shepherd
Smith
van Dijken

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Cooper
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schow

Allard
Deol
Goehring
Gray
Long
Neudorf
Sabir
Sigurdson, R.J.
Williams

Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

Chair: Mr. Rutherford
Deputy Chair: Mr. Jeremy Nixon

Amery
Frey
Irwin
Long
Nielsen
Rehn
Rosin
Sigurdson, L.
Sweet

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Smith
Deputy Chair: Mr. Reid

Aheer
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Deol
Ganley
Gotfried
Loyola
Neudorf
Renaud
Stephan
Williams

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Ms Phillips
Deputy Chair: Mr. Reid

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

Select Special Committee on Real Property Rights

Chair: Mr. Sigurdson
Deputy Chair: Mr. Rutherford

Frey
Ganley
Hanson
Milliken
Nielsen
Rowswell
Schmidt
Sweet
van Dijken
Yao

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Hanson
Deputy Chair: Member Ceci

Dach
Feehan
Ganley
Getson
Guthrie
Lovely
Rehn
Singh
Turton
Yao

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 10, 2022

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Hon. members, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the Queen* by Ms Brooklyn Elhard. I would invite you to participate at your choosing.

Hon. Members:

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen!

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, it's my great pleasure to introduce a number of guests to you today. Seated in the members' gallery today is Elizabeth Delos Trinos, the constituency assistant for the hon. Member for Edmonton-South West. Today, I might add, is a very special day for her and her family as today they became Canadian citizens, and I couldn't be happier for them.

Since we're all celebrating happy days together, seated in the Speaker's gallery is Emma Hopper. Emma works for the United Conservative Party caucus, and it is her birthday today.

Equally as important, and I'm unsure if it's their birthday or any other wonderful day in their lives today other than being here, seated in the galleries are Darrick Graff, president of the Fort Saskatchewan firefighters association, and Glen Rae, president of the Spruce Grove firefighters. They are guests of the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Members' Statements

Presumptive WCB Cancer Coverage for Firefighters

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, we may not agree on much in this Chamber, but I know that all members of this Assembly can agree that incredible bravery is shown by the men and women across our province who choose to fight fires. While doing their job, firefighters are routinely exposed to burning chemicals and other toxins. In just a typical residential structure fire there can be over 265 known carcinogens. Because of these exposures, cancer is the number one cause of firefighter line-of-duty deaths.

I was proud to be part of the NDP government that updated the list of cancers that are presumed to be job related so that firefighters could be sure to get the support they need. With that update, Alberta had the most comprehensive coverage in Canada based on the

science we had at the time. Since then several more cancers have been linked to the profession, and jurisdictions like Yukon and Manitoba have extended protections beyond what we have here in Alberta.

Representatives of the Spruce Grove and Fort Saskatchewan firefighters are here with us today as part of a new lobby by the Alberta Fire Fighters Association to see improvements and expansion of presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters in Alberta. I want to thank them for their work. One of my immediate family members is a firefighter, one with a young family, and I'm extremely grateful for the advocacy work happening today.

Those who've heard me talk in this place a time or two, both when I was the labour minister and now as the opposition critic for labour, know that a safe and healthy workplace is incredibly important to me. Every worker deserves to come home safely at the end of their day. When injuries happen or occupational diseases develop because of their job, workers should get the help they need to recover and the support of our workers' compensation system.

I urge the government to update the cancer supports for Alberta firefighters by adding thyroid, pancreatic, larynx, penile, mesothelioma, and soft-tissue sarcoma to the list of presumptive cancers and to work towards improving data collection for the firefighting occupation.

I hope all members will meet with the firefighters. On behalf of this Assembly, thank you to Alberta's firefighters.

Federal Carbon Pricing

Mr. Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, we all know that Canada is facing a serious inflation problem of a kind we have not seen in decades. Thanks to the inflationary money-printing policies of the federal government, rising energy prices, and increased costs for housing, it's now tougher for Canadians to make ends meet. What's worse is that at a time when Canadians and Albertans actually need relief, the federal government is once again making life more expensive. Every Albertan who receives a paycheck should be aware that Ottawa is taking a bigger share of their earnings with the 2022 CPP payroll tax hike. The Trudeau government had the opportunity to take advice from Alberta and others to cancel this tax hike, but they chose otherwise.

Now with April 1 approaching, the Trudeau Liberals are about to spring another monumental tax hike on Albertans and all Canadians. This is no April Fool's joke. On April 1 the Trudeau carbon tax is set to go up again, raising the cost of home heating, gassing up, fuelling up, further driving up the cost of groceries and every product that is transported to store shelves. The cost of fuel and heating is already rising due to global instability and demand, but the Trudeau government is still intent on sticking their hands further into the pockets of Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that Alberta's government is standing with everyday Albertans and calling on the Trudeau government to stop the carbon tax hike. I'm standing here wondering if the folks across the aisle might have the courage to do the same. Will the NDP finally stand and admit that their carbon tax was so wrong for Albertans? Will they apologize for driving up the cost of energy? Albertans are watching. Now is the time. Instead of the NDP pretending they care about inflation, they need to admit their hypocrisy, put the interests of Albertans first, and call on their close friend Trudeau to stop the tax hikes.

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

Ukraine

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ukrainian people know the meaning of turmoil. They've lived it for centuries. When Putin and his communist, socialist regime unleashed to attack Ukraine, he underestimated the sheer grit of the Ukrainian people. He has the bigger, more powerful military, but he is grossly miscalculating Ukraine and its will to protect its sovereignty and democracy. Ukrainians are tenacious underdogs, fighters, and survivors.

I am concerned about the humanitarian crisis unfolding before our eyes. Homes are being bombed, and hungry, desperate people are fleeing for their lives. Yesterday heavy fighting in Mariupol forced a humanitarian convoy to turn around. Putin's army attacked a maternity and children's hospital in Mariupol, killing innocent people. Sick children, women in labour were amongst the injured and killed. I have one question. How does the Putin regime see these women and children as a threat? I think about Ukrainian fathers and sons at war worrying about their families. Are they okay? Are they safe? Where are they? Do they have food? It sends chills down my spine.

Colleagues, we have a humanitarian crisis. The Ukrainian people have not only lost their homes; they've lost their cities. They've lost their families. People are breaking into stores in search of food, melting snow for water, and hiding in their basements without heat and electricity. Ukraine is living in survival mode.

Mr. Speaker, in the past two weeks 2.3 million people have left Ukraine. Many people, groups, and governments are stepping up, including ours. I'm proud that our Premier and government see the humanitarian need in Ukraine and are providing \$11 million in humanitarian aid, \$350,000 for local organizations involved in the aid programs. This will help provide much-needed initial aid for the people of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, Ukraine will continue to stand strong against the tyranny of Putin. Ukrainians are strong, resilient, and will continue to fight for freedom. [Remarks in Ukrainian]

1:40 Personal Income Tax Deindexation

Mr. Nielsen: This year the government will take \$1 billion in higher income taxes from Alberta families. While the Premier and Finance minister try to tell Albertans that they are not, the facts are, sadly, not on their side. Using deindexation of the income tax bracket, this government has raised everyone's income taxes through a strategy known as bracket creep. Now, many of you watching at home may be asking: what is bracket creep? A very good question, for which I will quote an expert on the subject, an expert who for years railed against this sneaky, billion-dollar pickpocketing of taxpayers, who had strong words to describe bracket creep and the impact it has on Albertans, powerful words that I will read today.

Bracket creep is a hidden tax grab, an enormous, insidious tax grab, an insidious tax on inflation that will mean Albertans pay more. It is a destructive tax on inflation, a pernicious, invidious tax. It is the heartless and insidious bracket creep that taxes the poor and forces low-income people onto the tax rolls. It is a tax grab that taxes people without their knowing.

This once principled individual fought against bracket creep for nearly a decade. He accused those supporting it of possessing a twisted logic and called them bracket creeps. One only wonders what harsh words this individual would have for the Premier and Finance minister, who have become the biggest defenders of bracket creep and who lack the courage to even admit it. I have to imagine that the career opponent of bracket creep would be angry,

Mr. Speaker. He would be disappointed. He would be shocked, sickened, confused to see this. The individual I'm quoting today knows that what I'm saying about bracket creep is the truth. Each and every quote I said today came straight from the mouth of the Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Through you to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: what happened to you?

The Speaker: While I do provide the widest possible leniency inside a member's statement, I did provide some significant comments just yesterday or the day before around referring to an individual as pickpocketing. I'm pretty sure that's what happened in the member's statement, and I'm sure it won't happen again.

The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Budget 2022

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After eight long years Alberta's budget is balanced. With our balance sheet back in the black, the lowest taxes in Canada, and essentially all restrictions now lifted, Alberta is truly starting to feel like Alberta again. We have the fastest growing economy in the nation, and our people are going back to work, with more than 130,000 net new jobs created in the past year alone. We are also seeing major private-sector investment in every corner of the province that would not be possible without this economic turnaround.

Budget 2022 is just more great news for Alberta's economic recovery, with significant investments in health care capacity, education, infrastructure, diversification, continuing care, and more. Albertans are celebrating this well-earned good news across the province. "This is one incredible budget," said *Calgary Herald* columnist Don Braid. "Boom, not gloom," said *Edmonton Journal* columnist David Staples. Alberta's Good News Budget Shows UCP Policies Work and NDP's Were a Disaster, said *Calgary Herald* columnist Corbella.

It's true that the only Albertans who aren't happy about this budget are the members across the aisle. The NDP is downright furious and chalking our balanced budget up to just high oil prices, but – get this, Mr. Speaker – if oil prices were exactly where they were today, those reckless members would've posted a disastrous \$6 billion deficit this year due to their out-of-control and reckless spending. We got here because our government established and followed a new set of fiscal anchors to get us back to balance. This included bringing our per capita spending in line with other provinces and keeping our net debt-to-GDP ratio low. And get this: we cut taxes, and we're bringing in more tax revenue than the previous government.

This makes the NDP mad, Mr. Speaker. They're mad that we balanced the budget through fiscal responsibility and restraint. They're mad that Albertans are going back to work and earning more money. Well, the NDP can just stay mad, because Alberta is moving forward. Our economic recovery is under way, and our greatest days are just ahead.

Thank you.

Police Services

Mr. Dach: Alberta municipal leaders have voted overwhelmingly that they do not trust the Premier and his UCP government to manage a provincial police force. Who is to blame them? Let's just look at their track record and see. The Premier made it clear what he thinks about independent investigations when he fired the Election Commissioner investigating members of the UCP caucus and the UCP leadership race, the same UCP leadership race that had been under a multiyear RCMP investigation for voter fraud, an

investigation that saw multiple ministers, MLAs, and staff interviewed by the RCMP. Not a great start, Mr. Speaker.

The previous Justice minister felt that it was okay to directly call a police chief to discuss a \$300 distracted driving ticket. This government's own report found that he tried to interfere with the administration of justice and, as a result, was no longer able to remain Justice minister and was shuffled to that labour portfolio. Instead of losing his ministerial position and being relegated to the backbenches, as one would expect in a parliamentary democracy, this minister still gets to sit in the front row and collect his \$181,000 salary.

Another prime example of how poorly this government handles justice and enforcement issues was the Coutts blockade. Our province was losing over \$44 million a day in economic revenue, crippling our supply lines and stopping our own products from getting to market, just so this government's MLAs could appease the far-right base of the UCP.

On top of the UCP's failures, the provincial police would cost hundreds of millions of dollars more annually to Albertans. This will be on top of the millions already downloaded onto municipalities in previous budgets, something this government has been refusing to acknowledge.

Albertans can't trust this plan, because they cannot trust this government, who have shown throughout their time in office that they are more focused on themselves than serving the people who elected them. Albertans need a government that respects the rule of law and will fight for justice. They will get it in 2023 from the NDP.

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

Budget 2022

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in this Assembly to highlight the importance of the balanced budget presented last month. Not only has this government's fiscal prudence set Alberta on a course for a bright future, but with this balanced budget the government has been able to fund the Alberta at work initiative, which is aimed at strengthening Alberta's workforce.

In Budget 2022 the Alberta government highlighted the need to create more opportunities to enter, participate, and thrive within the workforce to underrepresented groups such as women, Indigenous people, and individuals who belong to visible minority groups. Through the Alberta at work initiative this government will invest \$600 million over a span of three years to assist people from all walks of life to enter and to succeed in our workforce.

Mr. Speaker, this new investment is particularly important to the people of Calgary-Cross as the communities encapsulated within this great constituency represent some of the most ethnically diverse communities in Alberta. The announcement of the Alberta at work initiative is welcome news and will ensure that Albertans are given the life opportunities they need to thrive and to prosper in our great province.

All Albertans should have the same opportunity to engage in the workforce no matter their race, religion, gender, or background. Creating more space for underrepresented members of our society to engage in the workforce is a key step in ensuring that Alberta is an economic workhorse that allows people from all over the world to come to this province and prosper. Alberta has always been a beacon of hope for so many people around the world looking for a better life. With this investment in the Alberta at work initiative, Albertans can rest assured that this government has their back.

Thank you.

Budget 2022

Ms Rosin: Mr. Speaker, Alberta's finances are back in the black with a \$500 million surplus. Now, for the past two years we had heard the NDP cry that our cuts were too deep and our tax policies too radical, that reduced taxes would leave a gaping hole in the budget that could never possibly be recovered, yet two years later, when our government – surprise – delivered a balanced budget with a surplus, what did the NDP have to say about it? That it happened by accident.

Well, Mr. Speaker, judging by the NDP's very own claims over the past two years, even they know that this budget wasn't balanced by accident. Yes, even through the toughest of economic times our government was careful to bring Alberta's spending trajectory down, to keep our debt-to-GDP ratio below 30 per cent. We even brought our per capita spending to rival that of other provinces, and we forecasted the budget safely upon \$70-per-barrel WTI, despite prices now peaking above \$120 per barrel, just to be safe and ensure we weren't hedging Alberta's money.

Despite lowering the corporate tax rate to one of the lowest in North America, which the NDP swore would forfeit \$4.7 billion of revenue, we brought in \$5.1 billion of revenue because business and jobs from all over the world have flooded to our province because of this government's pro-business policies.

Even the CBC recognize that Alberta's financial position was no accident. To quote them: the simple reality is that the Premier can say that his government's hard work to control spending is what balanced the budget. Mr. Speaker, had fiscal prudence not been exercised, even with today's high oil prices this government would have run a \$6 billion deficit.

Albertans know the importance of fiscal responsibility. They know that every dollar a government spends beyond budget limitations will inevitably be paid back through high inflation, devalued currency, or crippling taxation, and that's why they elected this government on a promise to balance our budget after years of tax-and-spend policies. Now, one year ahead of schedule, we can say: promise made, promise kept.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: Question 1 goes to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Content on Ukraine in Educational Curricula

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, this morning I wrote to the Minister of Education asking her to change course on her draft curriculum and to keep Ukraine – the country of Ukraine – in the elementary social studies curriculum. I am a Ukrainian Albertan, and I know full well that the choice to use the country of Ukraine in grade 3 social studies was deliberate. I strongly believe that we need to continue to educate young Albertans about Ukraine as an independent country with a rich, vibrant, and resolute history. To the Premier: will you please commit, right here and right now, to leaving the country of Ukraine in grade 3 social studies?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, of course there will be content on Ukraine throughout the school curriculum. The current draft is a high-level outline. It does not include every specific, every single point of information that would be presented to Alberta students. Ukraine is, of course, an important country to be taught about just in general terms, but it is of particular importance to Alberta, to the settlement of this province, and to its future. I hope we don't end up

politicizing what I believe is a nonpartisan consensus in support of the people and the sovereignty of Ukraine.

Ms Hoffman: I appreciate the remarks that the Premier has made in the past about Ukraine and the importance that we make sure that we support Ukraine. One of the best ways the Premier could do that is to right here, right now, today, stand up in this House and say that he will leave the country – the country – of Ukraine in grade 3 social studies. It's been taken out of his draft curriculum that everyone has discredited. Just commit right here, right now. Will the Premier please undo this horrific mistake – I'm going to hope it was just a mistake – and put the country of Ukraine, which is taken out of the elementary school social studies curriculum, back in for grade 3? Yes or no?

Mr. Kenney: I already answered the question, Mr. Speaker. This is a scope and sequence document. It's high level. It doesn't mention all of the content. Of course there will be content on Ukraine, so please take yes for an answer.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta has done more to demonstrate concrete solidarity with the people of Ukraine than any province in the country, perhaps any subnational jurisdiction in the world: \$5 million to buy nonlethal military equipment, \$6 million in emergency humanitarian support. I just met this morning with the president of the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. He said that the supplies that we are funding are already on their way to Kharkiv, to Kiev, and to Odessa.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I'm giving the Premier a third chance. Absolutely, I have to say as a Ukrainian Albertan that I appreciate his words. I think that one of the most powerful things we can do is make sure that kids have an opportunity to learn about the country Ukraine. Yesterday I had to have a teachable moment to explain why we don't say: the Ukraine. It is a country. It is a nation. That is not its official title. Premier, please help teach elementary children about the history, about the current role, about the country Ukraine, which you have taken out of your draft curriculum. It's wrong.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, nothing has been taken out.

My record on these issues could not be more clear. As the federal multiculturalism minister I provided a \$10 million entitlement fund to their endowment – excuse me – to the Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko to teach about the reality of Ukrainian-Canadian history and the internment of Ukrainian Canadians. As Minister of National Defence, Mr. Speaker, I deployed the Canadian Armed Forces to Operation Unifier to help to train and to modernize the Ukrainian military, an operation that has been extraordinarily successful in preparing Ukrainians for this fight to defend the sovereignty of their country.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Corporate Taxation and Investment Attraction

Mr. Bilous: In the last election the Premier promised that his corporate tax handout was the silver bullet for our economy. He said that all we had to do was cut the corporate tax rate, and investment would come flooding back to the province. But even before the pandemic investment fell, the economy shrank, and 50,000 jobs were lost. In other words, it failed. In estimates yesterday the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Innovation said that the corporate tax cut wasn't enough to attract investment and that they had to provide additional incentives to attract them to Alberta. Will the Premier finally admit that his corporate tax handout and his economic plan are a complete failure?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, that's called leading with your chin, because that's the member who claimed that there was a, quote, \$4.7 billion corporate tax giveaway. Here's what actually happened. When the NDP raised the business tax rate by 20 per cent, revenues plummeted because investment fled the province. When this government decreased the business tax rate by one-third, guess what's happened? Revenues have increased, \$400 million more revenue from our eight-point corporate tax than the 12-point tax generated by the NDP. That's what growth does.

Mr. Bilous: Overall investment according to your own figures is lower than under the NDP government. Despite the UCP's corporate tax cut failing, the Premier doubled down on it and accelerated the cut. He said that companies would be, quote, irresponsible for not moving here. Since then, the number of head offices in Calgary has fallen from 117 to 102. Roughly one-third of office space continues to sit empty, and now capital investment is below levels seen under our government. Will the Premier, much like his jobs minister did yesterday, finally admit that his corporate tax cut has failed to attract the investment he promised Albertans?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, after the NDP's job-killing business tax hike, which was informed by their class warfare socialism, guess what happened? We saw a huge flight of businesses and investment and jobs from this province, and they were only bringing in \$2.4 billion on the corporate tax. I am pleased to report that, based on the dynamic growth of this economy across all sectors and regions, we are now projecting \$4.9 billion in corporate tax revenue.

Mr. Bilous: The fact is that our capital investment in 2018 was almost \$6 billion higher than your projections for this year, Premier.

In the last election the Premier promised that his corporate tax handout would lead to tens of thousands of jobs for Albertans, but before the pandemic 50,000 full-time jobs were lost, and in every budget they've revised their job projections downward. They're now expecting 130,000 jobs less. Calgary has the highest unemployment rate among major cities in the country. His plan has failed to produce the results he promised. Does the Premier understand that no one trusts him anymore with our economic future?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, last year Alberta: second-fastest job growth in the country. A hundred and thirty thousand net new jobs created January of this year. Two hundred thousand jobs lost across Canada but 7,000 more jobs created in Alberta. In this budget: a projection of 4.5 per cent employment growth, which is the average of private-sector projections. Best year ever in tech, best year ever in ag, best year ever in film and television, best year ever in oil and gas, best year ever in forestry, best year ever in petrochemicals: this Alberta economy, under our policies, is taking off like a rocket. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West is next.

Postsecondary Tuition Fees

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, under this UCP government costs are rising in every way possible. If there's a way that they can make life less affordable for Albertans, they seem to find a way to make it happen. The Minister of Advanced Education signed off on an unacceptable tuition increase at the University of Alberta. It's also been confirmed that he approved increases at the University of Calgary. Extreme tuition increases like a 32 per cent increase in engineering, 25 per cent for an MBA, 15.7 per cent for tuition for

medical students. Why does this Premier – what does he have against students? Why is he allowing such outrageous tuition increases?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that future graduates from Alberta colleges and universities have a strong economy in the long run, and that won't be the case if we burden them with tens of billions of dollars of debt, which is exactly what would happen under the NDP's reckless spending plans. We had to bring control back to Alberta's spending, and, yes, that meant we challenged our universities to operate as efficiently as universities in B.C. and Ontario. They've done that. We congratulate them. But for the NDP to raise cost of living – they're cheering on their ally Justin Trudeau to increase the carbon tax on April 1.

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, this Premier needs to know that actions have consequences, and certainly his government just doesn't seem to understand that. Skyrocketing tuition fees have long-term implications. Alberta already falls short of other provinces in offering financial aid. Higher upfront costs create barriers for our students. If students think that the increases are just not worth the money or if they can't afford it, they just won't go to school, or they'll move out of the province. Why would this Premier support extraordinary tuition increases, decreased competitiveness, risk the option of people leaving Alberta, and create long-term disastrous consequences?

2:00

Mr. Kenney: In fact, Mr. Speaker, according to StatsCan the average undergraduate tuition in Alberta is \$6,500, and in Canada it's \$6,700. Those students also pay lower taxes here. They don't pay a sales tax. They have much lower housing costs. Why would somebody pick up and move to Toronto or Vancouver and pay three times the housing costs and pay a sales tax and pay more to heat their homes while the NDP is cheering Justin Trudeau on to increase the cost of energy? When it comes to issues like the cost of living, taking a lesson from the NDP is like taking a lesson from an arsonist in putting out a fire.

Mr. Eggen: Mr. Speaker, this government's claim that the tuition in Alberta is lower than the national average simply isn't true. Universities, colleges, and polytechnics are scrambling to keep the lights on. Tuition increases are not the solution. Why would this Premier approve exceptional tuition agreements with our largest universities, download the costs onto the backs of students, who are already suffering as this UCP government makes life unaffordable for Albertans?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the reality is this. Had we continued with the NDP's reckless spending track of 4 or 5 per cent annual growth in spending, we would still have a \$6 billion deficit and then in two years an \$8 billion deficit. Those very same students would have to pay back that debt through their taxes plus interest. Getting our finances under control is essential for the long-term stability and growth prospects of this economy, that will benefit exactly those young Alberta students, who'll be graduating into the most dynamic economy this province has seen in many years.

Bill 4

Member Ceci: Mr. Speaker, today I spoke to the Alberta Municipalities Spring Leaders' caucus, and, boy, was there frustration in the room caused by a UCP government that is willing to use the legislative hammer to override the authority of local governments. This isn't about masks or who should be able to make health decisions. This is about a Premier picking yet another fight to shore

up his failing leadership, and that's very sad. Why doesn't the Premier withdraw his offensive Bill 4, apologize, and pledge to restore trust with Alberta's elected municipal leaders?

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, what he's talking about is the NDP's desire to force Edmontonians against their wishes to continue to wear masks, just like the NDP sent out the NDP labour federation to sue the government to force five-year-olds to wear masks indefinitely, just like their allies at the teachers' union, who threatened to sue us to force kids to wear masks. Then their NDP allies on Edmonton city council tried to force Edmontonians to wear masks. Guess what. Sixty-eight per cent of Edmontonians said no, and we support them.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Member Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. According to an Ipsos poll only 20 per cent of Albertans think the Premier should even stay on as Premier. That's how badly he's damaged public trust in this province. Mayors and reeves across Alberta are telling me that they don't trust this government because of endless cost downloading, forced changes to police funding, a massive cut to MSI, and heavy-handed, top-down legislation. Why won't the Premier reverse his approach and start working with municipal leaders as partners?

Mr. Kenney: We have, and we do, Mr. Speaker. You know, I had a number of municipal mayors and councillors come up to me today and say: "You know what? Thank you for giving a positive speech to us without attacking the opposition." They said, "We wish the NDP had done the same." It's always divide and attack. Just like they want to divide Albertans on public health policy, they want their NDP allies on Edmonton city council, who have no competence in public health policy, no jurisdiction in that, to force the city to wear masks while the rest of the province is not. Why doesn't the NDP stand up for the citizens of Edmonton?

Member Ceci: Mr. Speaker, municipalities are our partners in improving the lives of Albertans and recovering our economy. They create jobs and provide essential public service, yet that's not how many in the UCP caucus see it. The Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland made that clear in an interview. Speaking to the media, he said that municipalities are, quote, children of the province, and sometimes children need to be spanked. That's incredibly disrespectful and wrong-headed. Does the Premier agree with his member, and if he doesn't, why does he keep that member around?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, as we move on, getting our lives back to normal, Albertans want this province to be united, and they want consistency when it comes to public health measures. What the NDP wants is continued division and complexity. They want the NDP hard-core members of Edmonton city council to improvise their own public health policy against the clear wishes of Edmontonians. We are providing a very limited limitation so we can have one clear, consistent, and united provincial approach to this question.

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

Prenatal Benefit for Women Receiving AISH or Income Support

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The prenatal period is the most important period for a child. This time period

influences child development through to their formative years. As the overall cost of living continually rises, expectant mothers on income support and AISH are desperately in need of support during this period. To the Minister of Community and Social Services: how will you provide support for vulnerable expectant mothers?

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. Our government understands that women with limited resources often face a number of challenges during pregnancy. Therefore, today the Premier, myself, and the Associate Minister of Status of Women announced a new prenatal benefit for pregnant women on AISH and the income support program. Starting at their second trimester, they will receive \$100 additional prenatal benefits until the baby is born. This demonstrates a tangible, common-sense way we're helping Albertans . . .

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

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the reply. Given that prenatal support is critical for vulnerable women throughout their pregnancy and given that income supports and AISH provide a one-time natal benefit of \$256, again to the minister: can you explain how this new prenatal benefit will add to the existing program?

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

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently we have a one-time special diet program for prenatal mothers to use. That is \$256. With this new addition of \$600 on top of that, \$856 will place Alberta as the highest jurisdiction in Canada to provide prenatal benefits for our vulnerable Albertans. We're very proud of this strong stand we're taking.

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

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the minister for the response. This benefit enables a mother to purchase the much-needed necessities for her baby. These necessities can be anything from car seats, cribs, strollers, blankets, and diapers. Again to the same minister: in what way will today's announcement of the new natal benefit improve lives?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again for the great question here. As we know, when we have the added benefits for expectant mothers, they can use the money for nutritious food, vitamins, cribs and clothing, and safe and healthy infant care. Research has repeatedly shown that good nutrition and a low-stress home environment set the baby up for success. Can you imagine, with this added benefit to expectant mothers, when the baby is born healthy, when they go to school, when they get a job, what a fantastic future it will be?

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

Utility Costs

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Associate Minister of Natural Gas and Electricity, and it's quite simple. What is the average monthly rate Albertans are paying for natural gas and electricity right now, and how does it compare to the same time period last year?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, how embarrassing for the members opposite. This is pure NDP economics. The first thing they do is that they cancelled the cheapest form of electricity this province has. Then they ring up the transmission bill to the tune of \$7.5 billion, which our economy could not support. They lose a further \$1.2 billion on the Balancing Pool, and then they implement the carbon tax, the biggest tax in our province's history. Then they ask why electricity prices are going up. What a shame.

2:10

Ms Ganley: Given that the answer is that both electricity and natural gas have nearly doubled in that time period and given that the minister doesn't seem to have a clue and given that he really wants to blame his problems on everyone else – the truth is that the price for solar power is considerably lower than many other sources of generation – and given that the Official Opposition would bring in a real rebate program, can the minister tell families why he thinks it's just the system working when they're paying so much more? This minister has been in charge for three years. How about a little responsibility?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, first of all, we are a leader in Canada in market-based renewable energy, and we're very proud to embrace that power source. Let me just say that the NDP actually got what they wanted. They brought in the first carbon tax, and everybody knows that the goal of the carbon tax is to increase the price of everything. Well, now they got their wish. It's more expensive to drive your car. It's more expensive to heat your home. Everything is more expensive because of the NDP, and they have the audacity to ask why.

Ms Ganley: Given that the minister should be embarrassed to be spewing that level of misinformation in response to a simple question and given that when I asked him in November whether he would do anything to help Albertans, he proudly rose in this House and said that he planned to do nothing and given that even now, after months of struggle, all he has provided is a fake natural gas rebate and 50 bucks, can this minister explain to families how \$50 is going to make a difference when they're drowning in thousands of dollars in debt?

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, I will set the record straight so the member opposite can stop embarrassing herself. I was asked if I would be interested in bringing in a market price cap, and I said no because consumers can already have a rate cap. All they have to do is call the Utilities Consumer Advocate, and anybody who wants the benefit of a price cap can have one now. Again, you know, we are dealing with high . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. The associate minister has a very verbose way of answering questions, and still it's difficult to hear him.

The hon. the associate minister.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to get over my shyness and speak a little louder.

I will say this. We recognize that it was poor policies on behalf of the NDP government, and we are bringing in solutions that will help bring down costs long term, Mr. Speaker.

Postsecondary Tuition Fees

(continued)

Ms Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, it would be laughable if it wasn't so serious, listening to this government talk about the respect they have for postsecondary education. Yesterday we learned that the Minister of Advanced Education was signing off on hikes of 16 to 184 per cent, which will add significant costs to students. These costs will add stress and could even push students to leave Alberta altogether. So rather than talking about how this government values students, would the minister explain why he thinks a student facing a 104 per cent tuition hike will be better off?

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should know that answer because it was their government that wrote the regulation that permits exceptional tuition increases. Under the regulation – the regulation is very clear – exceptional increases are only allowed if they demonstrate improvements to the quality of the program. All of these programs will see significant quality improvements. The universities will be able to increase work-integrated learning opportunities, hire more faculty, and create a higher quality experience for the students.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that at a time when more mental health supports are needed, this government is doubling the cost to become a counselling therapist, from over \$4,000 to over 8 and a half thousand dollars per year, and given that there is currently a massive unmet need for mental health supports and given that one of the biggest obstacles is access to mental health providers, how can the minister justify making it more difficult to become a counsellor, especially when there is so much need?

Mr. Nicolaides: Another one, Mr. Speaker, the member should know the answer to. The details are in the regulation as well, that stipulates that these increases must go directly to improving the quality of education. However, apart from that, in reviewing these increases, it was important for me to ensure that a portion of the revenue was being used to create additional student assistance. In fact, that is the case. All of these increases of revenue are being set aside to ensure that there is additional assistance for students in those programs.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that this pandemic has been stressful for students, who have had to make multiple transitions from in-person to online learning amidst other stresses, and given that this government talks a big game about how they support mental health but is limiting access, with higher costs for students and doubling the cost to become a counselling therapist, can the minister explain how making it harder for students to enter the mental health field addresses the mental health crisis they claim to care about? Will he reverse the hike?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, Budget 2022 includes \$171 million over three years to create 7,000 additional spaces in our postsecondary system, more spaces than they ever created in our postsecondary environment. As well, it also includes \$12 million over three years to expand our existing scholarships. It also includes \$15 million over three years in funding to create new bursaries to support low-income students to ensure every Albertan can access postsecondary education. I know the Member for Edmonton-North West thinks that StatsCan is lying, but tuition fees today are lower than the national average.

Tax Policies

Mr. Barnes: In 2018 UCP members voted for a policy to restore Alberta's flat tax, explicitly instructing the UCP not to wait until the budget was balanced, but, in an I-hold-the-pen move, the flat-tax policy was removed from the UCP's platform, saying that the government would further improve Alberta's tax competitiveness once the budget is balanced. Guess what? Energy prices balanced the budget. To the Minister of Finance: why can't you respect the democratically expressed wishes of your own members and make our flat tax government policy?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we're so proud of the budget that our Finance minister brought in, the first balanced budget in years, with a forecast for brighter days ahead for Alberta. This government is focused every single day on attracting jobs, attracting investment into this province. Our economy is more diversified than ever. It's a team approach, and our Finance minister is doing an amazing job at that.

Mr. Barnes: Given that not only has this government failed to make good on the flat-tax promise – it actually nailed Alberta families with a sneaky, backdoor income tax hike – given that deindexing tax brackets from inflation has cost Alberta families hundreds of millions of dollars and that the minister has refused to accept any firm plan to end this bracket creep tax hike, citing that economies need to improve, and given that the minister has hundreds of millions for unbudgeted announcements just two weeks before the leadership review, can the minister tell us when he will stop his sneaky, backdoor taxes on Alberta families?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, as that member knows – and he ran on the platform to make sure we restored balance to Alberta's books. Mission accomplished for Albertans. Our Finance minister has done an amazing job getting that done. On top of that, we have done everything possible to get Albertans back to work, 130,000 jobs created last year, and when the rest of the country lost 200,000 jobs in January, Alberta added 7,000 jobs. Just because that member is bitter that the economy is turning around, it doesn't mean that we're going to lose focus on making sure that we provide jobs for Albertans.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, in estimates this week the minister responded to a question from the opposition, asserting that bracket creep tax increases are a fiscally conservative policy. That must be news to the Premier, who once wrote a column in the *Calgary Herald* describing bracket creep as a "hidden and regressive tax grab." To the minister: can you please explain to Albertans how a hidden and regressive tax grab is United Conservative fiscal policy?

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 2:19.

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, Alberta has the lowest taxes in Canada, period. Our Finance minister has done an amazing job balancing the books of Alberta. It's a testament to the entrepreneurs of this province, the fact that Alberta's economy is rebounding more diversified than ever. Agriculture is seeing record years. We've got manufacturing, logistics investments, film and television that's happening in this province, record years, technology and innovation. Alberta's economy is stronger than it's been in a long time, and there are brighter days ahead.

2:20 Edmonton Federal Building Use by Premier's Office

Member Loyola: Mr. Speaker, there's perhaps no greater evidence of how entitled this government is than their use of the 11th floor of the Edmonton Federal Building, better known as the sky palace. You know the sky palace. It hosted the Premier's illegal white tablecloth budget whisky dinner last year while the rest of us did the responsible thing and just stayed home. I know the Premier has been using the sky palace while getting his office remodeled and renovated. Can the Infrastructure minister tell this House how much money went into moving in and out of the sky palace and whether any renovations were done at all?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, as you see outside of the Leg. Building, there are repairs going on. That's why, when the Premier's office was being impacted by those repairs, we moved them to the Federal Building and brought them back. We only spent less than \$8,000 on that move.

Member Loyola: Given that Albertans are struggling with the cost of living and that this government just doesn't care and given that I would hope that everyone in this House would agree that a better use of money would be supporting struggling Alberta families rather than sprucing up this Premier's preferred dining establishment on the 11th floor of the Federal Building so he can host more secret gatherings with his closest allies, can the minister table in this House by the end of the week every single receipt from expenses related to renovations of the sky palace and hosting in the sky palace? If he won't produce them, what is he hiding?

Mr. Panda: I'm not hiding anything, Mr. Speaker. I look the same, with clothes or without clothes. I'm as transparent as possible. I already answered that question at budget estimates. I already shared that information. We haven't spent any extra money in that office to accommodate the Premier. We already said that many times. I'm repeating it again.

Member Loyola: Given the depths that past Conservative Premiers and Infrastructure ministers have gone to to conceal the construction of a luxury apartment in the sky palace and given that the last thing Albertans want to do is wake up and find that while this government won't lift a finger to help them pay their skyrocketing bills, they shoveled money into the sky palace, will the Minister of Infrastructure agree and commit that he will go before a committee reporting to this House to develop a clear set of rules for use of the sky palace moving forward? Mr. Speaker, no one trusts this Premier or anyone in that UCP.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, I already answered. If that hon. member wants to tour that office with me, I'll give him a tour of that office, how that office is being used. This member is spreading misinformation. He can come and take a first-hand view of that office. There is nothing to hide about that office. It's available for use for government purposes. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Racism and Hate Crime Prevention

Mr. Deol: It's tragic that Albertans are seeing an increasing number of racist incidents and hate crimes being faced by racialized and minority communities in this province. We have seen racialized Albertans being harassed, subjected to racist and disgusting language, and even assaulted. Every Albertan has a right to live in a province free from racism, hatred, and intolerance, and they

deserve a government that will take action to address it. It is concerning to see that not a single dollar in this budget is targeting the elimination of racism in Alberta. My question to the Minister of Justice: why is his budget silent on fighting racism?

Mr. Shandro: Well, first, let me, through you, thank the member for the question. This is a very serious issue that the government takes very seriously. But the premise of the question is false. We actually have. We're over doubling the funding for the Alberta security infrastructure program to \$5 million per year to increase safety for Albertans served by facilities that are targeted by hateful violence and vandalism. Unfortunately, his question is incorrect. We have doubled this funding, and we will continue, through my hon. colleague the associate minister of multiculturalism, to work with communities to address their concerns.

Mr. Deol: Given that the UCP government has done nothing more than lip service when it comes to supporting the racialized communities of our province even as racialized communities and community members are calling for action and given that this government has delayed for too long the release of the Anti-Racism Advisory Council recommendations, leaving many Albertans concerned that addressing the growing number of hate crimes in Alberta is not a priority for this government, what message does this Justice minister have for the racialized communities of Alberta, who expected support in this budget and got nothing?

The Speaker: The hon. the Associate Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Mr. Yaseen: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the questions. Albertans from all backgrounds deserve the freedom and protection they need to live and worship safely and free from threats of violence and destruction. This government has done so much for newcomers that I'm so proud of, including from credential recognition to the fairness for newcomers office, to grants for funding for places of worship and multiculturalism, and we have \$620,000 in our ministry, from the Ministry of Culture, to support our efforts.

Mr. Deol: Given that the growing number of hate crimes was acknowledged in the government's throne speech but then nothing was offered in the budget to help and given that this government has dragged its heels over and over and given that my colleague the Member for Edmonton-City Centre will bring forward legislation this session to establish a process for collecting race-based data, does the Minister of Justice support collecting race-based data, and if he doesn't, can he explain his reasoning for not supporting something critical to combatting racism that is being done in other provinces?

Mr. Shandro: First, let me supplement my hon. colleague's answer and confirm that we also have provided emergency grants of various amounts to be able to show the communities throughout the province that we take these issues very seriously. We support law enforcement and targeted groups to keep vulnerable Albertans safe, Mr. Speaker, and put criminals behind bars. It's important for vulnerable Albertans and those who would target them to see that the government will not tolerate these actions. We're proud to have the support of our compassionate and caring communities behind us.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore.

17th Avenue S.E./Chestermere Boulevard Capacity

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within my riding, the community of Chestermere, there is a very busy road that extends from Calgary at the east end of 17th Avenue and transitions to the west end of Chestermere Boulevard. In 2019 *MacLean's* reported that Chestermere was the third-fastest growing community in Canada, and with this population growth came an increase in traffic that now accommodates approximately three times the amount of traffic that the road is built for. To the Minister of Transportation: would the government consider expanding this road to two vehicle lanes in each direction to better accommodate thousands of commuters?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for that question. Before answering the question, I'd like to take the opportunity to speak to all Albertans and everybody in this Chamber and wish them a happy belated International Women's Day. I was pleased to make an announcement a few days ago announcing a \$3 million investment to help support women who are seeking job opportunities in the transportation sector.

Now, in answer to this question, Mr. Speaker, 17th Avenue and Chestermere Boulevard is a local road that is a responsibility of both the city of Calgary and the city of Chestermere. Alberta Transportation has not communicated directly with the city on the topic of . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the city of Calgary completed their options evaluation input summary on the 17th Avenue S.E. corridor, receiving input from partners, including surrounding landowners, community associations, and government representatives, would the government, then, complete a similar consultation and evaluation with the process and the residents and stakeholders of Chestermere and surrounding area who are deeply affected by the capacity limitations of this road?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, my department is aware of the local road network in and around the city of Chestermere and is in contact with the city and county officials. While Alberta Transportation is responsible for the provincial highway network, local roads and streets are maintained by various counties, municipal districts, towns, and cities. I'm confident that the city of Chestermere will engage with residents on ways to improve Chestermere Boulevard if that's what the city council decides to do. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, if you'd like to have a private conversation, there are lots of places to do that. The Chamber isn't one of them.

The hon. the Member for Chestermere-Strathmore.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. I'll have to listen to you in *Hansard* later.

Given that the need for the increase in capacity of this road is apparent and if the consultation process between stakeholders and government agencies occurs to identify and determine with certainty that this road expansion will require this, would the government be able to give some potential help with the future of this project?

2:30

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, as the member mentioned earlier, Chestermere is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, which creates challenges in respect to their commuter networks.

There is no process in place for Alberta Transportation to fund roadwork on 17th Avenue, Chestermere Boulevard because it is a local road. However, the city is able to use its MSI or federal gas tax fund to address upgrades on this road or in any other community.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has the next question.

Residential School Gravesite Identification

Mr. Feehan: Thank you. "The grief we felt when discovering our stolen children has opened fresh wounds." Mr. Speaker, that's Chief Sydney Halcrow of the Kapawe'no First Nation, who last week announced the discovery of 169 graves at the former St. Bernard's residential school site. They did this on their own dime as they did not want to wait any longer for provincial support. To the minister: what funding is the government of Alberta providing to this First Nation to complete and accelerate their work to confirm and discover the graves of their children?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. I know the member has a great heart for the Indigenous people, so I appreciate the question. Actually, we did come up with what we call the community research grant. It was an \$8 million grant, and I'm happy to say that we went through all the numbers this morning, and everyone that applied for a grant did get one. Up in the Kapawe'no area they actually went together, four groups as a joint application, and we did give out that grant. They did receive the grant, and I'm so happy that they were able to utilize that.

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

Mr. Feehan: Thank you. Given that the government announced the \$8 million last June to support First Nations who want to lead this work in their communities, I was concerned to hear the chief say that they didn't want to wait for provincial funding and that they chose to proceed on their own. Can the minister explain what is happening? Why are there delays to funding promised to assist in finding the unmarked graves of children in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again for the question. As soon as we heard about the discovery in B.C., we got into action right away. I was so proud of the other ministries that stepped up and helped us put the grant together to aid the communities. The group went together. We put a group together in our ministry and started working on it right away, and I'm happy to say that they were able to meet the demands that all came in. There's also a federal grant process, that I've been in contact with the federal minister about, to aid if there's any additional monies that need to be spent.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you. Given that this is an extremely sensitive and painful process for Indigenous communities and it must be led by communities and given that the province's role is to ensure that resources are readily available to support the search for remains or the commemoration of the loss, will the minister accept responsibility for the unfortunate delay in releasing funds and commit to doing a better job in the future? There's no doubt we will

find more of these burial sites, and the government promised to help. Where is the help?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. You know, our hearts do go out to the communities. I was actually on-site at Kapawe'no when they started the ground-penetrating radar, and I walked the grounds there, so I understand the intergenerational trauma that's happening out there. That's why I was also happy that mental health stepped up and provided a grant as well for mental health assistance with those communities. We were able to provide two grants, and those grants have gotten out the door. Like I say, there is other help available, and we'll walk that walk with those communities, because it is such a sensitive issue.

Thank you.

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

Calgary Cancer Centre

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After decades of Conservative announcements, cancelled announcements, and more delays, our government committed to and started the construction of the Calgary cancer centre. That was wonderful news for the people of Calgary to see that project, that had been used as a prop by past governments, finally get under way, but after watching this government fight with and undermine our front-line health care workers for years, now many are still concerned about this government's actual commitment to this critical project. Will the Health minister commit that the Calgary cancer centre will be fully staffed when it opens, and if so, why is it not funded in this budget?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. member for the question. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Health budget here has 600 million more dollars this year than last year in terms of budget and another \$1.8 billion over the next three years. We are also contributing \$3.5 billion into capital, including completing the Calgary cancer centre. I can actually tell the hon. member across the way that our government is committed to be able to staff this, get it up and running, when my hon. colleague the Minister of Infrastructure will be able to turn over the keys to Alberta Health. Then we'll be able to get the staff in there.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that I appreciate those words but I do not see in this budget where they are in fact planning for the staffing of the cancer centre and given that most people in health care would tell this government that getting the building ready is only half the battle and given that I know this government has had a troubled relationship with the Calgary centre, given that it possesses members, even ministers, who worked hard at cancelling, moving, or delaying that project in past governments, can the Health minister promise that every single bed will be open and ready to receive patients when the facility opens? Will Albertans have to wait until the NDP are back in government to see this project brought to life?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my previous answer, we are committing to be able to staff – you know, there'll be staff moving within the Foothills campus over to the new

Calgary centre. This will be one of the top centres for dealing with cancer patients not only for Calgary but for southern Alberta and across western Canada. I am very much looking forward to the tremendous work being done by my colleague the Minister of Infrastructure in completing this and then turning the keys over to us so that we can actually start ensuring that we have the equipment ready on time, we can train up the staff, and we can get that fully staffed and be able to provide services to Albertans.

Mr. Shepherd: Given that I appreciate the minister's commitment that some existing staff will be moving over but that we're talking about all of the staff that will be needed and given the actions of the Premier, the Finance minister, and the former Minister of Health have meant that front-line health care workers have felt attacked by this government since day one and given that during the pandemic they tore up agreements with doctors, threatened to slash the pay of nurses, created a hostile atmosphere that drove health care workers out of Alberta for friendlier places and given that, again, we are not seeing in this budget specific allocations to fully staff the Calgary cancer centre, is that perhaps because this government has made it so difficult to attract and retain health care workers in our province?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to hiring and ensuring that we have the health care staff providing the health services that Albertans need. Not only have we committed an additional \$1.8 billion on the expense line in our budget; we have hired additional staff over the last number of years. AHS has had over 1,700 more RNs compared to February 2020. We have the highest level of RNs that we've ever had in our history. In addition, we continue to attract doctors in the province. That number continues to go up, and we're going to continue to work to make sure we have the staff we need to deliver . . .

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

Emergency Medical Services

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A strong, steady, and dependable EMS system is crucial to the Alberta health care system. It's important that every community in Alberta can access emergency medical response in a reasonable time. Over the last couple of years Alberta's EMS system has been under great strain. It is not meeting the needs of Albertans, that they deserve. Given that our government has recognized this challenge and has taken big steps to improve Alberta's EMS system, can the Minister of Health please give us a progress report on improving Alberta's EMS system?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the hon. member for the question. We've had multiple conversations on this particular issue, particularly in relation to Airdrie. Alberta's EMS workers provide life-saving services to so many people in the province. I want to thank them, through you, for all the tremendous work they've done, particularly through challenging times through COVID and the increase of the call volume. As a government we are acutely aware of the challenge, and that's why we're taking action in Budget 2022 by increasing EMS funding by 12.2 per cent. That's an additional \$64 million, an increase that goes directly to adding more ambulances and crews and addressing issues that we have with recruiting and retention of paramedics throughout the province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. That's great news.

Given that the lack of ambulances in Airdrie caused one of my constituents, who suffered a pediatric cardiac arrest, to wait over 20 minutes before an ambulance arrived and given that another one of my constituents that had a blood clot move to their lungs, causing them to pass out, had to wait on the floor for 28 minutes before an ambulance arrived and given that these are not the only serious incidents in my constituency, can the minister tell us what they are doing to improve EMS in Airdrie?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thanks again, Mr. Speaker, for the question, and thank you to the member. I have some excellent news for the people of Airdrie. Budget '22 is moving forward with our plan to strengthen EMS. We'll be adding a new ambulance in Airdrie over the next month. We are also adding 10 new ambulances in Calgary in the next two years to ease the pressure on Airdrie's EMS. We also rolled out elements of the metro response plan on February 7, and that is having results. This plan has reduced more than 43 per cent EMS services going to neighbouring centres from Airdrie . . .

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister, on behalf of Airdrie. We're very grateful.

Given that health care is the number one issue in Airdrie and that I've heard loud and clear from my constituents about their concern with the lack of treatment spaces, doctors, and standard treatment and given that Airdrie has a population of over 75,000 people and is the fastest growing city in Canada and, further, given that the people of Airdrie deserve to have the same quality of health care as other Albertans, can the minister please tell us what steps are being taken to improve health care at the urgent care facility in Airdrie?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Budget '22 is about building health capacity. This government is listening to Albertans about the pressures on our health care system, including the advocacy of the hon. member. We're moving forward with the Alberta surgical initiative. We're spending \$133 million to build new surgical spaces. We're also spending \$100 million to add up to 50 ICU spaces across the province. Alberta's government is moving forward to provide every patient with the surgery they need within the wait times medical experts recommend. We'll continue to look at new ways to expand health care capacity, including in Airdrie.

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

Members' Statements

(continued)

Federal and Provincial Energy Policies

Mr. Barnes: The war in Ukraine, just a couple of weeks old, is reshaping global economics and politics in real time. As an increasing number of countries around the world move to ban imports of Russian oil, global demand for energy products continues to rise, yet Alberta is set to miss out on what could have been the biggest boom in a generation. Instead, billions will flow to dictators and authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, Africa, and

even Venezuela. The world's worst abusers of human rights will be richly rewarded while Alberta workers struggle with unemployment and empty office towers.

Let's face it. Canada's energy policy is an abject failure. Our province is home to some of the largest energy reserves in the world. Our labour force is young and well educated. We develop our resources in a way that meets with the highest safety and environmental standards. Yet even in a world begging for energy, we have very little capacity to increase production and meet this demand. Instead of being part of the solution, we are part of the problem. How did it come to this?

Ottawa's hostility to Alberta energy is well known. Policies like the carbon tax, the no-more-pipelines bill, and the tanker ban have made it impossible for private-sector investors to proceed with major projects. Even now, with the price of oil well over \$100, TC Energy has stated again that they will not revive the Keystone XL pipeline. Yet if we're being honest with ourselves, we can't dump a hundred per cent of the blame on Ottawa. For the past three years Alberta's government has offered no consequences for Ottawa's encroachment on provincial jurisdiction. And like the NDP before it, this UCP government has wasted untold millions trying to buy social licence. But what good has it done us, and what good has it done the world around us?

Instead of virtue signalling on issues like net zero or the Paris accord, it's time to get back to what actually works for our province. Albertans don't succeed because of government; we succeed despite government. Alberta can and should be the freest and most prosperous place.

Presenting Petitions

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

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills I request leave to present, in accordance with Standing Order 98(2), two petitions that have been received for private bills: the petition of Shannon Doram, president and CEO of the Calgary Young Men's Christian Association, for the Calgary Young Men's Christian Association Amendment Act, 2022; and the petition of Janet McCready, board chair, and Josh Traptow, general manager of the Calgary Heritage Authority, for the Calgary Heritage Authority Amendment Act, 2022.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at points of order. At 2:19 the hon. Deputy Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

Point of Order

Preambles to Supplementary Questions

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief on this point of order. This point of order was called when the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat was speaking, delivering his second supplemental. It is common practice in this Chamber that the second supplemental be in the form of a question and not include a preamble. That member's second supplemental did the complete opposite. It was, in fact, a contravention of the procedures of this place. If we refer to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, if you'd like to, "In 1975, Speaker Jerome stated that a supplementary question arises from the Minister's response and should be put in precise and direct terms without any preamble, prior statement, or argument."

This is a member who has been in the Chamber for a number of years, once affectionately referred to as the dean of caucus. I expect

a higher level of understanding of the procedures and practice and ask the member to improve the level of his questions going forward and apologize for contravening the procedure of this place.

The Speaker: The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a point of order. Again, I'll end with the question: can you please explain to Albertans how a hidden and regressive tax grab is a fiscally conservative policy? Now, I appreciate why the member may have been confused, but my first sentence ends with "asserting that bracket creep tax increases are a fiscally conservative policy." It's the same statement just carried throughout the 20 seconds; that's all that this question took. Again, like the Premier, who some time ago was dead set against bracket creep and the regressiveness and the unfairness to families – and we had a change on that. In this case the first sentence is actually part of my question. This is a regressive tax on families, and both of my sentences include that statement.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I appreciate the submissions. As many members will know, the preamble rule here inside the Assembly is one of the most difficult rules to create clear guidelines on. I know that the Deputy Government House Leader, while I appreciate the reference from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, also knows that the House of Commons has essentially completely departed from such a rule as the preamble rule, and there are fewer and fewer Legislatures who continue to use such a rule although we do here. Perhaps *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* isn't the best reference to use because they no longer have the rule apply at all.

I would say and I have said that for independent members, who get one question a week and have no other forum, we have applied this rule quite liberally. Perhaps a poor choice of words. We have applied this rule very broadly, and as the member has pointed out, there is clear tying from the first portion of the question to the end of the question. I don't think that this is a point of order. I consider the matter dealt with and concluded.

Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Mr. Williams moved, seconded by Ms Lovely, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To Her Honour the Honourable Salma Lakhani, AOE, BSc, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate March 7: Mr. Neudorf]

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie has risen.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute pleasure and honour to serve the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie over the last six, going on now seven years. I grew up in this part of the city, and I feel a special connection to it. I remember as a child having moved into the area, having so many beautiful memories that I continue to carry with me to this day, memories about the people and activities we used to do as children. For example, my friends and I would jump on our bikes and go and explore new areas of Mill Woods that were

still under construction. It was like we were going on our own little adventure to unknown lands.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Edmonton-Ellerslie is home to so many different ethnic and community cultural groups. In fact, 50 per cent of the population of Edmonton-Ellerslie is from an ethnically diverse community. Having come to this country, as many of them have, I have so much in common with the people of these communities. Growing up in Edmonton-Ellerslie was an opportunity to learn from people of so many different backgrounds. As I often say in this House, we have a lot more in common than we have different. We all care about our families, putting food on the table, taking care of the ones that we love. Every day the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie get up, go to work, and do what they have to do in order to support their families.

2:50

It very much is a working-class neighbourhood. Of course, there are many small-business owners that call Edmonton-Ellerslie home as well, who are working hard to provide for their families. They're doing their very best to not only make sure to put food on their own table but to leave a legacy for their loved ones and especially their children.

I think about all the people that I've interacted with and come to know over the last six years because of the role that I've played. For example, I recall the wonderful volunteers of the Millhurst, Southwood, Horizon, and Ellerslie community leagues. I'll give you the example of Lianne. Lianne lives in Southwood, but she's also a volunteer for the Millhurst Community League. I remember meeting Lianne for the very first time. She had a smile on her face but also that look like: we don't talk politics around here. Because, of course, for the community league it's about building unity through service to community. I guaranteed her that I'm a person that she could trust and that ultimately, no matter what my role or affiliation, I was there to work with her and the rest of the volunteers to build a strong community. What was at first a skeptical look over six years ago has become a kind embrace every time we see each other.

Regularly attending community events over the years has given me that opportunity to be able to connect with the everyday Albertans that are my constituents, to understand the real-life issues, concerns, and problems that they're going through. Many a time has been spent at a community league event, sitting and chatting with a constituent about a problem that they are experiencing in their life. Sometimes it's something very simple, and other times it's something as serious as a death in their family. It's through these conversations that I gain insight into doing my job as the MLA for Edmonton-Ellerslie. To me, making sure that life is affordable is one of the most important aspects when it comes to representing people inside of this Legislature. As I've mentioned so many times, these people are the salt of the earth, hard-working people. They don't earn exorbitant salaries, but they're happy to be contributing to their community and to this province that we all love.

I mentioned the ethnic diversity of Edmonton-Ellerslie, and I can tell you that the many community cultural groups indeed keep me busy with all the events they plan. Even during COVID I had many Zoom community events to attend, celebrating important festivals and days of religious observance, of course, for many different religions. These are also an opportunity to learn.

I remember – and I'm thankful – that very early on someone in my life told me that other people's rules and customs are different. As children you often hear children say: oh, that's weird. But I

learned to recognize that these customs are just simply different. Although they weren't my own, I could still understand the meaning and significance, both cultural and religious, behind certain customs, and although they weren't my own, they were just as important and valid for the people who observed them. Again, even though we have a diversity of philosophy, religion, and perspective, we have much more in common than we have different.

These aren't the only opportunities to connect with my constituents. Right next to my office is a charming little neighbourhood pub which is actually called The Pub, and most days, especially during the spring and summer, there's always a group of people outside just hanging out. It provides for me the opportunity to actually connect with them, hear their concerns, field their complaints about certain provincial matters, on which they are very, very informed. Many a summer day I've been leaving my office, closing up for the day, and as I exit the office, one of these constituents will strike up a conversation with me sometimes that will last for hours. I really don't mind because I've always enjoyed listening to people and learning from their perspectives and gaining insight from experiences that they've had in their own lives.

As I said, Madam Speaker, I'm very honoured and privileged to serve the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie, because I get a lot out of it. My father used to tell me that there's a big difference between getting an education and going to school. Now, of course, he and my mother pushed me to go to university but at the same time taught me that getting an education is not just something that happens inside of a classroom. It happens by actually sharing experiences with one another. Early on I learned that we are all students and teachers at the same time. Through all of these conversations that I've had with my constituents on a regular basis, I know that, at the end of the day, what's important for the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie, like most in Alberta, are their families and the ones that they love, making sure that we have a society and an economy that serves the people.

Yes, many of the families that I represent actually work in the petroleum industry. Many are subcontractors, skilled labourers, and some engineers. In conversations with them we can all agree that Alberta needs to diversify if we are to move forward as a province. No matter which door I knock on, everybody agrees that this should be the priority of the government of Alberta. I often hear statements like, "It's a no-brainer" or "I've been saying that for years," and they can't help but wonder why this hasn't been the plan all along, Conservative government after Conservative government.

Now, when we were in government, we created tax credit programs in order to provide an incentive to actually diversify and move Alberta forward. Many of those decisions were reversed when the UCP government came into power, Madam Speaker, and only a year or two later they reimplemented some of them as if they were a creation of their own. Of course, the fact that they would reimplement an Alberta NDP policy decision makes me happy, it makes the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie happy, but what this government is doing is not enough.

A lot of the families in Edmonton-Ellerslie have children going to postsecondary. They're all feeling the crunch of the higher tuition fees. Students in several programs at the University of Alberta, for example, will be facing staggering tuition fee increases this fall after the UCP Minister of Advanced Education signed off on hikes of 16 to 104 per cent higher, as the Member for Edmonton-North West expressed just yesterday in this House. I hear from many of my constituents about how postsecondary is becoming unaffordable. It's absolutely essential that postsecondary education in this province be affordable and accessible to all. I know that my colleagues and I on this side of the House will continue to fight for that, especially for all Alberta families.

Of course, Madam Speaker, this isn't the only increased cost to Albertans. When the UCP government decided to take the cap off insurance, I heard from so many constituents about how their insurance rate was going up, for some as high as 30 per cent. Even during this devastating time of the COVID pandemic, I remember early on hearing from a couple of teachers saying that because of the pandemic they're staying home. Their cars are in their garage. They're not driving that much, maybe to go to the grocery store and back, yet their insurance is skyrocketing. To date this government has done absolutely nothing to alleviate the pain of such a high cost of insurance for the people of Alberta.

Of course, as we heard in the last few weeks, utility bills are just completely out of control. It is the talk of the constituency. I can't tell you the number of e-mails and messages that I've received from constituents because of their utility bill. One lady, a single mom, told me that all of her income goes to pay for rent and electricity and that she has to be very selective when going to the supermarket because life has become unaffordable for her and her daughter. This is completely unacceptable.

I had another lady contact my office just the other day telling me that she's on income support and that she can't pay her bills. She has a child, she has a chronic illness, and she received a notice from EPCOR that her power is going to be shut off in just three days. Now, of course, I'm doing everything in my power along with my staff to make sure that that doesn't happen, but I want you to imagine the stress that this lady is going through when she gets a notice from EPCOR that her power is going to be shut off in three days.

3:00

Why does that even have to happen? This is a sign of the failure after failure of this government to provide a strong economy that includes everybody here in Alberta. These are both some of the examples of how life has become so unaffordable for so many. I would argue that the economic disparity here in Alberta continues to grow, and this is an absolute shame. I know for a fact that the Alberta which my constituents want to be a part of is one where everybody has the opportunity and everyone is treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve, where they are the focus of an economy that makes sure that no one is left behind. Unfortunately for the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie and all the people of Alberta, this government is failing to deliver on exactly that.

I want to take an opportunity to address the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the work that we all need to do in order to create spaces to have a meaningful and genuine dialogue regarding the social injustices of the past and how Indigenous people have been treated. This is something that we cannot continue to ignore, and the government of Alberta should be front and centre in recognizing these injustices and making sure that they don't happen again. But, unfortunately, we have a system that has more Indigenous children in care now than there ever were children in residential schools or picked up by the '60s scoop.

With a group of Edmonton-Ellerslie constituents that actually care about this matter, we're addressing the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Last year for Canada Day a group of my constituents decided to do a solidarity walk for all the children whose bodies were being found in mass graves at residential schools across Canada. It started because someone decided to put Canada flags on people's lawns without their consent. Now, as many of you know, southeast Edmonton used to be known as Indian reserve No. 136 of the Papaschase band. Many of the descendants of Papaschase continue to live in the ridings of Edmonton-Ellerslie, Edmonton-Mill Woods, and Edmonton-

Meadows, and it was some of these constituents, these descendants of Papaschase, that organized with other non-Indigenous constituents that same solidarity walk that I was speaking of earlier.

After the event I decided to reach out to the organizers, and what they really wanted to do, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, was to hold regular opportunities to bring Indigenous ceremony into Edmonton's southwest. We have been meeting for a few months now, and we've had one really successful event to celebrate the winter solstice. Now, when I was helping the group organize the event, one of the objectives was that it was going to be an opportunity for non-Indigenous people to learn about Indigenous ceremonies, but when the actual event was implemented, we found that Indigenous descendants, especially youth, were the ones that ended up coming to the event. They expressed that they didn't have many opportunities to engage in ceremonies and that they were so grateful that they could come to a ceremony that was actually in their area of the city. This is but just one small step.

Many of you may know of the community of Frog Lake and what happened there so many years ago. It is said that one of the warriors, Wandering Spirit, who was hung because of what happened, when asked for his final words decided to sing a love song to his wife. Now, I don't want to be misunderstood. I would never condone hurting, injuring, or killing anyone. What I am trying to point out is that what we have in common is a deep love for the people that surround us, our families and our friends.

Now, that was a very frustrating time for Indigenous people. Some would argue that it continues to be a frustrating time, but all the more reason that we need to work together to make sure that Alberta has an economy that serves everybody so that people don't get to the point of frustration when they feel like they have no hope left.

I want to thank Denise, Camille, Meera, and Alana, who are the main . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, hon. member.

Any other members wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. Rutherford: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that and the words from Edmonton-Ellerslie. I would just like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 1

Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act

The Chair: I would like to recognize the hon. Minister of Culture.

Mr. Orr: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I do have more to say about this. You know what? It is incredible. For most Albertans – I would venture to say everyone in this room – Queen Elizabeth II is the only monarch we have ever known. My goodness, she's been on the throne 70 years. During her reign our province and our country have grown up. We've experienced incredible change and growth. Alberta is a place where tradition is respected and progress is embraced – one of the great things about Alberta – where anyone

from anywhere, literally, can succeed with hard work and determination. Alberta's greatness is demonstrated every day by its people who work hard, who capture the beauty and soul of the province through their many creative endeavours, and especially by people who have helped lead this province through hard times and good times, and we've experienced both.

The Queen's platinum jubilee gives us the opportunity to celebrate everything we have achieved together in the past 70 years and to tell the stories that connect everyday Albertans, like Lorna Smith from the village of Alix, to the Royal Family. When I knew her, she was retired there with her husband, but here's the interesting story: Lorna's mother served as the personal secretary to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. As a girl Lorna and her mother both had HRH pins, Her Royal Highness pins, that granted them access to actually enter the palace at any time.

When she was about 13 or 14 years old, she tells us, she was invited with her mother to have tea with the Queen Mother in the palace ballroom. I think it was one of those kind of employee recognition kind of moments. One of Lorna's memories about that day was that the Queen Mother came in in a mauve dress and actually served them the tea. Oh. I forgot one piece: they were actually picked up by one of the palace limousines. Very challenging for a 13-year-old girl to be picked up and go to the ballroom. She didn't actually want to go at first, but her mother made her go, and she said later: I'm glad she did.

What I'm getting at here is that the jubilee is grand and many of the events and the pageantry that come along with it, and the people of Alberta are intimately connected with that. It's a part of our life and part of our history in different ways. That's part of the reason we feel we should celebrate this. Across the province you will find that some everyday Albertans have an interesting connection or memory to the Royal Family. I encourage people to share their stories of that.

Most importantly, the Queen's jubilee gives us the chance to thank the Albertans who have made it all possible here in Alberta. The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act is Alberta's way of honouring Her Majesty's legacy and the Albertans who have embodied her commitment to community service and, indeed, world service.

Under this legislation a series of awards and scholarships will be established to help recognize people who have changed this province for the better. There are two levels of awards. There's the Premier's award. The awardees are selected, one from every high school in Alberta, and they will be recognized for their citizenship and their contribution to the province. The process then would be: out of that pool of recipients – let me get this right here – a review panel will select the recipients of the Queen's platinum jubilee award, which will also have with it a series of financial awards or scholarships. There are two of those. There's the citizenship one, and then there are also two awards and scholarships that will be for the visual and performing arts, which reward youth who have demonstrated outstanding ability in the visual and performing arts. These awards will be \$7,000 each, increased from the \$5,000 of the previous ones. It's an increase fitting, really, to the recognition of Her Majesty's 70 years of service, but it will also help students pursue their goals and do what they need to do in their education.

3:10

These awards will replace the Queen's golden jubilee awards, which were created in 2002. For the past 20 years recipients of the Queen's golden jubilee award have moved on in life. They have become business leaders, talented artists, community builders, contributed immensely to our province and to the building of Alberta. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts will continue to be

responsible for selecting the recipients of the Queen's jubilee scholarship for the visual and performing arts. The others will be, as I mentioned, by a review panel. These Albertans have all represented Alberta well, made their communities proud. The new iterations of the Queen's awards will carry on the tradition of celebrating young people who have a future in this province.

Although it's important to invest in young people, there are so many other Albertans who deserve recognition and achievement and contributions. That is why Bill 1 includes the creation of a medallion, a new one-time Queen's platinum jubilee medallion. The medallion will be awarded to 7,000 Albertans over the course of 2022. The eligibility criteria for this award will be broad so that the medal can recognize a wide range of accomplishments in many areas. For example, this could include people who have been heroes through the pandemic response or who have worked towards reconciliation in their province or who have just been community builders in amazing ways. To streamline the process, nominations will be accepted from nonprofit organizations, elected officials, and representatives from provincial organizations. This will ensure that recipients can be selected and recognized during the jubilee year, and we hope that the first medals will go out on the weekend of June 2 to 5, when we celebrate the platinum jubilee.

The final piece of this legislation is intended to recognize the efforts and impact of members of Alberta's Executive Council. All of us here know how much effort and time and hard work Executive Council members on both sides of the House over the years have put in to serving the people of Alberta. Their contributions since the creation of Alberta have helped build a vibrant and dynamic province for us. Bill 1 would designate all past, present, and future members of Executive Council as honorary members of Executive Council upon their retirement. This is a small gesture when compared to the monumental contributions they have made throughout Alberta's history, and it's a call to them to actually continue with a lifetime of service. Serving on Executive Council is a step, but it calls for a lifetime of service.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, I just want to say that the platinum jubilee recognition act will help celebrate the reign of Her Majesty in the spirit that she has expressed; a spirit of unity, the spirit of working together. More importantly, it will show Albertans how much their contributions and leadership have been valued in this province.

I would like to end, Madam Chair, with a small quote from Chris – oh; I have it here – Chris Robertson. Twenty years ago he wrote of Canada – I think it's most appropriate for this particular time. Chris Robertson wrote that: we have to develop a spirit of pride where we celebrate everything Canadian; let's pay tribute to every great Canadian, glorious Canadian deeds, and Canadian trailblazers, whatever their accomplishments; we need to put humility for our nation in the back seat; we need to shout for joy, celebrating Canada at every turn in life; we need pride that will allow us to steer our ship of Canada safely through the toughest crises of nationhood; I want to live in a country where Canadians get goosebumps every time they see the maple leaf. That's the kind of spirit for Alberta that this act seeks to encourage, and I encourage every member of the House to continue to support it.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the minister for outlining some more of the details in regard to Bill 1 here in Committee of the Whole. Yeah. I think that the Official Opposition has generally a positive view of this bill. I think there are places within it by which we can sharpen the focus, I believe,

where it needs to be, which is with young people. The 7,000 potential nominees for a platinum jubilee medal: we should think with first consideration to young people because, of course, it's a reflection of what we hope to do, which is invest in the future. People who are going to live longer and serve longer as Albertans, in all ways possible, could of course carry that honour with them for the rest of their lives.

The other element of this, which is the scholarships: again, that's a good reflection of a focus on young people. I think that we just have to make sure we can use the medal part as a recognition for young people first and foremost as well.

Another element of it. I remember, having been in the Legislature longer, that there was a centennial medal during our 100th anniversary of the province, and one element of the government of the day for distributing those centennial medals was to try to make sure we have both a geographic spread of the honours throughout the province and a specific focus on local recognition, people who know those places in each corner of the province and can reach in and give a high-quality, perhaps, nomination and so forth for someone to get that kind of recognition. What the government of the day did with the centennial medals is that they did a lot, a certain amount of those centennial medals, to each of the 87 constituencies in the province for distribution and for nomination.

I mean, a constructive suggestion to the minister and to the government is that if we can have a way to use the natural geographic reach that we have here in the Legislature, with each of us representing 87 areas in the province, we could use that as a template for distribution and, of course, MLAs making nominations to citizens that they know that are doing a great job in each of our constituencies. I know I gave a number of medals out in my constituency, and it was really great. I still see those people today, right? It certainly makes a big impact.

The only other element of this bill, before I just wanted to make a few brief comments, is just, you know, around it being Bill 1. Traditionally, what we see: Bill 1 for each term or each session is sort of a signature piece of legislation that's driving the agenda of the government forward. I mean, while this is all great and certainly it's a worthwhile thing, the issue that I was really hoping was that Bill 1 could talk about affordability, because, of course, Madam Chair, we all know that inflation is almost unprecedented here in the province of Alberta, and it's affecting all of us in the broadest possible way. Certainly, it stems from energy prices, but it was happening even before that as well, with supply issues and things that – I don't know – some people just were not even understanding, that we're still just learning about.

So I think it's incumbent upon all of us to look to address this affordability issue head-on for all of our constituents and for the whole population of Alberta, because, you know, it's hitting hard, and it's hitting fast, and we need to be pre-emptive and not reactive to help people out. The price of gasoline, for example, is going up every single day, right? I was informed by my wife at about 8 o'clock in the morning that she had taken the bus, which I hadn't heard about for an awful long time. She said: "You know what? I wanted to fill up the car, and it was, like, \$1.70 a litre, and I just took the bus." I mean, there are ways by which we can deal with that, but lots of people in Alberta can't even take a bus because they live in places that are not served by buses and so forth.

You know, the price of food is really going up fast as well and then all of those other sundry things that people need, essentials for living: electricity, natural gas, the cost of renting an apartment, and so forth. Just everything is going up, so, yeah, I mean, while I do welcome the spirit of this bill and working through to recognize Albertans and young people especially who are making extraordinary contributions to our society, I just wanted to express that

as well. Let's not forget what the central purpose of our session is here and how we need to address, first and foremost, number one, the whole affordability issue.

With that, Madam Chair, I will take my seat. Thank you very much.

3:20

The Chair: Wonderful.

The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today to express my support for this significant legislation, Bill 1, the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act. I would like to firstly express my appreciation to the Lieutenant Governor for recommending the same to the Assembly. I applaud the Premier for sponsoring this bill, that will recognize the amazing contribution Albertans have made to this beautiful province.

Madam Chair, before I express my support to this bill, I would like to recognize all the hard efforts and contributions that have been made to ensure that Albertans were protected and supported during the pandemic.

As we mark the 70th year of Her Majesty's sovereignty, the proposed law will honour Albertans who have contributed to the betterment of the province through exceptional volunteerism, public service, and community leadership. Madam Chair, everyone who wants to make a difference would pursue a job in public service. It entails prioritizing the public good over personal gain. Many public employees claim that they choose public service to give back to their communities because they love doing so, making a profession out of meaningful pursuit. Money, status, and power aren't the only factors. Working as a public servant entails putting in long hours for a great cause and being committed to your everyday duties of serving the public.

I as well commemorate Her Majesty for taking time out from her busy schedule to visit, tour our beautiful province back in 1951, 1959, 1990, 1973, and 2005. In 2002 the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Recognition Act was passed by the Alberta government, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne by establishing special awards and scholarships to recognize Alberta youth who demonstrate excellence in citizenship through leadership, community service, and volunteerism as well, Madam Chair, as exceptional ability in the visual and performing arts.

Her Majesty has governed for longer than any other monarch in British history, and she has earned world-wide love and respect. Her exceptional reign has seen Her Majesty tour the world more than any previous queen. Making several significant trips, the Queen has been an important figurehead for the U.K. and the Commonwealth through times of enormous social change. Known for her sense of duty and devotion to a life of service, Madam Chair, one of the most significant aspects of the Queen's job is public and voluntary service. Her Majesty has ties with approximately 600 charities, military groups, professional bodies, public service organizations as royal patron or president, her outstanding contribution in World War II. These range from well-known world-wide charities to tiny organizations focused on a specific issue or operating solely on a local level. Her Majesty continues to engage in a busy schedule of engagements, including visits to charities and schools, entertaining foreign heads of state, and leading the country in remembrance and joyous events, all of which are supported by other members of the Royal Family.

Madam Chair, Her Majesty has always been supporting and encouraging achievement from all walks of life through an annual program of investitures, in which she bestows honours on members

of the public, garden parties, receptions, and other awards given in her name, which allow her to express her gratitude to all those who have contributed to the nation's well-being.

Madam Chair, in recognition of the efforts, Bill 1, Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act, will contain awards, a scholarship, plaque, and a \$7,000 award, which is a \$2,000 increase over the Queen's golden jubilee awards. It is intended that 10 Albertans will receive this prize or a scholarship each year for a total of \$70,000 to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's reign of 70 years.

The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act would also make all previous, present, and future Alberta cabinet ministers honorary members of Alberta's Executive Council. This award celebrates the numerous accomplishments made by Alberta Premiers and ministers to our province.

Madam Chair, in Alberta there have been many initiatives and awards awarded to Albertans for their significant contributions in the province such as the Albertan citizenship awards, Alberta northern lights volunteer recognition program, Great Kids award, heritage awards, minister's seniors service award recognition, volunteer recognition awards, and Stars of Alberta volunteer awards. Many of these outstanding awards pay tribute to the unsung heroes that make a difference in communities around the province, from deserving youngsters to adults who have done amazing things while facing adversity, to a person, group, company, or municipality for their work to conserve, preserve, and promote Alberta's history. As well, Alberta recognizes individuals, corporations, and charitable organizations who have a positive impact on the lives of seniors, and the communities should be honoured. These awards honour Alberta volunteers who contribute to the development of recreation in our province and community.

Our government is commemorating the numerous people who have contributed to the well-being of this province. Bill 1 would also assist the next generation in reaching new heights of leadership and instilling a feeling of responsibility and service. Giving back is also an excellent way to get to know your surroundings. Working with others who are likewise concerned about the environment can help expand networking as well as assist you in better understanding the conditions of other community members. Being an effective, empathic citizen requires having a broad, open-minded perspective of the various walks of life that surround you. You will never regret giving your time to help a cause that you are passionate about. It will enhance your life, introduce you to your community, introduce you to people and ideas that will have a good influence on your outlook for the rest of your life. Volunteering in your community allows you to grow as a person and gain a deeper understanding of how you fit in the world.

Madam Chair, volunteerism, public service, and community leadership have all contributed to making Alberta one of the greatest places to live and work. I encourage all members to support this Bill 1, Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act, which will promote and recognize the many people who have given back to this amazing and beautiful province we call our home through awards and scholarship. Again I thank the Lieutenant Governor and Premier for recognizing the amazing contributions made here in Alberta.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

3:30

The Chair: Are there others? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise today and speak to Bill 1, Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act.

This nation is a young nation as far as its sovereignty is concerned. As a nation we don't have a huge amount of history in comparison to a lot of other nations around the world. But, in fact, our attachment to the monarchy is actually much longer and much deeper than the roots of our Canadian sovereignty. It imbues the whole depth of our Canadian fabric as it predates the creation of this great nation by many centuries.

Canadians, I believe, understand the importance of the monarchy and the role that it has played in the history of our country. The monarchy has united us, and historically it has provided a haven for those who wanted to live under a parliamentary system of democracy. In the 1700s the United Empire Loyalists, some of whom were members of my family, joined with the other colonists that were in British North America to create the colonies of British North America. It was our respect for the monarchy and our support for the parliamentary form of government that spurred the British North American colonies to unite against the Americans in the War of 1812 and even against the Fenian raids prior to 1867.

The monarchy and our parliamentary form of government have provided its people with a strong and a stable and a productive government capable of meeting the needs of its people. Indeed, in 1867, with the passage of the British North America Act, the British colonies of North America peacefully transitioned into what we would call a self-governing colony under the monarchy when we became the Dominion of Canada.

Canada, like a young person who grows into adulthood, slowly evolved into a sovereign state. World War I served as a pivotal moment as our service in World War I proved to both Canadians and to the monarch and to the British Parliament and to the rest of the world that the citizens of Canada were capable and prepared to control not only their domestic affairs but also their foreign affairs.

By 1931, with the passage of the Statute of Westminster, Canada was prepared to make decisions regarding its foreign affairs, so in 1939, when Europe and Britain and indeed the rest of the world was threatened by the expansion of fascism, Canada was prepared to defend its democracy, its monarch, and its historical mother country and indeed the rest of Europe. My grandfather and several great-uncles fought in World War II. One of them died in defence of this nation. Indeed, on VE day in the VE day parade in my mom and dad's small hometown of Shaunavon, Saskatchewan, my mother led the Victory in Europe Day parade, carrying the Union Jack, and the people proudly sang *God Save the King*.

Canada has continued to evolve, and while we have distanced ourselves from some of the symbols of our colonial past, we have maintained our close alignment with the monarchy. Our present monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, was born in 1926, the first-born child of King George VI. Her Majesty was crowned in Westminster Abbey on June 2, 1953, upon the death of her father, King George VI. In 1953 the Canadian Parliament passed the Royal Style and Titles Act, which formally made Elizabeth the Queen of Canada. It's one of the things that I had to remind my students of when I was a teacher. When we talk about the Queen, we are not talking about the Queen of Great Britain; we're talking about the Queen of Canada.

Like most Canadians, I've never known another monarch. Canada has changed a great deal over my lifetime, and many of the symbols of the monarchy have disappeared. We now have our own flag, and most Canadians today have not learned to sing the words of *God Save the Queen* in school. The royal insignia is no longer seen on every mailbox across this nation. But the one constant that has remained throughout my life is that of Queen Elizabeth II. She still reigns.

It has in recent years become progressive to question the need for having a monarchy. I will start by saying that I have to admit that I

am a monarchist. I'm a monarchist for many reasons. Our entire parliamentary system of democracy is dependent on a monarch. Technically, the power of government is derived from the monarch. The monarchy is above the ebb and the flow of everyday politics. The monarch is the head of state and is, in the sense of party politics, apolitical. The monarch serves the people as the head of state. She is not the head of government. Governments come and governments go. Political parties and issues come and go. The monarch, especially this monarch, has remained: remained as a stabilizing influence, remained above politics, remained to guide and provide advice, remained to remind us of our past and of our history and of who we are, remained to provide us with a symbol of government that can speak to all of us, above the waves and things that will divide us.

It doesn't matter whether you're a Conservative or whether you're a Liberal or whether you're a member of the NDP; Queen Elizabeth, the Queen of Canada, and her representatives, the Governor General or the Lieutenant Governors at a provincial level, are apolitical. They are symbols of unity that help to transcend our differences as Canadians.

Bill 1 not only recognizes the importance of the monarchy in our nation but, significantly, the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. This bill recognizes the truly remarkable reign, the 70-year reign, of Queen Elizabeth II. Her service began long before becoming our monarch. She helped to fight fascism. She helped to guide us and transition us from the end of the British Empire into the vibrant community we are part of called the British Commonwealth of Nations. She has dedicated herself to a life of service. She is a part of over 600 charities, 36 of which are in Canada. For all of my years I have looked forward to the Queen's Christmas message. I, like many Albertans, remember her visit to Edmonton during the Commonwealth Games.

Bill 1 recognizes this long reign, this life of service, the longest reign of any British monarch and of any Canadian monarch. This platinum jubilee recognition bill is going to create several ways of recognizing and celebrating the service of this monarch. The platinum jubilee is a chance to celebrate her legacy and the service that she has given to her people.

3:40

Queen Elizabeth II platinum jubilee awards and scholarships will recognize young Albertans who are leaders in their communities and in the arts. The Queen's platinum jubilee citizenship award and scholarships would include a medallion and a \$7,000 prize in appreciation for the contributions of those individuals. The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act would also designate all former, current, and future Alberta cabinet ministers as honorary members of Alberta's Executive Council. This is to honour and recognize the many contributions that Alberta's premiers and ministers have made to the province. A one-time Queen's platinum jubilee medal has been created to recognize 7,000 worthy and dedicated Albertans throughout 2022. The act establishes three awards and scholarships: the Queen's platinum jubilee citizenship medal, the Premier's citizenship award in recognition of the Queen's platinum jubilee, and the Queen's platinum jubilee scholarship for the visual and performing arts.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, I would conclude by saying this: the platinum jubilee recognition act is a good bill to bring before this Assembly and to pass. In light of the 70 years of service of Her Majesty, it appears to me to be an appropriate way of recognizing a truly great and memorable monarch and a monarch that is worth recognizing and celebrating. God save the Queen.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to join the debate on Bill 1 in Committee of the Whole?

Seeing none, I will call the question.

[The clauses of Bill 1 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Any opposed? That is carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report Bill 1.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 1.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. That is carried.
The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that the Assembly be adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday, March 14, 2022.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:44 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 3rd Session (2022)

Activity to Thursday, March 10, 2022

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

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

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

Bill 1 — Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act (\$) (Kenney)

First Reading — 4 (*Feb. 22, 2022 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 94-97 (*Mar. 7, 2022 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 140-44 (*Mar. 10, 2022 aft., passed*)

Bill 2 — Financial Statutes Amendment Act, 2022 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 110 (*Mar. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Bill 3 — Special Days Act (Orr)

First Reading — 124 (*Mar. 9, 2022 aft., passed*)

Bill 4 — Municipal Government (Face Mask and Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination Bylaws) Amendment Act, 2022 (McIver)

First Reading — 110 (*Mar. 8, 2022 aft., passed*)

Bill 202 — Public Health (Transparency and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2022 (Loewen)

First Reading — 110 (*Mar. 8, 2022 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)

Table of Contents

Prayers	127
Introduction of Guests	127
Members' Statements	
Presumptive WCB Cancer Coverage for Firefighters	127
Federal Carbon Pricing	127
Ukraine	128
Personal Income Tax Deindexation	128
Budget 2022	128
Police Services	128
Budget 2022	129
Budget 2022	129
Federal and Provincial Energy Policies	137
Oral Question Period	
Content on Ukraine in Educational Curricula	129
Corporate Taxation and Investment Attraction	130
Postsecondary Tuition Fees	130, 133
Bill 4	131
Prenatal Benefit for Women Receiving AISH or Income Support	131
Utility Costs	132
Tax Policies	133
Edmonton Federal Building Use by Premier's Office	134
Racism and Hate Crime Prevention	134
17th Avenue S.E./Chestermere Boulevard Capacity	135
Residential School Gravesite Identification	135
Calgary Cancer Centre	136
Emergency Medical Services	136
Presenting Petitions	137
Orders of the Day	138
Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech	138
Government Bills and Orders	
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 1 Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Recognition Act	140

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

For inquiries contact:

Editor

Alberta Hansard

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875

E-mail: AlbertaHansard@assembly.ab.ca