



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 30, 2022

Day 2

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Fourth Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UC), Speaker
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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

Nicolaides, Hon. Demetrios, ECA, Calgary-Bow (UC)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
Nixon, Hon. Jason, ECA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre
(UC)
Nixon, Hon. Jeremy P., ECA, Calgary-Klein (UC)
Notley, Hon. Rachel, ECA, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
Leader of the Official Opposition
Orr, Hon. Ronald, ECA, Lacombe-Ponoka (UC)
Pancholi, Rakhi, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
Panda, Hon. Prasad, ECA, Calgary-Edgemont (UC)
Phillips, Hon. Shannon, ECA, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Pon, Hon. Josephine, ECA, Calgary-Beddington (UC)
Rehn, Pat, Lesser Slave Lake (UC)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosin, Miranda D., Banff-Kananaskis (UC)
Rowswell, Garth, Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright (UC)
Rutherford, Hon. Brad, ECA, Leduc-Beaumont (UC),
Government Whip
Sabir, Hon. Irfan, ECA, Calgary-Bhullar-McCall (NDP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Savage, Hon. Sonya, ECA, KC, Calgary-North West (UC)
Sawhney, Hon. Rajan, ECA, Calgary-North East (UC)
Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, ECA, Edmonton-Gold Bar (NDP)
Schow, Hon. Joseph R., ECA, Cardston-Siksika (UC),
Government House Leader
Schulz, Hon. Rebecca, ECA, Calgary-Shaw (UC)
Shandro, Hon. Tyler, ECA, KC, Calgary-Acadia (UC)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-City Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, ECA, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Sigurdson, R.J., Highwood (UC)
Singh, Peter, Calgary-East (UC)
Smith, Hon. Danielle, ECA, Brooks-Medicine Hat (UC),
Premier
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UC)
Stephan, Jason, Red Deer-South (UC)
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP)
Toews, Hon. Travis, ECA, 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),
Deputy Government Whip
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., ECA, Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UC)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UC)
Yaseen, Hon. Muhammad, ECA, Calgary-North (UC)
Vacant, Calgary-Elbow
Vacant, Calgary-Lougheed

Party standings:

United Conservative: 60

New Democrat: 23

Independent: 2

Vacant: 2

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Shannon Dean, KC, 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

Terry Langley, Sergeant-at-Arms
Gareth Scott, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Lang Bawn, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Council

Danielle Smith	Premier, President of Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Relations
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Nathan Neudorf	Deputy Premier, Minister of Infrastructure
Mickey Amery	Minister of Children's Services
Jason Copping	Minister of Health
Devin Dreesen	Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors
Mike Ellis	Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services
Nate Glubish	Minister of Technology and Innovation
Pete Guthrie	Minister of Energy
Nate Horner	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Brian Jean	Minister of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development
Matt Jones	Minister of Affordability and Utilities
Adriana LaGrange	Minister of Education
Todd Loewen	Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism
Jason Luan	Minister of Culture
Nicholas Milliken	Minister of Mental Health and Addiction
Dale Nally	Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction
Demetrios Nicolaides	Minister of Advanced Education
Jeremy Nixon	Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services
Brad Rutherford	Minister without Portfolio
Sonya Savage	Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
Rajan Sawhney	Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism
Joseph Schow	Minister without Portfolio
Rebecca Schulz	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Tyler Shandro	Minister of Justice
Travis Toews	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Rick Wilson	Minister of Indigenous Relations

Parliamentary Secretaries

Tracy Allard	Parliamentary Secretary for Civil Liberties
Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk	Parliamentary Secretary for Ukrainian Refugee Settlement
Tanya Fir	Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women
Shane Getson	Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Corridors
David Hanson	Parliamentary Secretary for Procurement Transformation
Martin Long	Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business
Miranda Rosin	Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism
R.J. Sigurdson	Parliamentary Secretary for EMS Reform
Devinder Toor	Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism
Glenn van Dijken	Parliamentary Secretary for Agrifood Development
Tany Yao	Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Health
Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary for Community Outreach

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Orr
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Allard

Eggen
Gotfried
Gray
Hunter
Issik
Phillips
Pon

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. van Dijken
Deputy Chair: Ms Goehring

Allard
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Barnes
Bilous
Carson
Feehan
McIver
Rowswell
Stephan
Walker

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Lovely
Deputy Chair: Ms Sigurdson

Armstrong-Homeniuk
Carson
Dang
Fir
Gotfried
Long
Sabir
Smith, Mark
Yao
Yaseen

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Smith
Deputy Chair: Mr. van Dijken

Ceci
Dach
Hunter
Loyola
Orr
Panda
Rehn
Shepherd
Toor

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Cooper
Deputy Chair: Mr. Williams

Deol
Fir
Goehring
Gray
McIver
Pon
Rowswell
Sabir
van Dijken

Select Special Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner Search Committee

Chair: Ms Rosin
Deputy Chair: Mr. Williams

Aheer
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Bilous
Goehring
Sabir
Singh
Smith, Mark

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Mr. Williams
Deputy Chair: Ms Rosin

Irwin
Lovely
Nielsen
Nixon, Jason
Panda
Rehn
Sigurdson, L.
Singh
Sweet

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Reid
Deputy Chair: Mr. Gotfried

Allard
Aheer
Armstrong-Homeniuk
Deol
Ganley
Loyola
Nixon, Jason
Rehn
Renaud
Yao

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Ms Phillips
Deputy Chair: Mr. Turton

Hunter
Lovely
Pancholi
Panda
Renaud
Schmidt
Singh
Stephan
Toor
Yaseen

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Mr. Hanson
Deputy Chair: Mr. Feehan

Aheer
Dach
Ganley
Getson
Issik
Nielsen
Orr
Sigurdson, R.J.
Singh
Turton

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

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

Hon. members, please remain standing. As is our custom, we pay tribute to members and former members of this Assembly who have passed away since the last time we've met.

Mr. Peter Trynchy

August 22, 1931, to November 21, 2022

The Speaker: Peter Trynchy was elected as the Progressive Conservative Member for Whitecourt on August 30, 1971. Mr. Trynchy won six consecutive elections in Whitecourt and two in Whitecourt-St. Anne, serving eight terms before retiring in 2001.

During his nearly 30 years of service Mr. Trynchy was the government whip from 1975 to '79; the minister of recreation and parks from '79 to '86; the minister responsible for occupational health and safety, and Workers' Compensation Board from 1989 to 1992; the minister of transportation and utilities from '92 to '94. Before his election to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta Mr. Trynchy served his community on the Mayerthorpe town council for six years. A businessman and a farmer, he earned a reputation for taking immediate action during his time in office. Mr. Trynchy received the Queen Elizabeth II golden jubilee medal in 2002 and the Michael Luckovich award for outstanding public service by a parliamentarian of Ukraine origin in 2008. A driving force to establish the Mayerthorpe Airport, it was renamed in his honour in 2020.

Peter Trynchy passed away on November 21, 2022, at the age of 91. In a moment of silent prayer or reflection I ask you to remember Mr. Trynchy as you may have known him. Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.

Please be seated.

Statement by the Speaker

Proposed Amendments to Standing Orders

The Speaker: Hon. members, before I call upon the Clerk for the daily Routine, I notice that Government Motion 9, which is on notice on the Order Paper today, is proposing to amend a number of standing orders, including amendments with respect to two items in the daily Routine: Introduction of Guests and Members' Statements.

The motion seeks, among other things, to amend Standing Order 7(3) to provide that each day members may make introductions under Introduction of Guests, that the time allotted for this item of business is to be four minutes, and that each member's introduction may not exceed 20 seconds. In addition, an amendment has been proposed to Standing Order 7(4) to reduce the number of members' statements from nine to seven each day.

I understand that two unanimous consent requests may be coming forward that would seek to give effect to these proposed amendments this afternoon. Is someone willing to make the first request? The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask for unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 7(3) in order to allow members to make their own introductions of guests for a period not exceeding four minutes, each introduction to not exceed 20 seconds.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: Accordingly, Introduction of Guests this afternoon will follow the process I have just outlined.

Is the hon. the Government House Leader willing to make a request for unanimous consent for Members' Statements to give effect to the motion?

Mr. Schow: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to ask for unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 7(4) in order to allow for seven members' statements to be given today in the order outlined in the House leaders' agreement shared with all members by the Speaker.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The rotation for Members' Statements that will apply today is contained in a House leaders' agreement that I received on November 28, 2022, which has also been circulated to each member and that I will table at the appropriate time today in the Routine.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. members, with admiration and respect there is a gratitude to members of families who have shared the burdens of public office and public service. Today I would like to welcome the members of the Trynchy family who are present in the Speaker's gallery. Please rise as I call your name, and remain standing until all have been introduced: daughter of Mr. Trynchy Darlene Langevin and her husband, Val; grandson Christopher and granddaughter Ashton; and son Marlin Trynchy and his wife, Janet Gervais. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly two people who I can safely say I would not be here without. One of them is my father, Doug Smith, and the other is my mother, Sharon Smith. When I told them I was going to get back into this job, they said, "Are you crazy?" And I said, "Thank you for your vote of confidence." I'm so glad that they are here. Please give them the warm welcome of the Chamber.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadows has a school to introduce.

Mr. Deol: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and, through you, would like to introduce 80 grades 5 and 6 students of Julia Kiniski school in my riding of Edmonton-Meadows. Among them are their hard-working teachers, staff. I would like to name Mr. Dale Mandryk, Ms Crystal Jenkins, Ms Lexie Zechman, and Parminder Grewal. Please join me in welcoming all of them here.

Thank you.

Statement by the Speaker

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: I know that it will take some time for us to get used to the reintroduction of Introduction of Guests, but I will remind members that those introductions are to be 20 seconds or less. I believe that we ought to set the precedent for what these introductions will look like in that I am of the belief that these introductions ought to be about the guests and less about being used as a partisan tool. That's not a reflection on the introductions that we've had already this afternoon but more that I wanted to provide that reminder and had forgotten. They will be 20 seconds, and I will be rising, as I do during question period or other speaking limits, to ensure that we can get through as many introductions as possible, and I encourage members to keep their remarks brief out of respect for others.

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated up in the Speaker's gallery, Chase Malkin and his mother, Janell. Chase has taken a keen interest in learning about Alberta politics and spends many days learning about all of us. I have no doubt that one day he'll be seated down here on this very floor. Please give them the warm welcome of the Assembly, and stop by 323 to meet Chase after question period.

Member Ceci: Elladee Windsor is a master of social work student who is currently completing her practicum in my constituency office. Her work is focused on the Fort McMurray wildfire and the role of social workers in recovery from disasters. I'm so proud she's here today, and I can't wait to watch her career grow and develop.

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

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to all Members of this Legislative Assembly my friends Destiny Chiasson and Brett Pearce. Please rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

Members' Statements

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

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans' rights are sacred. They are enshrined in the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Unfortunately, for too long our rights have been trampled on by federal actors, and for too long governments have failed to stand up and say: enough is enough. As we all know, this has grave consequences for our industry, our economy, and our workers.

Fortunately, those days are done. On Tuesday Bill 1, the long-awaited Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, was introduced in this Legislature. If passed, this act will empower our province to stand up against overreach and interference from the federal government, fight federal legislation that is unconstitutional or harmful, and defend the federal-provincial divisions of power, giving our province the right to develop policies that reflect our own unique needs.

This is not about separation. This is about strengthening and clarifying the bonds that make us a true confederation. This bill even has inspired other provinces like Saskatchewan to pass their own legislation affirming their jurisdictional authority against the federal government.

Contrary to what the opposition NDP will say, this act in no way permits cabinet to unilaterally amend legislation, but it comes as no surprise that the opposition NDP is already opposing the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act without even reading it. Their actions only serve to remind us how they sold Albertans out to Justin Trudeau and Ottawa when they were in office and how they will do that again if given the chance.

Our United Conservative team won't do that. We will always put Albertans first, we will defend Alberta's constitutional authority against overreach from Ottawa, and we will fully exercise our areas of jurisdiction granted under the Constitution. This bill is not a sword; it is a shield. Albertans expect their government to defend the province they cherish, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

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

Postsecondary Education Funding

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's postsecondary institutions are crucial to our economic recovery, equipping Albertans with vital skills and knowledge for now and the future. Unfortunately, college, polytechnic, and university students are struggling today because of decisions made by this UCP government. The Minister of Advanced Education has approved tuition hikes anywhere from 16 to 104 per cent and more than \$10,000 in additional annual fees. This government has consistently downloaded even more costs onto the backs of students, students who are already struggling due to the countless other UCP decisions that have made life unaffordable for Albertans.

Now, at a time where people across this province are struggling, this government has just made a bad situation worse. Alongside increases to tuition, fees, student housing, and more, interest rates have steadily been on the rise as well. So what does this government do? They add an additional interest charge on student loans. This means they are cruelly profiteering off Albertans who are simply seeking higher education. This extra money that the UCP is taking out of the pockets of Albertans adds to student loan payments, one steep monthly bill during the worst affordability crisis in 40 years.

Students are facing major pressures in every aspect of their lives: increases to rent, utilities, tuition, gas, insurance, and more. The list goes on and on. Yet the average student doesn't even have access to the inadequate affordability packages offered by this government. While some folks are able to access these resources, so many students are simply left out in the cold. Single people, those without children, students: they're all impacted by the affordability crisis, too, and they're just as worthy of support, I believe.

These are our future leaders. They are facing an affordability crisis and are crying out for help. The Alberta New Democrats are listening. Should we form the next government, we will take action to ensure that education is affordable and that our young people are set up to lead into a bright economic future.

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

Former MLA Peter Trynchy

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a heavy heart I share a member's statement today regarding the passing of Honourable Mr. Peter Trynchy. He passed away on the 21st of November at the age of 91. He was preceded by the love of his life,

Lorraine. He'll be missed by his son Marlin Trynchy and his wife; by daughter Darlene and her husband; and by grandchildren Christopher, James, and Ashten as well as five great-grandchildren.

Peter Trynchy was born in Rochfort Bridge, Alberta, on August 22, 1931. Peter was a businessman, a farmer. He ran a local grain elevator for years. He served on the Mayerthorpe town council and a number of other local organizations. Peter was elected in 1971, served for 27 years. For those keeping score at home, that's eight consecutive terms. He was the minister of recreation and parks, the minister of OH and S, the WCB, public safety services, transportation and utilities. There isn't a corner of this province that didn't benefit from Mr. Trynchy's hard work over the time in office. Mr. Trynchy would often remark how exciting it was to be part of such a significant change in Alberta under the leadership of Premier Lougheed. Mr. Trynchy established the Peter Trynchy scholarship, which helps folks to obtain career education in technical trades.

I first met Mr. Trynchy when I was knee-high to a grasshopper at the Wildwood Fair. He took the time to talk to me as a kid and give me an Alberta pin. I carried that around for years, and it's one of the reasons as an MLA I do the same thing for kids in our constituency.

In 2020 we renamed the airport in Mayerthorpe after Mr. Peter Trynchy. Without him it wouldn't have been built. We made it a stop on the Alberta Air Tours. We had 20 airplanes that came along and stopped in, and it was the first time the seniors were able to get out of the homes. I had the honour of giving Mr. Trynchy an Alberta pin back and told him the story, and it made him smile.

Mr. Trynchy, you left some awfully big shoes in our constituency to fill. I'll do my utmost to fill them. I wish to thank you and your family for all your years of service.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Seniors' Support

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our seniors helped lay the foundation for our great province. Because of the importance that seniors hold in our province, it is critical that they are taken care of. Today I'm honoured to stand in this House to share just one of the ways that we are taking care of seniors in my constituency of Livingstone-Macleod.

This summer I had the privilege of visiting Peaks to Pines, a new 100-unit seniors' lodge in the Crowsnest Pass. This seniors' living facility offers different levels of care: seniors can choose independent living and be self-sufficient in their own suites, or they can choose to have supportive living, where they have access to on-site health care aides, prepared meals, housekeeping, and more. These varying levels of care choices will provide seniors in my riding with the flexibility and support they need. Peaks to Pines lodge is a huge step in the right direction towards housing options for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, although this facility is a great addition in my constituency and I'm pleased to see it finally completed, it does not solve the issue of difficult living situations for seniors across our province who simply cannot afford to live in a facility like this. Investment in affordable housing and care facilities will be vital to ensure that seniors have the best care possible and will keep them close to family and friends.

Seniors in our province, especially those who live in rural communities, need more support from our government. Because of the increased costs of living and the inflation crisis, Albertans everywhere are struggling. Living on fixed incomes, our Alberta seniors are struggling to afford life. Recently our government announced that we will be increasing the benefit rate for low-income seniors by 6 per cent beginning this January. Low-income Alberta seniors will also be receiving an additional \$100 a month

for six months beginning in January. Mr. Speaker, the indexing of these financial assistance benefits and the additional cash is going to be critical as we address the financial pressures our older Albertans face. This added 6 per cent will have a positive impact on the lives of our seniors.

Thank you.

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act

Mr. Sabir: Economic certainty; stable, competent government; the rule of law: all of these things are critical for the future of Alberta, and all are under threat with the introduction of the Premier's sovereignty act. This bill is unconstitutional. It completely disrespects this House, the people elected to serve in this House, and millions of Albertans who put us here.

The Premier was selected by 1 per cent of Albertans. She didn't even have the majority of support in her own party, yet she now believes she can give herself supreme power to rule outside of this House, that she can change legislation behind closed doors. She has decided her actions are not subject to public accountability. She has decided she supersedes us all.

While she may be so misguided in her own love for herself to give herself this power, her own ministers don't agree. The Finance minister called the bill a ticking time bomb. The Minister of Municipal Affairs called it the Anarchy Act. The minister of environment said that it will "create instability and chaos." I could go on and on.

Now those ministers stay silent, but Albertans are speaking out. Political scientists are calling it the most undemocratic piece of legislation this House has ever seen. Investors and businesses are reaching out to us to express serious concerns as they openly consider whether to pull out of the province altogether. This bill will kill jobs; it will stop investment; it will destroy our economic future; it will erode our democracy.

This Premier must be stopped. I call on every MLA in this House today to take a stand against this Premier. We are at a critical moment. Albertans are watching, and if you refuse to act now, you can explain to our children why you put their future at risk.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1:50

Statement by the Speaker

Rotation of Questions and Members' Statements

Private Members' Business

Rules and Practices of the Assembly

The Speaker: Hon. members, as this is the first regular sitting day of the Fourth Session, there's some information I wish to share with you prior to Oral Question Period. I would like to inform you that modifications have been made to the Oral Question Period and members' statement rotation based upon the House leaders agreement I mentioned in my earlier statement.

One Oral Question Period each week and one member's statement every three weeks had been assigned to the member who was the independent member during the spring, the Member for Central Peace-Notley. However, since that member is now a member of the United Conservative caucus, that question and member's statement have been allocated to the United Conservative caucus.

The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat will be entitled to question 8 on day 3, and the Member for Edmonton-South will be entitled to question 9 on day 4. Each of the independent members will continue to be allocated one member's statement every three weeks. The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat is allocated a statement on Monday of week 2 of the rotation, and the Member for

Edmonton-South has been allocated a statement on Monday of week 3.

With respect to private members' business there have been some modifications to the list of positions for private members' public bills and motions other than government motions drawn for the Fourth Session. As a result of recent appointments of certain private members to Executive Council and the resignation of the former Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat, bills 210, 224, 231, 238, 239, 245, 246, 253, 254, and 255 and motions other than government motions 510, 515, 520, 521, 523, 526, 539, 542, 543, 551 have all been withdrawn from the list of positions for the Fourth Session of the 30th Legislature.

As I reminded you in the procedural memo sent to members on November 28, a number of parliamentary secretaries have been appointed recently. I remind you that parliamentary secretaries are private members; they are not members of Executive Council. Accordingly, they have the rights and the duties of private members, not of members of cabinet. I refer members to the rulings by Speaker Kowalski on April 16, 2008, which can be found on page 13 of *Hansard* for that day, and Speaker Wanner, which can be found on page 1599 of *Hansard* from October 30, 2017, which indicate that it is inappropriate for parliamentary secretaries to direct questions to the minister whom the parliamentary secretary is affiliated with. Accordingly, I would ask that the parliamentary secretaries refrain from posing questions to their ministers.

With respect to House leadership I would remind members that the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul is a private member. He has been appointed as the Deputy Government House Leader. Members will recall that the current Government House Leader was previously appointed the Deputy Government House Leader during the 2021 fall sitting, also when he was a private member. On October 25, 2021, I made a statement on the scope of the member's role as the Deputy Government House Leader, and I'd urge the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul and all members to review those remarks, which can be found on page 5647 of *Hansard* from that day.

I wish to remind members that the election of the Deputy Chair of Committees will take place immediately following the Routine.

Finally, as we embark on this session, please remember that in accordance with Standing Order 13(7) members must be in their assigned seats when speaking or voting.

Oral Question Period

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

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by quickly congratulating the Premier on her new role.

Mr. Speaker, all Albertans – all Albertans – expect their elected officials to stand up for Alberta, no question. But yesterday we learned that the Premier's approach on sovereignty is not that but, rather, a full-throated power grab from Albertans. She's granting herself the ability to write laws in secret, behind closed doors, no reviews, no checks, no balances, just an unprecedented abuse of authority. To the Premier: why is her first act an unconstitutional, antidemocratic attack on the democratic rights of Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question from the hon. member. No, it does not. It's very clear. I suppose if the

opposition had stayed to actually read the bill when it was presented yesterday – I would have expected they might have read it in the meantime – they would have seen that every decision that is going to be made has to first get the validation from this Assembly. What that means is that this Assembly will pass a motion, and it will give the direction to cabinet. It will always be at the direction of the members that we will make decisions in cabinet.

Ms Notley: Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm relying on the briefing from the Deputy Minister of Justice, who does understand this legislation, unlike this Premier. In fact, this move is nothing more than a cynical political tool used to consolidate power and to undercut our much-needed economic recovery. In fact, the Calgary Chamber of commerce says that it will impede new investment, reduce business certainty, and make it harder to attract new talent. Why doesn't the Premier put Albertans first, drop this bill, and start doing some real work to protect and promote investment in Alberta?

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

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The number one biggest detractor and the number one thing that has chased investment out of this province has been the Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa and their undemocratic decisions and their violation of our constitutional rights in this province. That is what the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act is all about. It is about enforcing our constitutionally guaranteed rights to make our own decisions regarding the development, the conservation, and the export of our resources. I would ask the opposition to support it.

Ms Notley: Well, quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing an alarming collision of three very rare political events: first, we have a Premier who's made more mistakes in three weeks than most make in three years; second, we have a Premier selected by less than 1 per cent of the population a mere six months before a general election; and third, that same Premier is now attempting to consolidate more power outside of the Legislature than any Premier in the history of this province. She's in over her head. Why won't she withdraw this legislation and focus on real solutions for Albertans?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to educating the opposition in my speech later today on the sovereignty act about how our country is supposed to work and the fact that Alberta does have sovereign rights to make decisions in areas of exclusive jurisdiction. I would just ask for them to listen to the debate and to support the actions that we are taking here because we know that Albertans want us to act on this. We have a mandate, with the equalization referendum that was passed, that our people want to make sure that we stand up to Ottawa, and that's exactly what we're going to do with the sovereignty act.

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Notley: Now, Mr. Speaker, I did listen to the debate. I listened to the debate of the UCP leadership candidates, and let me tell you that those folks sitting around: hypocrisy a little astounding. Not long ago they all held a joint news conference on how they would be voting against the act. The Finance minister called it an economic time bomb; the jobs minister, a fairy tale; the Municipal Affairs minister, anarchy; and the minister of trade said that it was like shooting ourselves in the foot. Yesterday all of them capitulated. Will any one of them stand up and explain why they sold out Albertans yesterday?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have had an incredible time over the last eight weeks making sure that our caucus members had a lot of input into all of our decision-making and identifying our priorities, and one of the things that we had heard loud and clear was that they want to stand up and push back against Ottawa. As they had input into the construction of this bill – we’ve gone through a cabinet policy committee process; we’ve gone through a cabinet process; we’ve gone through a caucus process – everybody became very comfortable with the fact that this is going to do exactly that: it’s going to assert our constitutional rights, and it’s going to push back against Ottawa.

Ms Notley: Well, I think everybody became really comfortable with a paycheque, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the former Premier at least had the good sense to walk away from this Dumpster fire. He once called this approach catastrophically stupid, and back then the Finance minister agreed with him. He said, quote: I believe invoking the Alberta sovereignty act would put us backwards because it would create chaos. He went on to say that the act would curtail new investment and force established businesses to leave Alberta. To the Finance minister: if you believe what you said then, why did you fail those businesses and the people working for them yesterday?

2:00

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to rise in the House this November day. I had legitimate concerns over early renditions of the proposed sovereignty act, but I’ve had full opportunity to weigh in to the development of this bill. This bill, for my support, needed to respect the rule of law, needed to be constitutional, and needed to be implemented in a way that would not create business uncertainty. This bill does that.

Ms Notley: Well, I hope the minister can sleep well at night, because businesses certainly are not. Economists and business leaders say this approach hurts our international reputation. The former Energy minister actually described a recent international meeting with energy leaders. She said, quote, it’s already creating instability and chaos. “I had international investors concerned about their assets in Alberta asking about what was going on with the Sovereignty Act.” To the now environment minister: why are you surrendering to an approach that is undemocratic, unconstitutional – you’re a lawyer; you know it – and harmful to our economy? That’s what you said.

The Speaker: Prior to the hon. the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas’ remarks, I’m sure she’s not asking for a legal opinion of the minister because that would be outside of the convention of what is acceptable in the House.

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 1 is neither unconstitutional nor undemocratic. Every single thing that comes out of it will be debated in the Legislature. In the very preamble of the act it said it will be constitutional and nothing will be construed to be unconstitutional. I had some very grave concerns about the act. We went through a caucus process, and I think we addressed those concerns.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Health Care System

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, all Albertans deserve to have the health care they need when they need it. Yet today health care is in chaos because of both the pandemic and the many bad decisions of the

UCP. Albertans can’t find a family doctor, they’re being transported to hospitals in fire trucks, and they’re waiting 20-plus hours in ERs. In Calgary sick children are being forced to wait for care in a trailer outside the children’s hospital. Why is the Premier more obsessed with calling movie sets about vaccine mandates than helping Alberta families get the health care they need?

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

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that the health care system is in crisis, which is why I made it a priority when I got elected that we were going to make sure that we put health care reform, and Alberta Health Services reform in particular, at the forefront. It’s the reason why I have dismissed the board and thanked them for their work but put in place an official administrator, who can accelerate all of the changes that we need to make to make sure that the experience of people on the front line is going to be improved. Number one, we’re going to reduce wait times in emergency rooms. We’re going to also make sure that people don’t wait in . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, that board shakeup was window dressing, absolutely nothing more. This is a Premier who has accused front-line health care workers of manufacturing a staffing shortage, she fired the chief medical officer and replaced her with a volunteer, and she’s now developing her own public health response by talking to a conspiracy theorist who believes the vaccine is a bioweapon. She promoted horse dewormer as a treatment for COVID. The Premier suggested last week she’s made some mistakes. If so, will she stand up and apologize for the ones I just described today?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We heard that we needed new leadership at the chief medical officer of health, and I’m very pleased that Dr. Mark Joffe has agreed to take on that role. We also know that the only way that you can make the kind of changes that we need to make to stabilize health care, to address the long waits of paramedics when they show up at emergency rooms, the long waits that people have when they enter an emergency room, and the surgical wait times is to make sure that we have somebody hands on, day in, day out, ensuring that they have the support that they need to push the changes through, and that’s what we’re giving. I’m delighted to work with Dr. Joffe.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, Albertans have actually heard the Premier’s inside voice on health care, and it’s not pretty. She’s mused about opening unstaffed beds in hotel rooms, bringing back health care premiums, making people with, quote, catastrophic medical events pay deductibles, and paying for doctors’ visits out of a \$300 spending account. These things were said and written 16 months ago, not 16 years ago. Why doesn’t the Premier apologize for those statements or, conversely, just admit she can’t be trusted to fix Albertans’ health care?

Ms Smith: I find it amazing that the Leader of the Official Opposition is opposed to health spending accounts, because the only time I’ve ever had a health spending account is when I was in elected office. I know she has a \$950 health spending account paid for by taxpayers. It sounds kind of elitist to me to be accepting taxpayer money for a health spending account and then saying that Albertans shouldn’t be able to have the same thing. What we’re offering is an approach that will make sure that we’re supporting

the health care decisions of all of our Albertans by paying for the things that are not paid for by Alberta health care.

Children's Health Care and Hospital Capacity

Ms Pancholi: There is a crisis in our health care system, and children are now experiencing the worst of it. Both the Stollery in Edmonton and the Alberta Children's hospital in Calgary are continually exceeding 15-hour wait times. A heated trailer has been set up outside the Alberta Children's emergency department. A trailer to hold children wanting to access health care: that's where we're at. Children's surgeries are being cancelled, there's a shortage of children's medications, illnesses are moving quickly through schools, and too many kids do not have family doctors. Will the UCP government allow an emergency debate in the Legislature today to address the children's health care crisis?

Mr. Copping: Thank you to the hon. member for the question. Mr. Speaker, our emergency departments are under strain, as they are across the entire country. We're seeing an early and severe flu season, and patients coming to emergency are sicker than on average, you know, given that, often, many numbers of visits to either the emergency departments or to family doctors were put off during the pandemic. We're responding. We're responding by adding capacity across our entire system, from EMS to continuing care. At the Children's in Calgary, AHS added a new fast-track unit, and they're working to add staff to other spaces as well.

Ms Pancholi: I was joined earlier today by my constituent Lindsey Kemp, whose 6-year-old son George is immunocompromised. He's had two heart transplants, and he also has Crohn's disease. Lindsey worries about what will happen if George gets sick and needs hospital care, which he does regularly. She worries for patients and parents waiting for a life-saving transplant for their child. The Minister of Health is allowing the chaos in our hospitals to continue and potentially putting life-saving surgeries and treatment for children at risk. At what point will the Minister of Health acknowledge that this is a crisis?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, my heart goes out to all parents who have sick children, and I wish that family and that individual all the best.

We are providing care. Mr. Speaker, if you need to get care, whether it be at the Stollery or the Children's hospital, it is there for you. Yes, our system is under strain, but we are dealing with that. We are investing an additional \$600 million this year, \$600 million next year, \$600 million the year after that, because we know we need to expand capacity. We are also looking to transform our system, add more family doctors, and I can talk more about what we're doing with the AMA in a moment.

Ms Pancholi: Parents across this province will say that they do not feel that they have access to health care for their children right now, and they're correct. Now, I recognize that solutions to this problem are not easy, which is why we must debate this in the Legislature today. We cannot wait until wave after wave of illness overwhelms our hospitals and the dedicated front-line workers who have done so much to care for Albertans. They deserve clear and immediate support from the members in this Chamber. Parents need to know that they can access health care for their children. For the sake of the children and our health care workers, will the UCP agree to an emergency debate today about children's hospitals and their crisis?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, we are acting and we have been acting and we are continuing to act. I spoke already about adding capacity to our system. We are spending record amounts of dollars: \$22 billion this year and expanding that by another \$1.2 billion over the next two years. We are also transforming the way we deliver the health care system. The Premier already spoke about appointing the administrator to drive changes to our system faster, lower EMS times, lower times in emergency departments. We are also working on expanding access to systems through adding health care staff. We have more doctors, more nurses than we ever had in the system, and we're doing more.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie-East has the call.

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (continued)

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For far too long we have watched our provincial rights, granted to us under the Constitution, be infringed upon by federal actors, and for far too long governments have failed to stand up and say: enough is enough. On Tuesday Bill 1, the long-awaited Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, was introduced. Can the minister please explain how this act will be used to protect our rights, our freedoms, and the interests of our province from federal overreach?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. What this does is provide a framework for us to openly and democratically have a debate here in this Assembly to be able to discuss when there is overreach from the federal government. We know this is happening very often, and this provides us a tool, an additional tool to what we already have as a government, as a House, a tool for us to be able to continue that work and then to be able to take next steps on how we can better protect the interests of Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie-East has the call.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Given that no one wants to see any government grant itself extraordinary powers that could potentially be abused, like we recently saw from the federal Liberals in the use of the Emergencies Act, and given that concerns have been raised about whether this new legislation would grant Alberta's cabinet these kinds of extraordinary powers, can the minister please explain as to whether this act would allow cabinet to alter or amend legislation without legislative oversight? [interjection]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. the Minister of Justice is the one with the call.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. No. To be clear, in no way does this act permit cabinet to unilaterally amend legislation. In this framework cabinet cannot amend legislation without the specific direction provided by the MLAs in this Assembly. Cabinet can only work within those parameters. That means that the democratically elected members of the Assembly are the ones who determine . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

The hon. the Minister of Justice is the one with the call.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, that means that the democratically elected members of the Assembly are the ones who determine what actions under the act are justifiable or necessary.

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

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A well-informed opinion from someone who has read the bill.

Given that members of the United Conservative Party are all proud Albertans and Canadians and given that questions have been raised about whether the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act opens the door to separation from Confederation, can the minister explain whether this piece of legislation is about separation or about protecting Alberta within a united Canada?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. No; this has nothing to do with separation. This is entirely about protecting the interests of Albertans. In fact, although they're not listening right now, I would invite the NDP to suggest opportunities for how this framework might be used in the best interests of Albertans, but of course they're not going to do that because they don't want to upset or push back against the Trudeau-NDP alliance in Ottawa.

Health Spending Accounts

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, as of today hundreds of thousands of Albertans have no family doctor. For many this is a direct result of the conflict and chaos caused by the UCP. Now the Premier wants to move forward with health spending accounts, an idea she discussed extensively, saying in June 2022 that they could act as a way to pay to see a doctor. She even said, "My view is that the entire budget for [family] practitioners should be paid for from Health [care savings] Accounts." Will the Minister of Health unequivocally condemn any suggestion that Albertans should be asked to pay out of pocket to see their family doctor, especially given that this government has made it so much harder for Albertans to see one?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. The Premier has been quite clear on this, on the purpose of health spending accounts. The purpose of health spending accounts is to be able to provide coverage for services that are not covered under the Alberta health insurance act. I was very pleased that in September we reached an agreement with the AMA and that agreement was ratified, and this agreement allows us to invest more in our doctors to be able to attract and retain. We have more doctors now than we've ever had in the province. I look forward to continuing to work with them to focus particularly on family doctors, and we can retain more and get better access for ...

Mr. Shepherd: Given, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier was much less clear just a few months ago about these health spending accounts that are outlined in her mandate letter to the Minister of Health so the minister owes it to Albertans to answer to the Premier's well-documented, radical reasoning behind the proposal and given that in discussing HSAs, the Premier openly mused about forcing Albertans to pay a deductible to see a doctor and given that she had also suggested that Albertans in desperate need of care could turn to family members for donations or host a fundraiser, does the minister agree that the Premier's past suggestion that Albertans in need of medical care should be left to rely on a GoFundMe is unacceptable?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat my first answer. The purpose of the health spending account is to enable Albertans to access those services that are not covered by the Alberta health spending act. I want to be crystal clear. Often preventative care doesn't get the attention it deserves. You know, it takes steps to maintain. The health spending account, when we actually get that set up, will provide the opportunity for Albertans to focus on preventive care where they want, just like many Albertans across the province do today through their own health spending accounts through private employers. We want to provide that opportunity to all Albertans.

Mr. Shepherd: Given, Mr. Speaker, that this government did more damage to accessing preventative care than any in Alberta's history – and the questions I'm asking today are based on the Premier's own words from as recently as last July – and given that she clearly advocated for all visits to a family doctor to be paid from AHSAs or, if that presents a burden, Albertans in need of care could beg their employers, their family, or their communities for help and given that Albertans facing an affordability crisis not seen in 40 years shouldn't be forced to also have to pay for care, will the minister state clearly on the record that Albertans will never pay a single cent for public health care that they're currently entitled to under this government?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, for a third time, just to be clear, the purpose of the health spending account is to cover those items that are not covered under the Alberta health insurance act. I want to be crystal clear about that.

Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on providing better access to family care. I was very pleased in September to announce the modernizing Alberta's primary care system, a task force to look at where we can learn from around the world to be able to improve access to primary care, access to Indigenous care, and access to rural care. We know that primary care done well will actually help our acute-care system.

Affordability Plan

Ms Renaud: People who have never struggled before are struggling now, and this Finance minister put together an affordability package that leaves out millions of Albertans. Middle-class singles and the working poor get nothing, zero help. Struggling Albertans can't afford groceries, can't afford skyrocketing insurance premiums, have less money in their pockets after years of sneaky UCP income tax increases. To our accountant Minister of Finance: why did this government leave so many Albertans out of this affordability crisis plan?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While Alberta's economy has recovered strongly, we know that Albertans and their families are struggling. They are challenged every time they leave their homes to get groceries or feed their families or fill up at the gas station. So we've put together an immediate relief package, which provides an estimated \$900 in relief to households with or without children, with or without seniors. In addition to that, we've also put together targeted supports to where they're needed most: to support seniors, vulnerable Albertans, and children for their health and well-being.

Ms Renaud: Given that this government walked into a \$28 billion royalty windfall and couldn't come up with an affordability plan to help all Albertans and given that this government has systematically

harmed disabled and vulnerable Albertans since 2019 and given that after their half-baked new plan an AISH recipient is still \$3,000 worse off than they would have been under an NDP government, to the Minister of Finance: why, with record revenues, is this government still targeting the most vulnerable and people who still can't afford to buy groceries and keep a roof over their heads?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased to join my colleagues in announcing the reindexing of core support programs that vulnerable Albertans rely on. These include AISH, income support . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. The hon. minister was courteous enough to listen to the question. Perhaps you might do the same for the answer.
The hon. minister.

Mr. Jones: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I was pleased to join my colleagues in announcing the reindexing of AISH, income support, the Alberta child and family benefit, and the Alberta seniors' benefit. We know that vulnerable Albertans and seniors need the help right now. In addition, we're providing \$600 in targeted supports to recipients of those core support programs to help them get through the worst of this storm.

Ms Renaud: Band-Aid on a wound.

Given that this government is so out of touch that they came up with an affordability plan that leaves out millions and given that a recent graduate, someone just starting in their career, is getting hammered by inflation but is getting no support from this government and given that some of the wealthiest Albertans are getting a tax-free cheque while those struggling get nothing, how can this Minister of Finance stand in this House and possibly justify his plan that leaves out so many Albertans who are struggling to make ends meet?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

2:20

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, individual Albertans will benefit from significant broad-based relief. They'll benefit from fuel tax savings every time they fill up. They'll benefit from the electricity rebate, for a total of up to \$500 in relief. We've lowered their income tax. In addition, we just announced further bursaries for low-income students. We've announced an expansion of low-income transit. We will support students. We will support Albertans, individual or not.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose.

Health Care Workforce Supply

Ms Lovely: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Weekly I hear from individuals in the Camrose constituency that we have a shortage of nurses, and these individuals also do not have a family doctor. They indicate that they have been on a waiting list for months. The Minister of Health held an engagement session in Camrose this summer where local doctors, nurses, and elected officials attended and participated in round-table discussions. To the Minister of Advanced Education: can we have the nursing program reinstated at Augustana campus?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member. Let me just say on record what an incredibly fierce advocate she is for the community of Camrose.

Mr. Speaker, in the spring we announced in Budget 2022 \$171 million in new funding to create 10,000 additional spaces at our postsecondary institutions. That includes new spaces in nursing, for health care aides, and in paramedicine. I'm continuing to work, though, with the University of Alberta, in particular, with respect to the individual program.

The Speaker: The Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the answer. Given that our government is focused on ensuring accessible health care is available for all Albertans and given that the St. Mary's hospital team has indicated that they are a teaching hospital and given that Augustana campus provided instruction for a nursing program for many years, to the minister: how soon will the University of Alberta be advised that they can reinstate the program at Augustana Camrose?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the University of Alberta has opportunities both now and well into the future. As I mentioned, we recently created a new program to create 10,000 spaces in in-demand postsecondary programs, including in health care related programs. As per the direction provided by Premier Smith in my mandate letter, the Premier has asked us to expand that very successful targeted enrolment program specifically in areas of economic need and health care need. Just as recently as the other day I had a conversation with the president of the University of Alberta, and we're working closely together.

The Speaker: I might remind the minister that the use of proper names for any reason is unacceptable.

The hon. Member for Camrose.

Ms Lovely: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the answer. Given that many communities in the province are currently suffering from a doctor shortage and given the limits to the volume of Alberta-trained doctors we can produce, to the minister: what is the government's long-term solution to address the shortage of health care workers?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much to the member. I will agree with my colleague that the Member for Camrose is a fierce advocate.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's health care workers are the best in the world, and we need to make sure that they have the right supports in place to retain the staff that we have now and recruit the additional staff that we need. I was, as I indicated earlier, very pleased that we reached a recent deal with the AMA with over 70 per cent support. That includes incentives to attract new doctors to our province, especially in rural and remote areas. We are also working on a plan with the Minister of Advanced Education and postsecondary institutions to expand the current number of seats for more medical grads in the province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora is next.

Education Funding

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today with great concern about the state of Alberta's classrooms and the education that's being provided in them in turn. It's clear that under the UCP our international reputation and student outcomes are falling further and further behind. Will the Minister of Education tell Albertans why she thinks it's okay for there to be thousands and thousands and thousands of more students going to school while she provides a thousand fewer teachers to actually educate them? Her own budget proves it.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I see that the member opposite is unprepared and has not done her homework. In fact, if she had done her homework, she would have realized that we have added \$700 million to the 2022-23 school budget, which actually has increased the number of teachers, over 800 new teachers and over 800 new educational assistants.

Ms Hoffman: Given that the minister's own budget shows that she has a thousand fewer teachers than when she took the office and given that the UCP cut funding from classrooms and student learning has suffered as a result of that and given that the government has now said that schools must provide in-person and online learning simultaneously, without providing any new resources for them to be able to do so, and given that staff burnout is a significant concern – and it's a reality – will the minister tell Alberta students, staff, and families why she's providing no new supports while schools are dealing with widespread chaos and absenteeism?

Member LaGrange: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what fantasyland she's living in, but I can tell you that we have added \$700 million to the overall budget. We actually funded the teacher contract settlement; that's an additional \$205 million over three years. We have added supplemental enrolment funding. We've added fuel contingency funding, Ukrainian student supplemental funding. You know what? School board reserves, operating reserves, have gone from \$264 million to \$464 million.

Ms Hoffman: Given that the minister fired 20,000 education workers via a tweet at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic and many of them were never rehired and given that education funding has been underspent by roughly a billion dollars over the last two years – those are facts from the UCP budget documents – and given that 99 per cent of Alberta teachers don't trust the minister and most were disheartened to see the current Premier decide to keep her in the position, the minister has been a failure . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has the call.

Ms Hoffman: Teachers don't trust this minister. Parents don't trust this minister. Why did the Premier keep her in the job instead of shaking it up?

Member LaGrange: Again, nothing can be further from the truth. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I spent all summer, from the end of June to the beginning of October, meeting with school divisions. I met with over 70 school authorities. I actually attended all the AGMs . . . [interjection]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Member LaGrange: . . . the Catholic School Trustees' AGM, the francophone AGM, and the Alberta School Boards AGM. You know what, Mr. Speaker? I got a standing ovation by the Alberta School Boards Association. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (continued)

Ms Ganley: The Anarchy Act. A ticking time bomb. A constitutional and economic crisis. Those are some of the ways the ministers in the government cabinet have described the sovereignty act, but I specifically want to ask the now minister of environment if she will support this economically destructive bill, which she herself said would create "instability and chaos"?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no doubt I had grave concerns about the sovereignty act as originally proposed, but as it's drafted now and as it's gone through a caucus process, it's addressed many of those concerns. It follows the rule of law. It's democratic. Everything before it comes before this Chamber. It does not seek to disallow or not follow court judgments. Most importantly, it respects the separation of power between the judiciary and the legislative Chamber.

Ms Ganley: Given that the Minister of Finance said that the sovereignty act is a ticking time bomb and given that it seems that all UCP MLAs will be whipped to vote in favour of this bill despite the economic chaos and destruction it will cause and given that I am hearing from businesses that are deeply concerned and considering whether they can continue to do business in Alberta if the sovereignty act is passed, will the Minister of Finance stand up against this Premier, who is threatening the economic future of this province?

Mr. Toews: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I did have legitimate concerns over some early renditions of the sovereignty act. Certainly, it's a concern of mine that we maintain a business environment of certainty and predictability, one that attracts investment. This bill has to respect the rule of law, be constitutional, and be implemented in a way that keeps a stable business environment. It will. That's why I'm supporting it.

2:30

Ms Ganley: Given that investors are looking for certainty and that they've told me that the sovereignty act creates nothing but chaos and given that I'm already hearing from chambers of commerce, energy companies, innovators, and more that this bill is already having an impact on investments, job creation, and more – and that was before it was even tabled – can the Minister of Energy admit today that if a single investor withholds investment in Alberta as a result of the sovereignty act, he will ignore the Premier's directive and defeat this harmful legislation?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, what's creating uncertainty today is excessive fearmongering by the members opposite. When they were in office, they raised taxes, they heaped on regulatory burden, and they sent tens of billions of

dollars of capital packing and, with that, tens of thousands of jobs. We've worked hard to position Alberta's economy to be competitive, to attract investment, and to create jobs. That's why Alberta in the last year has created 28 per cent of the jobs in Canada in this province alone.

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

Queen Elizabeth II Highway 65th Avenue Interchange in Leduc

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly a great day for Albertans and businesses in the capital region. Today the hon. Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors stood with the town of Leduc as they finally broke ground on the much-anticipated QE II and 65th Avenue interchange. Given that this project is one that many individuals and businesses will much appreciate, can the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors provide the House with some details on when we can expect to see shovels in the ground?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors.

Mr. Dreeshen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was a great day for the Edmonton region. I was with the Deputy Premier, from Edmonton-South West, as well as the MLA for Leduc-Beaumont, announcing this amazing Leduc intersection and interchange. Graham Construction actually won the contract, and construction is going to happen within days. It is unfortunate, though, because the provincial representatives of the NDP could have asked their leader, Jagmeet Singh, to approve this project through the national trade corridor program, but they didn't, and it got declined.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Minister. That sounds very familiar.

Given that we will see shovels in the ground in a matter of days and given that this project will improve the flow of traffic on Alberta's busiest highway and given that this project will aid businesses and individuals commuting to the Edmonton airport, can the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors please highlight the significance this project will have on Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors.

Mr. Dreeshen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our economic growth and our economic corridors aren't just rail and road. It's also through the air and our international airports. The Edmonton International Airport: the air cargo capacity that they do is tremendous, and to attract more businesses, more economic growth in the Edmonton region, this was such a key component to that. As well, STARS air ambulance is based on the south side of the airport, so having an additional access to the airport with this investment will just not only go for economic growth but also to help emergency services in the Edmonton region.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for the answer. This is incredible news for the capital region's economy.

Given that the interchange will improve access to the shopping centre outside of the airport and given that this project will make it easier for our province's distributors to access cargo centres at the airport and given that these improvements to the QE II will kick-start our economy, can the Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors please share the economic benefits that this project will have for our province? [interjections]

Mr. Dreeshen: I hear the Edmonton MLAs from the NDP cheering this on – that's great – a \$112 million announcement in the Edmonton region today. Six hundred jobs are going to be supported with this project. We'll see about a 3 per cent increase in cargo trucks every year from this. We're also bringing important services to the Edmonton region. We'll actually see international markets increase by about 4 and a half per cent every year with this announcement and about 6 million hours of commercial traffic to be saved when this project in the Edmonton region is done. So just a great day for Edmonton.

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

Alberta Sovereignty Act and Indigenous Rights

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thirteen days ago treaty chiefs stood in an unprecedented show of solidarity to oppose this Premier's unconstitutional sovereignty act. Treaty 8's grand chief said that the sovereignty act, quote, undermines the authority and duty of the sovereign nations that entered into treaty. Chief Tony Alexis has called on this government to hold off on passing the sovereignty act until at least after the next election. To the minister: why is he supporting the UCP government forcing through the sovereignty act without any consultation, after all treaty chiefs stood in opposition?

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

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's government is standing up for everyone in the province. Indigenous peoples have also faced economic barriers from federal institutions. This act will not change existing treaty or Aboriginal rights that are recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Feehan: Given that the sovereignty act will give the Premier and all of her ministers dictatorial power to rewrite laws behind closed doors and given that the UCP government will have power to remove Indigenous rights with as little as a stroke of a pen and that treaty land can be exploited without free and informed consent from the First Nations and given that Chief Alexis stated that this bill sets up the province to allow extraction at any rate, completely unprotected, does the minister really support the sovereignty act, which has the ability to completely erase treaty rights?

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

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Section 2 clearly states that "nothing in this Act is to be construed as . . . abrogating or derogating from any existing aboriginal and treaty rights." That's the first thing in this bill that was put in there. I have met with several First Nation leaders, and I've heard their concerns. We will continue to work with them. We've developed such a good working relationship with them. We've got our Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation working. We're just moving forward with them at all times.

The Speaker: The hon. member, with no preamble.

Mr. Feehan: Given that every single treaty chief opposes the sovereignty act and given that your government is rushing through this piece of dictatorial legislation and ignoring the duty to consult with First Nations and given that now he supports legislation that can remove Indigenous rights and the need for free and informed consent by the whim of this Premier, to the minister: with his failure to consult First Nations on the sovereignty act and now admitting to supporting

the Premier's ability to remove Indigenous rights, does he believe he's capable of continuing to be Minister of Indigenous Relations?

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

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we work closely with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. I'm in support of standing up for all Albertans. The federal government: they need to stay in their lane. That's what this is all about. This gives us that tool that we need to defend the interests of all Albertans. This government has been working hard, like I said, with our Indigenous friends out there. A great example of that is our partners in prosperity movement, where we're working hard, and we've got our Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation working, and we've got several new projects coming forward in the new year.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Organizational Vaccine Policies and Provincial Funding

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to represent Calgary-Bhullar-McCall, which during the pandemic was able to see 99 per cent vaccination rates. It was a moment of pride for our community. Now, however, it seems like the new Premier, rather than wanting to celebrate this success story, would rather call them to tell them to get in line with her thinking or forget seeing a cent of provincial money as long as she's in that chair. Can the Minister of Justice explain why vaccinated Albertans are being bullied by this Premier, and will he advise the Premier that these types of calls are inappropriate and should stop immediately?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Copping: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. As a government we understand that we are in an endemic phase at this point in time. We have a number of measures in place to be able to support Albertans and support getting through this particular phase in dealing with COVID-19. That includes building capacity in our hospitals. That includes, you know, asking Albertans to make the choice to get vaccinated. We're very pleased to be able to offer a number of bivalent vaccines. That also includes people making the choice about wearing masks, but that is a choice.

Mr. Sabir: Given that this Premier claims that she's standing up against vaccine mandates by claiming that she's calling businesses and withholding their grant funding if they don't cave to her claims and given that, despite her claim, the Arctic Winter Games claim that they never heard from the Premier and that they claim they got their money over two years ago, is this Premier so desperate to maintain control over the base that elected her leader in the UCP that she is inventing instances of threatening event leaders and businesses?

2:40

Mr. Luan: Mr. Speaker, this government is proud of working with partners to promote the maximum participation for Albertans who can benefit from our major sports. In terms of the Winter Games, the Premier was clear: in Alberta we do not prevent any Albertans because of their status of health choices such that they cannot participate in sports. I am proud to tell you that we worked with the organizing committee for this event. They adopted our recommendation, and they removed their obsolete ban.

Mr. Sabir: Given that, in the Premier's own words, she leveraged \$2 million in provincial funding for the Arctic Winter Games in order to convince them to block their vaccine mandate but given that the Premier, who spent her first week in office apologizing for her words and actions, is still claiming she is calling film sets and other businesses to bring them in line with her whims, can the Minister of Justice confirm if the Premier is actually calling these businesses and commit to getting her to stop, or can he confirm if this is just another fantasy of the Premier?

Mr. Luan: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to share with Albertans that this government strongly encouraged all Alberta employers with respect to decisions of individuals' choices for their health status. When we listened to public health orders, we consider public health as determined by Alberta Health Services and Alberta's chief medical officer. When it comes to individuals' choice for their health in terms of vaccine status, that's something between their doctors and themselves. We won't interfere with that.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland has a question.

Spinal Muscular Atrophy Treatment

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you become a parent, life as you know it is over. That may sound harsh, but I challenge anyone who has children to think that anything is more important than their children's well-being and their safety. When you have a sick child, parents, family, and friends stop at nothing to help them. One such family are the Hankis. Their little girl, Harper, has spinal muscular atrophy. Through the miracle of modern medicine and a proverbial village, a life-saving gene therapy treatment was made available for Harper last year. However, additional medications such as risdiplam or Evrysdi are now needed to maintain and further improve Harper's quality of life. To the Minister of Health: can you please advise if medicine for Harper is approved for any additional funding?

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. I agree with the hon. member that the health and well-being of children is the main focus of every parent, especially when they are sick. I was very pleased that Zolgensma is covered for eligible Albertans up to six months old, as of December 1, 2021. This one-dose therapy is truly a miracle of modern science, and I'm glad that we can provide it under the rare disease drug program going forward.

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

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the minister. Given that Harper has had noticeable improvements with her treatments and given that her family and the generosity of others have paid for the treatment plan to date and given that the available funds are running out and the little girl's health will slowly decline without her medication and given that there is a long review process determining potential for treatment subsidies, could the minister please explain what support is available for Harper's family, if they can continue to provide Harper with her essential treatments?

Mr. Copping: Thank you again to the member, Mr. Speaker. Right now there are three covered treatments for spinal muscular atrophy, and each has its own requirement for coverage. Currently the clinical evidence does not support the combination of these

treatments. However, there is a process available for Albertans to apply for exceptional coverage through their primary care provider. If there is evidence to support the request, the exemption may be granted, and the coverage would be extended. I feel for every family experiencing these problems and hope we can find long-term solutions to SMA and other rare diseases in the future.

The Speaker: The hon. the member.

Mr. Getson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you, Minister, for the work on this. Given that the clinical evidence from Harper's doctors has been outstanding on her improvements and given that I've met this little girl and her family several times over the years and I've witnessed her progress personally and given that these treatments are approved in the United States by a number of medical plans that cover the costs, to the same minister: can you please clarify if there's a possibility of using Harper Hanki's current treatment plan perhaps in concert with the manufacturer's medication to offer critical data that could help others while also starting the process to look at this as a treatment option?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks again to the member. The treatment of rare diseases in Alberta needs a comprehensive approach. We need a plan to help fast-track approvals of new drugs and therapies that can result in these life-changing outcomes. New research is constantly emerging, and we need to make sure our coverage reacts to the changing needs of Albertans and does this quickly. That's why we are developing a strategy for the evaluation and approval of rare disease drug treatments within the province, and I'll share more about this initiative in the near future.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period, and we will be proceeding immediately to the remainder of the members' statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past July we welcomed the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region to Alberta. PNWER's 31st Annual Summit, hosted in Calgary, was one of the organization's most successful in history. As now past president of PNWER I cherished the opportunity to showcase my city and our remarkable province to over 600 legislators, business leaders, academics, and policy-makers while highlighting local success stories and cohosting a much-heralded visit to the oil sands.

PNWER includes elected and business leaders from 10 provinces, states, and territories. I am proud to announce that all jurisdictions were represented at this year's summit, and I am grateful to have worked closely with the private sector and academics in strengthening the many long-standing relationships through PNWER.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is our closest neighbour, friend, and ally, but we must not take this all-important relationship for granted. We must work hard in finding common ground, in building trust, and on more effective and enduring engagement on issues of mutual importance.

In these times of geopolitical uncertainty we are reminded of increasingly unpredictable influences on our security and economic stability, and while short-term priorities of our nations may differ,

our unique and cherished relationship as secure, friendly, and trusted trading partners, with over \$1 trillion in bilateral trade in 2021, is of vital importance to all Albertans. Our commitment to North American security through NATO, NORAD, and Five Eyes also reflects our mutual concerns around continental defence and shared commitment to global peace and security.

For over 30 years PNWER has contributed to strengthening our regional economy through 19 multisectoral working groups, the enduring impact of their Legislative Energy Horizon Institute, emergent collaboration on energy security and sustainability, or just the ability to pick up the phone and call a friend across the border.

Mr. Speaker, when we reflect upon the values and vision we share with our American friends through PNWER and other organizations promoting bilateral prosperity and security, we embrace a subject that we share in this Chamber, that every Albertan is supported in achieving their best.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul and Deputy Government House Leader.

Northern Alberta Land-use Planning

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Trudeau and the federal government are at it again. They make an agreement with the province and then find another angle to try and interfere with provincial jurisdiction.

This time it's in the form of providing federal funding to pursue a feasibility study in regard to what is called an Indigenous protected conservation area, or IPCA. There are two proposals being looked at that have northern Albertans very concerned. One, in the Wolf Lake area, covers over 11 townships of land within the MD of Bonnyville and Lakeland provincial park. That's over a thousand square kilometres. The main problem with the feasibility study is that it provides zero details as to what restrictions the IPCA could put in place. Will it restrict access for hunting and recreation, could it restrict access for some groups for traditional use, or is it just intended to interfere with oil and gas and forestry? That's the problem, Mr. Speaker. No one can provide that information.

Our government just completed extensive committee meetings with all stakeholders in the Cold Lake caribou subregion, which includes the area in question. The recommendation from that work, which includes extensive habitat restoration and protection, resulted in the Cold Lake subregional plan, which was accepted by the federal government, who then signed a section 11 agreement under the Species at Risk Act agreeing that jurisdiction remains in the hands of the provincial government.

Now the Trudeau Liberals are using the Metis Settlements General Council in an effort to further interfere with provincial jurisdiction by providing this funding. This proposed IPCA and total lack of information provided by the hired consultant group are causing a lot of concern for many people in the region and indeed all over the province. If Mr. Trudeau was really concerned about helping our Métis settlements, maybe providing funding for much-needed infrastructure, fresh drinking water, and housing would be better.

Canada's provincial Crown lands and parks must remain under the jurisdiction of the province they are located in. Alberta's Crown lands and provincial parks are public lands and will remain so. Nice try, Justin. Alberta will not give up sovereignty over provincial Crown lands or parks.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River, followed by Edmonton-Whitemud.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give oral notice of Bill 202, the Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022, sponsored by myself, the Member for Peace River.

2:50

Ms Pancholi: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice that at the appropriate time under Standing Order 42 I intend to move the following motion:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly acknowledge the following: (a) Alberta is facing a crisis in children's health care that has resulted in unacceptable emergency room wait times, capacity issues, and surgical cancellations to the point that a trailer is now being established next to the Alberta Children's hospital to provide health care; (b) wait times at the Alberta Children's hospital and the Stollery children's hospital have exceeded 15 hours on multiple occasions; (c) the families of sick children impacted with COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus, and influenza have been facing a prolonged shortage of children's pain and fever-reducing medication, which adds to the stress, discomfort, and pressure of an already difficult situation; (d) the government's reduction of funding for education programs has led to 1,000 fewer teachers and thousands fewer educational assistants being employed by Alberta schools, which has made the challenges of dealing with schoolchildren's widespread illnesses more difficult to deal with at a local level.

Be it further resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Alberta (a) to acknowledge the impact these delays and the lack of access to basic health care services are having on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children and their families and (b) to immediately table in the Legislature an action plan to address the crisis in children's health care.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has a tabling.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of a letter that I sent earlier this week to Alberta school trustees outlining things that they have told me are deep concerns and things that we will do to address them.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert has a tabling.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three copies of an e-mail that was sent to my office and to the Minister of Education. It's just a tragic story about children catching COVID at school and passing it on to their mother, who has metastatic cancer and is not doing well as a result. This constituent is asking me to encourage the Minister of Education to read her multiple e-mails.

The Speaker: Are there other tablings? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul and Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In a new session it's absolutely my pleasure to introduce five copies of the Leap Manifesto, of which one of the main signatories is the NDP socialist caucus.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Seeing none, I do have a tabling today. I rise to table six copies of the House leaders' agreement which was signed on November 28, 2022.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of hon. Mr. Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance, the 2022-23 mid-year fiscal update and economic statement, November 2022.

On behalf of hon. Minister LaGrange, Minister of Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association 2021 annual report.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in light of the Standing Order 42 and the possibility that unanimous consent may in fact be granted, which would set aside the regular business of the day to proceed immediately to Standing Order 42, we will now proceed to the election of the Deputy Chair of Committees.

Election of a Deputy Chair of Committees

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act and Standing Order 58(2) nominations are invited for the office of the Deputy Chair of Committees for the 30th Legislature. The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The role of the Deputy Chair of Committees is one that serves a vital function in this Assembly as it maintains order and honours tradition and decorum. I believe that the person best suited for this role is one who is familiar with House proceedings, a member in good standing, and one who has proven to be fair to all. That's why today I am honoured to nominate the Member for Livingstone-Macleod, Roger Reid, for this role.

Over the past three years I have seen first-hand that Roger has proven attentive to every position he has held while being a mentor to those around him. Roger is respected amongst all . . .

The Speaker: The member.

Mr. Long: My apologies. The Member for Livingstone-Macleod is respected amongst all members of our caucus and many members of the opposition caucus and has a deep admiration for our parliamentary process and the historical traditions of this House. He also happens to be the representative for one of the top five most beautiful constituencies in the province.

Over the last two years this member has stepped up to fill the roles of chair and Speaker in an unofficial capacity. I'm truly confident that given his experience and dedication he would fulfill the role of Deputy Chair of Committees with dignity, confidence, and respect for all members of this Assembly. I encourage all members to support him in his quest to serve this great Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does the member wish to accept the nomination?

Mr. Reid: I do.

The Speaker: It felt like we were getting married there.

Are there other nominations? The hon. Official Opposition House Leader has a nomination.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, all members of this Assembly. We know how important the office of the Speaker and the Speaker's team are. The Deputy Chair of Committees is an important piece of that work, managing the business that we conduct here in this Chamber, ensuring the privileges of all members are protected.

An important part of that work is maintaining a nonpartisan office of the Speaker to ensure that functioning of our Assembly, to ensure

order and decorum. For that reason, we see in other parliaments and in other Legislatures a common practice of choosing members of the Speaker's team from multiple parties within the Legislature. Canada's House of Commons has frequently used that practice, in their case choosing the Deputy Speaker from the opposition caucus. Not only does this contribute to the good functioning of the House, but it also ensures nonpartisan functioning of the House. So I'm asking all members of this Assembly to set aside partisanship in considering for the nomination of Deputy Chair of Committees the MLA for Edmonton-Manning.

The MLA for Edmonton-Manning has the experience of presiding over this Assembly as its chair. In fact, this MLA served in the 29th Legislature as the Deputy Chair of Committees. She has a wealth of experience and a true desire to serve this Assembly impartially and with the considerable grace and wisdom that she has shown throughout her time as an elected official here. We have seen her ably representing our Assembly at Speakers' conferences in the past and working across the aisle in both her critic roles and in her role as the MLA for Edmonton-Manning, supporting her constituents. I know that she would add excellent qualifications to the Speaker's team and that she would serve with credit this entire Assembly. The MLA for Edmonton-Manning also comes from Alberta's capital region. I think that having regional representation within the Speaker's team is something that should be considered as we make this nomination and as we make our choice in the election of Deputy Chair of Committees.

Please consider making the office of the Speaker and the Speaker's team a little bit sweeter and voting for the MLA for Edmonton-Manning. [some applause]

The Speaker: Does the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning wish to accept the nomination?

Ms Sweet: I do accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Seeing none, I am prepared to declare nominations closed. Are there others?

I declare nominations closed. The nominations for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees – this is the one time in which I am officially allowed – are the Member for Edmonton-Manning, Heather Sweet, and the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, Roger Reid.

I will briefly provide the parameters in which the voting process will take place. The doors to the Chamber will remain secured during the voting process. Members will proceed from their desks to pick up a ballot here from the table officers. Members will then proceed to one of the four voting booths that will be placed on the table before me. Members will indicate their choice for Deputy Chair of Committees by printing the proper name, first and last, of the candidate whose name appears on the posted list, which will be in the voting booth. Members deposit their completed ballot in the box provided for them at the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk. Members will return to their desks after casting their vote.

Once all members have voted, the table officers will retire with the ballot box to count the ballots, accompanied by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who will act as a scrutineer. When results have been tabulated, the table officers will return to the Chamber, and the bell will be rung for one minute. During the period of time in which the table officers and the Sergeant-at-Arms are counting the ballots, members may leave the Chamber but need to return to the Chamber at the completion of the one-minute bell.

The voting process will begin immediately following the set-up of the voting booths and the ballot box.

3:00

[The lists of candidates were posted]

The Speaker: The voting process will now begin.

[Members voted from 3 p.m. to 3:07 p.m.]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Have all members who wished to cast a ballot done so?

I declare the voting process closed.

Would the Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, and table officers please count the ballots and report back to the Assembly.

[Ballots were counted from 3:07 p.m. to 3:16 p.m.]

The Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the number of ballots cast for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees, 77; the number of spoiled ballots, zero; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 per cent plus one majority, 39. The member having received the majority of the votes cast is Mr. Reid. Mr. Reid is hereby the Deputy Chair of Committees of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 30th Legislature.

The Speaker: Before we proceed to the remaining business of the Assembly, I would invite the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod to say a few words if he wishes. The hon. member.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am truly humbled, and through you I want to say thank you to the members of this Legislature for their confidence and their trust. I look forward to serving this House and the people of Alberta as the Deputy Chair of Committees.

Thank you.

Motions under Standing Order 42

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud to proceed to Standing Order 42. I understand that some members may be leaving the Chamber. Out of respect to the hon. member, please do so quickly, quietly, and promptly.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Children's Health Care and Hospital Capacity

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 42 to request that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to debate a motion that is urgent and pressing and which I read out under Notices of Motions. I'd like to acknowledge that pursuant to Standing Order 42 I've provided the members of this Assembly with the appropriate number of copies, and I've provided your office notice of my intention to move this motion as well as notified the government.

Mr. Speaker, it's our duty as representatives in this Assembly to address the urgent crisis in children's health care. As the motion indicates, children and their families are experiencing significant anxiety and greater illness and pain because of the pressures in the health care system.

The spread of COVID-19, RSV, and the flu has led to significant illness among children across the province. This has caused both significant absenteeism in school and pressure on the health care system. There have continually been over 15-hour wait times at the children's hospitals in Edmonton and Calgary. A temporary trailer was just set up in Calgary to increase the room for children waiting for care. Families have been advised to go see their family doctor instead of coming to the emergency room, but hundreds of

thousands of Alberta families can't find a family doctor, so they have no place to go. The increased need for emergency care has caused children's surgeries to be cancelled. Clearly, this is not what we as legislators want the state of health care to be in our province, which is why we should have a fulsome debate today about what actions we can take to relieve this pressure and support children and families.

I know health care workers and providers are doing the best they can with the support that they have, but unfortunately health care workers have too often been blamed during the pandemic. The spread of misinformation and an active combative approach of some members of the government have significantly lowered morale of health care workers. As the pressures in children's hospitals increase, more staff will be expected to work more and at times cancel planned time off over the holidays. This is already taking place in the Children's hospital in Calgary. I believe we have a duty to all health care workers to tell them that those of us elected to represent Albertans support them, that we respect them, and that we are actively working towards solutions to this urgent health care crisis.

3:20

But we, of course, have a duty as well to children and their families to have this debate. A constituent of mine named Lindsey Kemp joined me earlier today, whose son needed to go to the Stollery many times in his young life. In fact, she described it as having lived there with him, with her son, for over a year in between two heart transplants before the age of five. She knows the situation in the Children's hospital as well, and it is clear that the current situation is not okay and must be addressed. Lindsey was brave to speak out today on behalf of her son and other children in similar situations.

I sincerely hope that the government members opposite will have the courage today to debate and speak to this urgent matter. I can think of nothing more important than the health of children across the province that we represent. Addressing children's health is far more important than Bill 1, which is already ridden with controversy in the powers that this government is giving to themselves. I want all members of this Chamber to think where their priorities lie and what they want to advance today. Is it an undemocratic bill, or is it supporting children and their families? Parents in this province right now are anxious, they're stressed out, they're worried, and for many of their children they are not getting the health care they need.

As a parent, Mr. Speaker, I can say from first-hand experience that I know the fear of when my child was sick – she had a fever for eight days straight – and I'm thinking that the last thing I want to do is seek emergency health care right now because I'm worried about taking my child to a children's hospital and the wait times. No parent should be afraid to actually go access emergency health care. They should be able to know that when they need it for their child, they will get it immediately.

We know that they'll get the best care possible from our health care workers, who are fantastic and have done incredible work, but right now parents and children are not accessing the health care system because they cannot. That is a crisis that we should all take incredibly seriously, and we should have this debate. I urge the members of the government to take that to heart and to have this discussion today in this Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 42 allows for a member of Executive Council to respond for up to five minutes should they wish to do so. The hon. Minister of Health has risen.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for raising this issue. This is a very important issue. As I've said before in this Chamber, our emergency departments are under

strain, as they are across the entire country. As you read in the paper and as mentioned by the hon. member across the aisle, we are seeing an early flu season, and patients coming to emergency, as I indicated before, are sicker on average, partly because so much routine care was deferred over the last couple of years.

But we are responding. We have a plan, and we are acting on that plan, Mr. Speaker. We are spending a record \$22 billion this year, the highest amount ever, for our health care expenses. In addition to that, on top of the \$22 billion, there are also additional dollars for getting caught up on surgeries and for our COVID response. We're using this money to add capacity across our entire health care system.

Now, Alberta Children's hospital in Calgary is seeing a surge of patients in recent weeks, like other children's hospitals across our country, and they're responding to that surge of patients by adding capacity. That's part of the additional \$600 million and that \$22 billion that we are putting into health care this year. They've added a new fast-track unit to be able to do treatment and triage as well, and they're working to add staff to open up other care spaces as well. They've also added the heated trailer, as mentioned by the member opposite, so kids and families don't have to wait outside at peak times, Mr. Speaker. That's a good initiative. It's part of our overall approach to add capacity, and it's a very small part of the work that we're doing not only in the Children's hospital but across our entire health care system.

Mr. Speaker, just this morning I was at the Misericordia hospital for an event celebrating a new emergency department that will be opened next year, three times the size of the existing one. I want to thank all physicians and nurses and health care workers and professionals and volunteers for the work that they're doing to look after Alberta patients and particularly for kids in emergency and across our entire health care system. They are under strain. They need relief, and we are working to provide that. I think that they would also want me to reassure parents that the health system is there for sick kids.

The two children's hospitals are near 100 per cent occupancy overall, as are a number of our major urban hospitals at certain times when, you know, we hit the peak flu season, like we are right now. They are adding staff to be able to respond to these needs. The children's ICU is very busy, most recently under 100 per cent of normal capacity, and they have had to transfer a few patients out, but they are able to provide care to the sickest kids that need the care. Quite frankly, it's recognizing that we need to do more, but our ICUs are holding up better with less disruption than we're seeing in other provinces relative to the demands right now.

In surgery we're doing similar volumes compared to before the pandemic, and access is similar in terms of the percentage of children waiting longer than the recommended time. Now, this is still too long, Mr. Speaker, but we are continuing to be able to provide surgeries across the system, including for children. There are postponements here and there on a tactical basis, but we are providing the service. Quite frankly, even though we know we need to do better, we are doing much better than other provinces, where the national average is far worse than we have here.

It's been a tough two years, and it's going to be another tough winter, Mr. Speaker, but we are taking steps to address the challenges being faced in our emergency departments and being faced in our children's hospitals. We are funding to add additional capacity. We made the recent change in terms of appointing an official administrator, and this administrator is full-time focused on supporting our senior executives within AHS to be able to deliver the services that Albertans need, with a particular focus on emergency departments. We know this is an area of critical concern, and we will drive those times down. There are a number of initiatives as part of that in terms of not only improving triage services and improving access to – or allowing 911 operators to move people to 811 in terms of demand management but also improve the

flow throughout the entire system and have other areas for alternate levels of care so we can actually treat people faster.

Mr. Speaker, we are working on this. We are investing in our health care system. We have appointed a new official administrator, who's bringing a number of initiatives in place. We have a plan. We're enacting a plan. We are going to deliver on that plan, so at this point we do not need an emergency debate.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 42 is a request for unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent denied]

The Speaker: We are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day Government Motions

2. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve into Committee of the Whole, when called, to consider certain bills on the Order Paper.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this is a nondebatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 18(1)(a).

[Government Motion 2 carried]

Fall Sitting

4. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 3(9) the 2022 fall sitting is extended until either of the following occurs, immediately after which the Assembly stands adjourned:
 - (a) the end of the day on December 22, 2022;
 - (b) the Government House Leader advises the Assembly that the business for the sitting is concluded.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this is a nondebatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 3(9).

[Government Motion 4 carried]

3. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve itself into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supply to be granted to His Majesty.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this is a nondebatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 18(1)(a).

[Government Motion 3 carried]

Evening Sitings

6. Mr. Schow moved:
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) and for the duration of the 2022 fall sitting of the Fourth Session of the 30th Legislature the Assembly shall meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings for consideration of government business unless the Government House Leader notifies the Assembly that there shall be no evening sitting that day by providing notice under Notices of Motions in the daily Routine or at any time prior to 6 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this is a nondebatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 4(1).

[Government Motion 6 carried]

3:30

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1 Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier, the President of Executive Council, and the Minister of Intergovernmental Relations.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's been quite a spectacle to return to this honoured Chamber over the last 24 hours. I don't know that I've ever seen anything like it: to have the first reading of a first bill not only voted against before it was even presented to the Legislature but to have a standing vote on division just to try to demonstrate that there was some rancour in our ranks.

Then, you know, that wasn't enough. To also then see the opposition go and clearly not read the bill when they had the opportunity to and try to get informed about it by Twitter and get so many things wrong that I'll have to correct in my speech today but then quite an unprecedented response from the Leader of the Official Opposition, to actually call upon the federal government to disallow this bill should it pass. It's quite remarkable when you hear that among the many expected things of the sovereignty act this week, even the media is outraged by this. Here's an ex-Premier who wants her job back encouraging a Prime Minister to disallow future provincial law.

I must tell you that this is exactly the reason why we're putting this law forward in the first place, because of federal intrusion into our affairs and the fact that we have to push them back into their own lane. I'm quite surprised, actually, that the members opposite have not taken a page from their namesake party in Saskatchewan, which voted in favour of a very similar bill called the Saskatchewan First Act. They are not fearmongering about it. They are recognizing that this is essentially asserting the way our country ought to operate, and I'm delighted that the Premier of Saskatchewan has acted in this regard. I think it's actually a testament to the opposition in that province that they realize that they must put their citizens first. I have to question whether this opposition puts Albertans first or whether they put the view of the leader of their federal party and the Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa first. That is what is going to be decided as we move forward over these next coming months.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Since it's clear that many members of this Chamber have not read the bill, let me go through and talk about why it is that we are proposing Bill 1, the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act. I think one of the misconceptions that had been put forward was that this had something to do with leaving Canada. Nothing could be further from the truth. What we are simply asking for is to have the same power and the same respect that Ottawa gives to Quebec. Nothing more, nothing less.

Let me go through a little bit about why it is that I believe that this is necessary. I have seen this from having travelled this province for many months. Albertans love our province, and they love this country. Canada is our home. Canadians are our family. This has nothing to do with our fellow Canadians. This has everything to do about an out-of-control federal government that does not honour the foundational documents that this country was built on. They are constantly intervening in our areas of sovereign jurisdiction. Yes, I use that term advisedly because that is how our Constitution is written. We are demanding action so that Ottawa respects Alberta's sovereign areas of provincial jurisdiction as defined by the Constitution and demanding that – and I think Albertans expect us to uphold the fact that we are

signatory to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and make sure that we are upholding those as well.

Unfortunately, the Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa is systematically and intentionally undermining and attempting to control all aspects of our province's economy, how we develop our resources, and even how we manage our social programs. Through equalization transfers they overtax our province massively, and then they dribble a little bit back to us with conditions over how we're supposed to spend it. On top of that, they take the rest so that they can buy votes in areas in eastern Canada where they think that they're going to have more luck in winning seats. It is a black hole, the federal bureaucracy, and Albertans have had enough of it. The continued federal attacks on our economy and province cannot be allowed to continue, and the Canadian Constitution is clear.

Let me go through and establish the framework for why it is we're putting the bill forward this way because I think it will answer some of the questions of the critics. It says:

Whereas Albertans possess a unique culture and shared identity within Canada;

Whereas it is the role of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and the Government of Alberta to preserve and promote this unique culture and shared identity;

Whereas the Constitution Act, 1867, the Constitution Act, 1930 and the Constitution Act, 1982 are foundational documents that establish the rights and freedoms of Albertans and the relationship between the provincial and federal orders of government, including the division of legislative powers between them;

Whereas the Province of Alberta is granted rights and powers under the Constitution Act, 1867 . . . 1930 and . . . 1982 and is not subordinate to the Government of Canada;

Whereas actions taken by the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada have infringed on these sovereign provincial rights and powers with increasing frequency and have unfairly prejudiced Albertans;

Whereas actions taken by the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada have infringed on the rights and freedoms of Albertans enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in an unjustified and unconstitutional manner;

Whereas the people of Alberta expect the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada to respect the Constitution . . . as the governing documents of the relationship between Canada and Alberta and to abide by the division of powers and other provisions set out in those documents;

Whereas the people of Alberta expect the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada to respect the rights and freedoms of Albertans enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and

Whereas it is necessary and appropriate for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to set out measures that the Lieutenant Governor in Council should consider taking in respect of actions of the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada that are unconstitutional or harmful to Albertans and for Members of the Legislative Assembly . . . to have a free vote on such measures according to their individual judgment.

There are a couple of things here that I think are important. Number one, it lays out that we are proposing to pass legislation that is in compliance with the foundational documents of our country. Voting against this is like voting against our Constitution. Asking the federal government to disallow this is like asking them to disallow and override our constitutional protections in the Constitution, and it is not appropriate.

The other thing I'd say is a word about "sovereign," because I think that's what many people are reacting to. Maybe it's because I have had the opportunity of taking the oath of office in the position I'm now in as well as the oath of office, just yesterday, as MLA for

Brooks-Medicine Hat. I have given out diamond jubilee medals in honour of Her Majesty. We saw yesterday a Speech from the Throne given by the Lieutenant Governor, who is the representative of His Majesty.

When you look at even the way in which this bill is enacted, it says: "Therefore His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, enacts as follows." This very document shows that we have a direct sovereign right that is granted to us on behalf of His Majesty. I am not and we are not seeking permission from Ottawa to exert our influence. We do not have to ask for permission from Ottawa, and it's because we have these sovereign rights.

Let me tell you a little bit about where that comes from. When NAFTA was passed, in 1993, there were a number of academic papers that were talking about the application of trade law in Canada at the time. I'd like to quote from a 1994 essay in the *Canada-United States Law Journal* titled *Sovereignty and Federalism: The Canadian Perspective*. It outlines clearly how the provinces and the federal government have equal legislating authority. Here's what they say:

The concept of sovereignty in the Canadian federalist context has more than one application. As a result of the Constitution Act, which distributes legislative powers between provincial legislatures and the federal parliament, it is appropriate to speak not only of the sovereignty of Canada, but of the separate sovereignty of each province within its sphere of legislative jurisdiction.

So this is not an unfamiliar concept. The outsized reaction to what it is that we are proposing is the only thing that is unusual here. That's why I think it's important for people to understand why it is we have to make a different approach.

3:40

Let me go through and tell you what I have observed over the last number of years, because I think that for too long what has happened is that we have allowed the federal government to interfere in our areas of jurisdiction. Maybe it was because we were a young province. Maybe we had a low population. Maybe we felt that we could use the extra hand. Maybe it was because the federal government was actually helpful at different periods through its history, but the last seven years, under the Liberal-NDP government that we now see at the federal level, have become anything but that, anything but helpful.

As we have grown in population, what we have seen is that Ottawa is actively sabotaging our economy and damaging our prospects for growth at the same time that it's overtaxing us. This is, I think, underscored by the fact that three times we have tried to do things the way we normally do them, which is polite and diplomatic and writing letters and going to conferences and begging and pleading for them to just honour our jurisdiction, and look what's occurred.

First, the Leader of the Official Opposition, when she was in this position, attempted to get social licence. How did that work out for us? We got a carbon tax, that we now can't get rid of and which is now going to grow by 300 per cent, that is underscoring the cost of every single thing every single family has to buy. I've been waiting to see the Official Opposition leader call out and object to that increase, because they care so much about affordability. We haven't seen it. But why do we have a carbon tax in the first place? It's because they paved the way for it.

We also saw an early phase-out of coal-fired electricity. I've talked to somebody in the industry. They say that that premature decision cost us \$4 billion, that had to be made up in the power bills of everyday Albertans. You're wondering why we have an

electricity price crisis; that's part of the reason for it. There was one plant, Keephills, that was closed within years of it being opened even though it was supposed to have a much longer time horizon. That was a decision that was made to try to get social licence.

Thirdly, a cap on our oil sands producers. Well, look at what that got us. Not only did it give a bad idea to the current environment minister; he is now proposing an aggressive target, that we certainly cannot meet, increasing the expectation that emissions will be reduced 42 per cent by 2030, eight short years. An emissions cap that aggressive without the technology able to implement it is a de facto production cap, and it is against the Constitution because it violates our foundational rights to be able to determine how we develop our own resources.

That is what we tried to do. We tried to get social licence, and what do we get instead? Well, Trudeau responded by giving us a ban on tanker traffic, Bill C-48, which is targeting our industry in particular; what we've been calling the no-more-pipelines act, Bill C-69, that really is: you can't build anything anywhere in Alberta without federal approval. It's why we are fighting it, and it's why all of the provinces have joined with us. Then we saw the cancellation of Northern Gateway, Energy East, Teck Frontier mine, and well over \$100 billion of other projects. That's what happened when we tried to seek and curry favour with the federal government.

Next, the former Premier thought: "Well, maybe I'll pay a courtesy visit to Quebec. Maybe we can see if we can get some buy-in on exporting western Canadian natural gas through ports on the coast in Quebec, from LNG facilities there." Quebec initially said yes, but most recently, earlier this year, they responded by cancelling the Port Saguenay LNG project and banning future oil and natural gas development in their own province. There are Alberta-based companies that now have claims of billions of dollars against the Quebec government on the basis of those cancelled leases. That's what happened when we tried once again to seek some kind of bilateral agreement with Quebec. It failed.

Thirdly, I remember the precise moment that Albertans lost support for equalization. It was when it became clear that there was – Premier François Legault was asked the question about supporting the recommissioning of the Energy East pipeline, and he said to Alberta: we don't want your dirty oil. A couple of days later, there was extra money left over in the equalization fund, and the Finance minister at the time, Bill Morneau, gave a billion dollars to Quebec. The message to Albertans was pretty clear: we don't want you to have economic prosperity, but keep the dollars rolling. That is the reason why there was such a strong mandate to end equalization. When it went to the public, 62 per cent of the public said to end it.

The answer from the federal government – and I think we went out there hoping that this would be the final opportunity to start a constructive conversation with the federal government about how we could change our bilateral relationship, how we could work together to develop our resources. What did we get instead? We got environment minister Steven Guilbeault, who has waged an unceasing attack on our province ever since that decision. When you look at the policies that he has proposed, he wants to see an end to any fossil fuel based power on the electrical grid by 2035. This is a province where 90 per cent of our electricity grid is powered by natural gas. Almost a hundred per cent of our home heating is powered by fossil fuels. This is the approach they're taking at the federal level. Then on top of that, as I've mentioned, is the production limit cap that he wants to put on oil and natural gas.

That's not all. Now he's attacking our farmers with a similar aggressive emissions reduction proposal to reduce emissions 30 per cent in a similar time frame. It's the same problem. If you do not

have the technology and you do not have a realistic time frame, an emissions cap like this operates as a production cap. It's a violation of our right under section 92A to develop our own resources.

Enough is enough. We have been a constructive province, and the response has been continued disrespect and a continued drain of our resources. Since the 1960s we have seen \$600 billion leave this province to go and fund federal priorities, and this is the reason why we're putting Ottawa on notice. We are not going to do this anymore. This is not going to be the way that our province relates to the federal government. We are telling Ottawa that we intend to return to the law that governed our relationship, the Constitution. We will not enforce federal laws that violate the sovereign powers granted to us under sections 92 through 95 of the Constitution or that violate the rights and freedoms of our citizens guaranteed by the Charter.

Now, I happen to have the sections of the Constitution with me because I think maybe I spend more time reading the Constitution – Madam Speaker, maybe it helps to get to sleep at night, but I've read the Constitution quite a bit over the last number of months. Let me tell you how the distribution of legislative powers is defined in the Constitution under section 91. This is the language that is in our Constitution.

Powers of the Parliament

Legislative Authority of Parliament of Canada

91 It shall be lawful for the [King], by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate and House of Commons, to make Laws for the Peace, Order, and good Government of Canada, in relation to all Matters not coming within the Classes of Subjects by this Act assigned exclusively to the Legislatures of the Provinces; and for greater Certainty, but not so as to restrict the Generality of the foregoing Terms of this Section, it is hereby declared that (notwithstanding anything in this Act) the exclusive Legislative Authority of the Parliament of Canada extends to all Matters coming within the Classes of Subjects next hereinafter enumerated; that is to say . . .

I am not proposing that we take over any areas of federal jurisdiction. They have jurisdiction over, as it says here, "the Public Debt and Property" and "the Regulation of Trade and Commerce." Boy, I wish they'd do a better job at that, in getting our products to market rather than blocking them. They talk about the ability to raise money by any mode or system of taxation and the borrowing of money on the public credit – gosh, I do wish I had control over that one, too, because I can tell you that we wouldn't be having the inflation crisis that we have today – the postal service; the census and statistics; the militia, military; the fixing of and providing for the salaries of the civil service; beacons, buoys, and lighthouses; navigation; sea coast; ferries; currency, exchange, banking, and coinage; savings banks; weights and measures; interest; copyrights; bankruptcy and insolvency; and so on and so forth.

These are not things that are contemplated under this legislation because I respect the sovereign areas of federal jurisdiction. I have no desire to, for instance, go and open up passport offices although I think that's probably a job that we would do better than the federal government right now, too. We expect that the federal government – in fact, I think they might do a better job in their areas of jurisdiction if they focused on them rather than intervening in our areas of jurisdiction every chance they get.

Let me continue on, then, so that we understand the framework for how our legislation is written. We are not going to interfere with federal jurisdiction. We are just asking them to stay in their own lane and get out of our jurisdiction. What is our jurisdiction? Pretty much, well, anything else you can think of:

Such Classes of Subjects as are expressly excepted in the Enumeration of the Classes of Subjects by this Act assigned exclusively to the Legislatures of the Provinces.

There's that word again. That's the indicator that we do have sovereign power. It is because these powers are given to us exclusively. It says that

any Matter coming within any of the Classes of Subjects enumerated in this Section shall not be deemed to come within the Class of Matters of a local or private Nature comprised in the Enumeration of Classes of Subjects by this Act assigned exclusively . . .

There it is again.

. . . to the Legislatures of the Provinces.

Here it is.

Exclusive Powers of Provincial Legislatures
Subjects of exclusive Provincial Legislation

92 In each Province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Matters coming within the Classes of Subjects next hereinafter enumerated; that is to say . . .

Direct taxation. The borrowing of money. We have the ability to manage the sale of public lands belonging to the province and the timber and wood thereon. We have the ability to establish and maintain prisons. We have the ability to establish and maintain hospitals and the health system. Municipal institutions fall under our jurisdiction. Shops and other licences to generate revenue fall under our jurisdiction. Local works and undertakings fall under our jurisdiction. The solemnization of marriage. Property and civil rights in the province fall under our jurisdiction, section 13. The administration of justice, including the courts. We also have "generally" – a catch-all – "all matters of a merely local or private nature in the province" are our exclusive jurisdiction.

3:50

It goes on:

Non-renewable Natural Resources, Forestry Resources and Electrical Energy

This is so important it has its own section in the Constitution.

92A. (1) In each province, the Legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to

- (a) exploration for non-renewable natural resources in the province;
- (b) development, conservation and management of non-renewable natural resources and forestry resources in the province, including laws in relation to the rate of primary production therefrom; and
- (c) development, conservation and management of sites and facilities in the province for the generation and production of electrical energy.

Do you see why Bill C-69 interferes in every possible way in this foundational principle of our Constitution? That is what we are trying to return to.

We also have the right for export from our province of our resources.

- (2) In each province, the legislature may make laws in relation to the export from the province to another part of Canada of the primary production from non-renewable natural resources and forestry resources . . . and the production from facilities in the province

that generate electrical power. The only proviso is that we can't charge a discriminatory price to our neighbours.

So this is the framework for how our country is supposed to work.

We have a whole section on education.

Legislation respecting Education

93 In and for each province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education . . .

There are a few provisions that is subject to.

There's also section 94 that deals with just our friends in Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

Section 94A gives the federal government some – it says that they may make laws in relation to old age pensions and supplementary benefits, including survivors' and disability benefits irrespective

of age, but no such law shall affect the operation of any law present or future of a provincial legislature in relation to any such matter.

We have the ability to have our own laws around old age pension and supplementary benefits.

Section 95: this is concurrent powers of the legislation on agriculture and immigration.

In each Province the Legislature may make Laws in relation to Agriculture in the Province, and to Immigration into the Province; and it is hereby declared that the Parliament of Canada may from Time to Time make Laws in relation to Agriculture in all or any of the Provinces, and to Immigration into all or any of the Provinces . . .

This, to me, I think, is also – we should take this under advisement. We have essentially abrogated our own duty, I think, to manage these areas. I think the federal government is only supposed to be there from time to time, and we've allowed them to take over the entire area.

I should also mention, because it may have been a while since folks have read the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to which we are also a signatory means that we are obliged to also protect the foundational rights and freedoms of our citizenry, and this is how it is framed:

Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law . . . the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights . . . set out in it subject to only such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Now, I've talked to the last living signatory of this document, Brian Peckford, and he says that this is what gets violated all the time. When governments take action to violate rights, it must be demonstrably justified. They must demonstrate that it was justifiable to do, and I think that that is where the federal government fails on so many fronts when it violates our rights.

I should also mention section 2 here.

Fundamental freedoms

- 2 Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:
 - (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
 - (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
 - (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
 - (d) freedom of association.

We also, under section 6, have right to mobility.

- 6(1) Every citizen of Canada has the right to enter, remain in and leave Canada.

We have rights to move around and gain a livelihood.

- (2) Every citizen of Canada and every person who has the status of a permanent resident of Canada has the right
 - (a) to move [around] and take up residence in any province; and
 - (b) to pursue the gaining of a livelihood in any province.

That's been violated so many times in the last two and half years.

We also have legal rights, the rights to life, liberty, and security of the person.

- 7 [Every person] has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

We've got the right against unreasonable search and seizure.

- 8 Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.

- 9 [We have] the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned.

And I must also underscore, of course, equality rights.

- 15(1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law

without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

We have an obligation as legislators here to make sure that we are upholding the rights of our citizens and that we are also exercising our powers in our areas of jurisdiction. That's what this is about. It's about pushing Ottawa back in its own lane.

So let me tell you a few things that I'm watching that I think that this legislation might have applicability for in pretty short order. First of all, I mentioned the fertilizer ban. If the federal government makes good on its policy proposal that they want to force our provinces to reduce fertilizer emissions 30 per cent, it's going to be a de facto production cut in the use of fertilizer, which has global implications for world food security. We can't allow that to happen, and I'm pleased to see that Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe will not stand by and let that happen either.

We also have this arbitrary emissions reduction, which I've mentioned before as well. If they move on the proposal to reduce our emissions 42 per cent by 2030, it is also a de facto production cut, and it is offside with section 92A of the Constitution.

Firearms confiscation. They're rushing to amendments on Bill C-21 I think because they know that they're offside with this, and I think our Justice minister has done a great job of putting them on notice and making them be aware that they are violating the Constitution in many ways. Property and civil rights are provincial jurisdiction. Policing is provincial jurisdiction. The contract that we have with the RCMP in setting our priorities falls under our jurisdiction, and we will not be moved to go after firearms owners who purchase their firearms legally. We are interested in going after criminals, people who are smuggling firearms across the border and putting them into the hands of gangs in Calgary and Edmonton and elsewhere. That is our policing priority.

There's a fourth area, Bill C-69. Our Transportation minister has already put the federal government on notice that we want to build some new highways. If you can believe it, they have inserted themselves into our ability to build highways that are longer than 75 kilometres in length. That was never intended by the founders, to micromanage our affairs to that extent.

But there are so many others. The censorship law. As much as it's difficult at times to meet that press gallery – they're a little bit tough on me – I absolutely support the fact that they have a job to do. And if they are finding that they do not have the ability to exercise their press freedom under new onerous federal laws coming through, they should know that we will protect them here because it is an essential . . .

Mr. Madu: Hear, hear.

Ms Smith: It is. It's essential. It's the fourth estate. I come from it myself. Their job is to be a watchdog on our institutions.

The improper use of the Emergencies Act. I should mention this as well because I suspect a lot of our draconian policies that we saw over the last two and a half years come from an inappropriate direction happening from the federal level of government. I think we can see as well through the past number of weeks that the Emergencies Act was invoked improperly. As a result, this is the kind of thing that we should have been able to stand up and do as Quebec and say: "You know what? Some of those provisions: we're not going to enforce them. We're not going to freeze bank accounts of our citizens. We are not going to be targeting those who are engaged in peaceful protest." So I can see a number of different ways in which this legislation might be used.

4:00

I'm just hoping – I'm hoping – that in doing so, in passing this legislation, it creates a new, constructive relationship with the federal level of government. I mean, I have seen many of the members certainly in the Liberal caucus socially, and I think that there are some great ways in which we could potentially work together. I know that one of the members, Randy Boissonnault, just recently wrote a column – I hope I can find it here – about the ways in which we have been able to work constructively together. I do want to mention that because that is my intention: let's find a way that we can work together constructively on the things that are our priorities as well.

I'm going from memory now because I can't seem to find this column, but one of the things that we announced jointly was that we were going to be investing in a net-zero hydrogen production plant called Air Products. This, to me, is a prime example of how we can continue to support our base industry. We are a natural gas basin. We have a comparative advantage in this product. We've got the technical expertise to develop it. But it also works in sync with the federal obligations that have been signed on to in our international agreements. If we can find ways to work together like that, we will have a very constructive relationship.

I did have a chance to talk to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau when I first got elected, and I said that our industry is not offside with the carbon neutrality targets of 2050. Our industry is actively working with the adoption of carbon technology, the comparative advantage as well that we already have in capturing CO₂ and burying it underground, turning it into useful products, the development of hydrogen. We are going to be a hydrogen hub, particularly in the Edmonton region.

We also have the ability to help our friends and neighbours internationally by exporting clean LNG to displace more polluting fuels, whether it's coal, whether it's wood, whether it's dung. There are billions of people on the planet who still do not have access to clean energy when they're cooking their food or heating their homes; 44 million people a year die of indoor air pollution. We have an obligation not only to provide food security but to provide energy security and to alleviate global poverty. We can do that by still maintaining the objectives to reduce CO₂ emissions. If we can get the credit – and there is a mechanism for this in the Paris accord, a green transfer credit – we can reduce emissions elsewhere, get credit back here, and get to carbon neutrality faster. Those are the things that we want to work with the federal government on.

I should also mention as well – I'm not allowed to say his name, but he's the Minister of Culture. I almost caught myself. The Minister of Culture was just at a very successful meeting with his counterparts in the rest of the country on how we're going to address domestic violence. This was a very productive way of approaching the issues. The minister put on the table: here are the programs that we are already funding; will you match what we are doing? The federal minister agreed, so there are over \$500 million that are being invested in domestic violence initiatives, and Alberta's share is going to be \$53 million. But we didn't have to sacrifice; we didn't have to compromise. They came to the table and said: tell us your priorities, and we will work with you on implementing those. Those are the kinds of things we want to see.

The transportation minister, whose name I can't say, also was recently at a conference. He told his federal counterpart that there's no reason why they should be interfering in our ability to build new highways. One of the mandates I've given to the Transportation and Economic Corridors minister is: let's build that highway between Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray; let's build an economic

corridor going down the east side of our province; let's make sure there's a . . .

Mr. Williams: Peace River.

Ms Smith: I hear Peace River might also need a new stretch of highway. [interjection] Not to mention a hospital in Cardston that's also needed.

These are the kinds of things that I think we can work together with our federal government on if they give us the latitude, and it sounded like, in putting that forward, they gave an early indication that they would be prepared to do that with us. That's what co-operative federalism looks like. It's when both parties recognize that we have sometimes competing but often complementary ways of getting the job done. But the federal government must always defer to us in our areas of constitutional authority because we have the sovereign jurisdiction; it's what our foundational documents actually say. That, I think, is going to be the approach that we are hoping to take on and go forward with. It's not going to be combative if it doesn't have to be, but the ball is going to be in Ottawa's court.

I think that they have managed to figure out how to have a constructive relationship with Quebec, where Quebec is able to, for instance, have its own provincial police, have its own pension, have its own immigration program, collect its own personal income taxes. Then whenever the federal government comes calling and says, "We'd like to spend money in your area of jurisdiction," Quebec says: "Well, actually, we don't want the strings attached. Just give us the envelope funding, and we'll do it our own way." And they always say yes. Why is it that Quebec is treated so differently? Because they demand to be treated differently, and we should demand to be treated just like Quebec. That is what the sovereignty act is all about. I think that what I'm seeing with our counterparts in Saskatchewan: they understand this, too. They understand that by asserting their rights under the Constitution, it will change the relationship with the rest of the country.

I should say that I think the biggest success that we had in putting this on the table, despite the ways in which it's been mischaracterized, was when our Environment and Protected Areas minister went to COP27 just a few weeks ago in Cairo, had an opportunity to talk with Steven Guilbeault and had an opportunity to meet with her counterparts in the environment as well. When the final communiqué came out, it called to reduce, eventually phase out oil and natural gas. And for anyone who didn't hear this, I have to underscore it because this is what the environment minister said. He said that he could not sign on to the final communiqué because the development of natural resources is provincial jurisdiction, and if he signed on to that, he would face a legal challenge from the provinces that Ottawa would lose. I have never seen that recognition from the federal government before. The fact that our environment minister was able to meet constructively, have a pleasant conversation, talk about shared interests: I think that we're finally getting through. But would we have gotten through if we hadn't put this on our radar, if we hadn't demanded to be treated differently, if we hadn't demanded that they followed the provisions in our foundational documents? I simply don't think so.

And you know what? The Americans are noticing, too. I'm told that John Kerry has talked with Steven Guilbeault and said: "What are you guys doing up there in Canada, specifically in Alberta? You guys are miles ahead of us on emissions reduction. We want to learn from what's going on in Alberta." That's the reason why we need to have our own ability to make decisions about the development and conservation of our resources our own way, because we'll do them differently. We'll do it way differently than Quebec. Quebec's approach is: keep it in the ground, don't develop it, and spend billions of dollars paying out private-sector investors. Our approach is: let's use technology and let's make sure that we get our cleaner

fuels to market and let's work collaboratively on the development of new industry, in particular hydrogen. That is the reason why we must assert that this is our area of jurisdiction, and Ottawa can simply butt out.

Let me just say a moment, because I think it's now been pretty clearly established: there's nothing in this legislation that talks about breaking up our country. That's not what this is about at all. It's about going back to how this country was initially intended to work by our nation's founders. I think that there's a new misconception now that has developed that somehow this bill is going to give authoritarian powers to the cabinet. I think this just goes back to, again, reading what the actual legislation says. The legislation is designed so that if we find one of these violations that I've talked about, we will bring forward a motion and enumerate all of the ways in which we are going to address it, and it will be fully debated in this Chamber. Every member will have the opportunity to weigh in on it, and that will become the marching orders of cabinet. It will have to come through the Legislative Assembly first.

In addition – and I should just maybe underscore this point – powers of the Lieutenant Governor in Council has subsection (4), "Nothing in this Act abrogates any authority or power vested in the Legislative Assembly." The Legislative Assembly is the heart of this. None of this even begins unless we get approval from the Legislative Assembly. In addition, it will expire, as these kinds of things should. I mean, we hope that any time we would have to invoke this act, we would be able to work out some kind of collaborative path forward with our federal counterparts, but any of these provisions will expire two years from when the original order is set.

We have to be mindful, of course. We don't want to be using this all the time, obviously. I don't want to use it at all if it can be helped. If Ottawa stays in its lane, we won't have to use it at all, but we had to make sure that there were these legislative protections so that if we do take this kind of action, it comes back here because this is the people's Chamber, and it's the people who are going to have to decide on this. But I think the people have given us a mandate to move forward on pushing back against an increasingly out-of-control Ottawa, an out-of-control Ottawa that has no respect for the rule of law, no respect for the provinces, no respect for the fact that it shouldn't be intervening in our area of jurisdiction.

4:10

The other thing that I have to underscore and I believe one of my ministers responded: we foundationally, because we believe in these documents – I should just remind everyone what section 35 of the Constitution says. This is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Recognition of existing aboriginal and treaty rights

35(1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed . . .

(2) In this Act, "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

Land claims agreements

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

And (4),

Aboriginal and treaty rights are guaranteed equally to both sexes

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally . . .

That is a foundational section of the Charter.

This document says we're going back to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Constitution. It by definition is going to

support Aboriginal and treaty rights. It says right under section 2 that

nothing in this act is to be construed as

- (a) authorizing any order that would be contrary to the Constitution of Canada,
- (b) authorizing any directive to a person, other than a provincial entity, that would compel the person to act contrary to or otherwise in violation of any federal law, or
- (c) abrogating or derogating from any existing aboriginal [land] and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada that are recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

It's right there. It's right there. So this is, I think – am I coming to an end here? This is the reason why we have done what we have done.

I have given the examples of six areas that are under concern to me, but I have also done a couple of other things. I have asked our ministers to look at policies and laws that are unconstitutional or that harm Albertans and to prepare resolutions for the spring. To give examples, as I had mentioned: the fertilizer production cap, C-69, arbitrary emissions reduction cap on oil and gas, firearms confiscation, the federal law, the improper use of the Emergencies Act, the plastics ban, trespassing by federal environmental officers on private property. There's already a new law in Saskatchewan to address that. We, I think, also are going to have some concerns with excessive restrictions on building code requirements, with the federal government wanting to force us to change overnight our electricity system. That, again, violates the provision of our power under section 92(a) of the Constitution. And there are probably others.

I have also asked our deputy ministers that I want to know when the federal government is reaching in because this is the way in which they attempt to control us, through their federal spending power. They reach in at the bureaucratic level and say: "Hey, let's work together on this, that, or the other policy. We'll give you a little bit of money; just float it up the food chain to the minister, pass it." What always happens: they either only fund a fraction of what it's going to cost or they tell us to put the program in place in a way that's massively more expensive than the way we want to do it ourselves or the funding expires and then we're left implementing a program that was designed by Ottawa. We're not going to do that anymore.

Every time the federal government contacts any one of my departments, it elevates into my ministry so that I know exactly how many ways in which the federal government is trying to intervene in our affairs. As I told you, this is not going to happen anymore, Madam Speaker. From now on Alberta is not going to ask permission from Ottawa to be prosperous and free. Those days are behind us.

With that, I would move second reading of Bill 1 and ask the hon. members to support me in that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others wishing to join the debate? The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak to the second reading of Bill 1. Yesterday I along with my colleagues stood up for Alberta's economic security, stability by voting against the Premier's proposed legislation, which, in my opinion, is the most disastrous piece of legislation that I have ever seen.

The Premier cited extensively what section 92 of the Constitution does. It gives Alberta exclusive jurisdiction over certain heads of power. The Premier also mentioned a section from the Charter that sets out rights and obligations of all Canadians. Nothing in this piece of legislation does anything to change that.

In fact, this bill does not do what it says it's doing. It's not even worth the piece of paper it's written on. You cannot fool Albertans by changing the name of this disastrous piece of legislation, that is clearly an absolute recipe for disaster for our economy, for our democracy. It is dangerous, it's antidemocratic, and it will create more chaos, more costs, and more conflict. That's why we voted against its introduction yesterday.

Allow me to explain what this bill does. The first thing it does is give the Premier and cabinet unprecedented powers to change and rewrite laws behind closed doors, without approval of this House. Let me say that again. This gives the Premier and cabinet ministers unprecedented power to change the law unilaterally, without approval of this House. What it does: section 3 says that any cabinet minister can bring a motion to the resolution, ram it through, using and abusing the majority, and then go to the cabinet table. And what can they do? In section 4(a)(i): "suspend or modify the application or operation of all or part of an enactment, subject to the terms and conditions that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may prescribe." That's written in the legislation, that it can suspend or modify the application or operation of law. If somebody still, after reading this, cannot understand, there's nothing much you can do. But that's what the section does.

In sub (ii) what it says: "specify or set out provisions that apply in addition to, or instead of, any provision of an enactment." This gives cabinet power to specify or set out provisions that apply in addition to or instead of. Now, this provision gives cabinet the power to make additions to the laws or even create laws that will be applied instead of the enactment that this section applies to. Their words: it's written in section 4. I urge all members: along with their key messages, do read the legislation. It's pretty clear. I would say that Albertans didn't send me here to let cabinet decide on debate. Our role is to debate legislation. All of my colleagues are here to do that. They are here to debate legislation, not just motions giving cabinet powers to decide what they think is appropriate behind closed doors.

The UCP MLAs may want to give someone else their job. On this side of the House we are here to do our job. Let's remember that the Premier was elected by 1 per cent of Alberta voters, and now she wants to pass this draconian piece of legislation, that gives cabinet dictatorial powers. This is not right.

4:20

It doesn't matter what's in the motion presented in the Legislature when this act says that cabinet can amend whatever and however they feel like. We spoke this morning with the department officials, and they clarified that there is no requirement for the motion to be specific. Even that motion is not binding on the cabinet: that's what Justice officials are telling us. It hands total power over to the cabinet. The power they have is over everyone. The act states that it provides authority over every public and grant-receiving organization, meaning that the cabinet can dictate their will to nonprofits, school boards, municipalities, police forces, and more.

This is a massive, massive overreach. There has been no consultation with Albertans. This is undemocratic, and it's an attack on our democracy. If Albertans want to challenge the changes made under this act, the UCP has made it harder. When you ask public officials for rationale to put the standard of review as "patent unreasonableness" or decreasing the time frame for judicial review from six months to 30 days, rightfully so department officials are saying that that's a political decision for the Legislature and the government to explain, and I'm sure we won't hear anything.

The Premier also said yesterday, even though it is their first piece of business, that she hopes that this act is never used, but we now have documents from the public service and mandate letters with specific

direction on how the government plans to use this act. We've got three different stories, depending on if you talk to the Premier, the minister, or the deputy minister and department officials. The Premier and the minister are either severely misinformed about what's in this legislation, or the government is misleading Albertans.

Let me share who has weighed in on this piece of legislation, what Albertans have said about this act, and I quote: there is no shred of evidence that this act will lead to economic growth; you can't tell me this is going to support economic growth and support continued economic diversification in this province. End quote. Madam Speaker, that's Deborah Yedlin, president and CEO of the Calgary Chamber of commerce. She doesn't think that there is a shred of evidence that this will lead to economic growth.

Todd Hirsch, ATB's former chief economist, believes that the Premier's piece of legislation, which would assert the province's sovereignty to overrule federal laws and policies, is dangerous. I quote: I think this would be so politically confusing and disruptive; just ask Quebec after 1976, when that province first elected a separatist Parti Québécois government, how that went for them; it was 40 years of an outflow of people and capital and corporate presence and influence, and it never returned; that same thing would happen in Alberta. End quote. That's a former chief economist with Alberta treasury branches.

Then the Premier was talking about section 35, that gives Indigenous and treaty rights constitutional status. The Premier went on at length about how this piece of legislation upholds treaty rights. She completely ignored what treaty chiefs have to say about it. All three treaty chiefs – treaties 6, 7, and 8 – spoke against this piece of legislation at a joint news conference. I quote: we must uphold the treaty; it is an international agreement and the highest law to govern the land, resources, and our people; we have never ceded this territory, nor do we ever plan to. That's treaty chief Tony Alexis of the Alexis Nakota Nation.

Another quote:

Bill 1 determines that a federal initiative is unconstitutional if it violates provincial jurisdiction or "causes or is anticipated to cause harm to Albertans." This is important because it is not about jurisdiction, it is about whether the [government] likes a federal law or not.

That's Professor Duane Bratt from Mount Royal University.

Emmett Macfarlane called it "the most unconstitutional bill in Canada's modern history." Another quote:

Upon the passing of such a resolution . . .

the resolution mentioned in this act,

. . . Bill 1 gives a free hand to the government to change any law on the books and to order "provincial entities" – which include any provincial agencies or institutions (municipalities, universities and even the police!) – to ignore or violate federal law, even criminal law.

Madam Speaker, these are considered opinions of distinguished Albertans about this piece of legislation.

Yes, Madam Speaker, there are UCP members as well who also had some choice words about this act. Not a few months ago the UCP government was repealing the extraordinary powers they gave themselves in Bill 10. That was a health-related bill. At the time the now Justice minister admitted it was excessive. He said – and I quote – that the power to modify legislation by ministerial order is unnecessary. Now, the Deputy Premier was also participating in that debate, and this is what the Deputy Premier said, the Lethbridge Deputy Premier: "No one person should be able to enact regulations without consultation."

Now all the UCP are happy to support a piece of legislation that is opposed by businesses, that is opposed by academia, that is opposed by all three treaty chiefs. They are happy to give their government

excessive powers to go around the Legislature and public oversight. That's shameful.

In addition, the hypocrisy of the UCP leadership candidates sitting around the Premier is astounding. Astounding. Not long ago they all held a joint news conference and told Albertans, promised Albertans how they will be voting against the sovereignty act. The Finance minister called it an economic time bomb. That's what the Finance minister said. The jobs minister called it a fairy tale. The Municipal Affairs minister called it anarchy, and the minister of trade said that it was like shooting ourselves in the foot. Yesterday all of them forgot about what they said six weeks ago. They failed to walk the talk. They prefer their positions over principles. That's also shameful. Albertans certainly deserve better.

4:30

The UCP government is focused on legislation that will destroy jobs, chase investment away, and stifle Alberta's economy at a time when we should all be focusing on building a better and brighter future for this province. That's the consensus among the business community, among academia and Indigenous leaders.

We have an unprecedented crisis in our health care system, and this government instead is focused on destroying the economy. Tens of thousands of Albertans don't have access to a family doctor. Wait times at emergency departments of children's hospitals have been as long as 16 hours, and now with the worst of the flu season yet to come, parents are struggling to find medication necessary to treat their sick children. That should be front and centre for this government, but, unfortunately, no.

Then there is the so-called affordability plan, the UCP's affordability plan, which doesn't even come close to undoing the extra costs piled onto families by the UCP for things like car insurance, for things like school fees, for things like utilities. I urge the members to talk to ordinary Albertans. What impact these things have on their pocketbooks any ordinary Albertan will be able to tell them. I invite them, any minister, to come walk with me in my constituency. You will get to meet many Albertans who are struggling to pay insurance, who are struggling to pay utilities, who are struggling to pay school costs, all piled onto them by this UCP government. Clearly, they are focused on attempting to distract Albertans from the issues that they are facing, and the government has no interest in addressing those issues.

Instead, they are focused on creating more chaos, more conflict, and more cost for Albertans with this sovereignty act. Business leaders are telling us that it will cost jobs, that it's not good for Alberta's economy. They want stability, they want certainty, not the sovereignty. It must be stopped. Business leaders, legal experts, Indigenous leaders, and even members of the UCP's own cabinet have rejected the sovereignty act as unconstitutional and harmful to Alberta's economy. Whether this act has any legal merit or not, it's already chasing investment away from this province.

Madam Speaker, Albertans don't want this. They want leadership that is stable, responsible, honest, and focused on issues facing Albertans. In our alternative Speech from the Throne we presented a better vision. We put forward a plan for economic growth that will create jobs and that will attract investment. We'll put a cap on utility costs, freeze insurance, and reverse the UCP fee hikes on families.

In six months, Madam Speaker, Albertans can elect a new government that will focus on their . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to join the debate? The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I rise to speak today to Bill 1, Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act. You know, it's no secret that Alberta has long had to struggle to

escape the colonialism of central Canada's Laurentian elite, well, in fact, since before this province was even a province. To put it another way, Alberta has had to struggle to be accepted and join as an equal member of the eastern Canada confederation of provinces, and the struggle seems to never end.

Canada is a confederation. What is a confederation? We need to think about that, and I did some research into it, actually. Confederation, one dictionary says, is a permanent union of countries, of self-governing peoples. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* online version has an article on it in which they say that it's a "permanent union of sovereign states." Another says that it's a loose alliance of political units and goes on to say that the component states retain considerable independence. The members of a confederation often delegate only a few powers to the central authority. The word originates, actually, from Latin and means "an agreement."

I think that if we're to understand anything, it's not enough just to say what it is; you also have to say what it is not. So when you're looking into what a confederation is, it's not an autocracy. It's not a dictatorship, not a subservient relationship, not a delegated position but a meeting, an agreement of equal powers with defined areas of authority. When our federal partners try to abuse this agreement called a Constitution, then they must be challenged.

This is a position, actually, that the preceding North-West Territories Legislative Assembly took in negotiating the agreement to even join the confederation of eastern provinces. On May 2, 1900, they passed what they called the autonomy motion, which is really just another word for the sovereignty of provincial jurisdiction, and they requested in that motion the fullest inquiry into the terms upon which the territories might enter Confederation. I mean, that was the very negotiation from the very beginning: what terms can we have by which we should even consider being part of this confederation? It was all about provincial jurisdiction and equal status with the pre-existing provinces that were in confederation with each other. Should . . .

Mr. Williams: Will the member give way?

Mr. Orr: Sure.

Mr. Williams: I was wondering if the member could go into a bit more detail about how Canada is set up, not like it is in the United Kingdom, where there are constituent peoples and constituencies that are subject to expression of the Mother Parliament. Instead, we're equal partners in Confederation as provinces.

Mr. Orr: Thank you. Yes, that is exactly how it is set up, and those were the exact terms upon which Alberta joined as a later signatory to those agreements, those mutual partnerships that formed the confederation. In fact, it was formed in part, a confederation, out of fears of U.S. aggression, but I won't go into all those details at this time. But those are exactly the terms upon which it was set up.

Then, interestingly enough, by May 21, 1902, every single candidate in the territorial election of the North-West Territories favoured the principle of provincial autonomy, or provincial sovereignty. They wanted, actually, to be part of Confederation but as an equal partner on fair, just, and equal terms, as the other Confederation provinces had been given. The feds continued to delay, to vastly underfund the needs of the west, so in 1903 the Assembly of the North-West Territories unanimously passed a motion demanding immediate autonomy.

This is not a new discussion in this province, my friends; this has been going on for a long, long time. To this day the fight has been carried forward by Premier after Premier after Premier, and we could argue for many, many hours about those details or delineate them. Time after time the federal government imposes rules that disproportionately affect this province and its people while Alberta

continues to drive this wonderful country as its economic engine. This is a problem that has persisted for far too long.

While Alberta is subject to the unbalanced decisions of the federal government, another province enjoys a substantial amount of sovereignty within its Confederation. How is that fair and equal? Outlined in our Constitution, as the Premier has clearly detailed, there are clear rules that delineate the areas of provincial and federal jurisdiction, and they do not overlap. Despite these enshrined separations of power in our Constitution, the federal government in Ottawa has imposed laws on Alberta that instead should be decided here at home by our peoples.

4:40

Pursuing Alberta's self-determination does not weaken or threaten our commitment to this nation. Our country will in fact be made stronger when this bill becomes law because a stronger Alberta is good for all Canadians. When we are allowed to protect our energy and agricultural sectors from unfair restrictions, all of Canada will benefit from less expensive food, energy, and transportation. When we take full control of the economic development of our province, all Canadians will benefit from the job growth that we produce. Greater sovereignty within provincial jurisdiction for Alberta isn't selfishness; it is pursued because of the love we have for this country and province, with the knowledge that more prosperity for Alberta means more prosperity for all Canadians.

Many of the laws implemented by the federal government that disproportionately affect all Albertans still impact the rest of Canada. For example, restrictions on fertilizer use that could seriously harm our country's agricultural sector and eventually lead to a food crisis, especially because this will drive up costs even further: right in the midst of an inflationary cycle the feds want to do this.

The fact that Alberta has done so much for our nation but is still punished by the federal government in Ottawa sets a very dangerous precedent to the Confederation itself. If Alberta doesn't stand up, who will? This problem will only get worse, and eventually other provinces will be stuck in the same spot as us. In fact, Saskatchewan recognizes this and has already moved on it.

Sadly, even though this bill supports the strength of Canada by reinforcing the constitutional separation between provincial and federal governments, the Alberta NDP obviously are going to attack it for personal and, quite frankly, simply partisan reasons, yet just last night we heard the Saskatchewan NDP voted in favour of second reading of a very complementary, similar bill in Saskatchewan. Maybe they should talk to their Saskatchewan neighbours and find out how it is that in Saskatchewan the NDP actually supports their province and their people but that in Alberta apparently they're only interested in partisan gain.

This bill does not isolate us from our fellow Canadians but brings us closer together as we share in the bounties of an unshackled economy. The NDP will stand in opposition to this bill because, supposedly, increasing Alberta's sovereignty in the face of smothering federal economic regulations will somehow make us a worse place to do business. That could never be farther from the truth. Empowering the provincial government to stand up for our people and our businesses, for its constitutionally enshrined rights will actually help attract investment as unreasonable and burdensome economic restrictions are lifted.

This bill, in fact, comes in response to Alberta industry members begging that Alberta retain authority over our resources and not give it up by default to federal oversight. The oil and gas industry has long advocated for a made-in-Alberta TIER equivalency regulation to the federal standards. We have that, and we will keep that. Forest industry members have requested in writing – I have the letter right here – that we push back against federal incursions into

Alberta regulatory space. They say: we need a strong provincial champion to clarify that Alberta will defend our interests.

When the feds threatened Quebec, the Premier of Quebec responded decisively, making it clear that he was prepared to go to court to defend his province. So will we. We are not the only province in Canada to pursue greater self-determination within Confederation. Quebec has it in many ways. Saskatchewan is moving in the same direction.

The NDP will just fearmonger over this bill, stating that it'll drive investment and economic interest out of our province. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not only is this not true; it's just purely hypocritical. Nothing scared investors in Alberta away as much as the previous NDP government. Their leadership nearly crippled this province.

Now we have a unique opportunity to defend our economy, our province, and our people from an overbearing federal government, and we must take it, despite the words of those who would spread falsehoods and frighten Albertans away from reclaiming the rights that are enshrined in our Constitution. After all, we are conservatives, not socialists. Making sure our economy thrives is what we do best.

Now is the pivotal time for Alberta to stand up for itself and not act like disenfranchised minors and be subservient to an abusive partner. It's time for that to end. This bill would ensure that this Legislature has the necessary authority to protect this province, its people and economy, from further overreach by the federal government. It would also allow us to reverse some of those rules and regulations that are unfair, unconstitutional, and abusive. We cannot allow fearmongering from the opposition to prevent this government from doing what it must do to ensure the prosperity of Albertans for years to come. Strengthening this province's constitutional position does not endanger the livelihoods and prosperity of Albertans; it protects them and encourages their unstifled growth.

That is why this bill must pass. For the good of this province and our country we must stand up. Now is the time, this is the place, and we are the people. Vote for Bill 1. Thank you.

Mr. Williams: I move, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we adjourn debate on second reading of Bill 1.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Mr. Toor 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, His 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.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Falconridge.

Mr. Toor: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my sincere honour to rise and accept the Speech from the Throne given by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor on putting forward provisions for the Legislature and the province we all enrich.

The throne speech clearly laid out the priorities our government will be pursuing this session as Alberta continues to recover,

diversify, and grow. I believe these priorities align with the priorities of all Albertans, who are rightly concerned about their rising cost of living, their province, their economy, and their health care system. With record-high inflation, caused in part by record spending from the federal government, our people are being forced to choose between the necessities of life and paying their bills, this despite our province experiencing the strongest job growth in the country, high wages, and a nearly full economic recovery from the pandemic.

To help Albertans to weather this inflation storm, we announced a substantial relief plan that starts with the introduction of the inflation relief act. This multibillion-dollar package of broad-based and targeted relief will help fight inflation and make life affordable for all Albertans but particularly for our vulnerable, our disabled, and our elderly. This is real relief that will help Albertans pay for fuel, water, heat, groceries, and more of their necessities. We're doing our part to help fight this inflation crisis.

At the same time, we continue to call on our federal counterparts to get spending under control and to scrap the federal carbon tax along with the disturbing plans to increase it by 300 per cent. Our government knows that affordability is the primary challenge facing Albertans right now and that families are counting on us to take decisive action to address the rising cost of living.

We also know that our government is in a position to deliver this timely and meaningful relief because we have gotten our fiscal house in order. Alberta's strong balance sheet and this multibillion-dollar relief package for Albertans do not exist in isolation, which is why I was also so glad to hear that our government will continue to focus on creating jobs, attracting investments, opening the door for new workers, keeping taxes low, and diversifying the economy. This government has worked tirelessly to restore Alberta's economy and build a new Alberta advantage, and we're now seeing the results of that hard work.

4:50

In my riding of Calgary-Falconridge small businesses are the largest employer, whether it's the restaurant industry, retail industry, trucking industry, construction industry. It's all booming. A lot of employers are calling me. They have a problem of labour shortage. When the economy is booming, a labour shortage might be a good problem to have. My message to them is that we are happy to deal with it, and I think that many of my colleagues are dealing with the same problem.

This economic boom is what is going to be creating more jobs and going to put a roof over the heads and food on the plate for average families in each of our constituencies in Alberta. We have seen hundreds of thousands of jobs created, landmark investments across the province, a rapid growth in new industries, and a spike in people coming to Alberta in search of either a family reunion or for economic opportunity.

I was pleased to hear that we will remain committed to defending the rights and interests of Alberta, the province, as I said before, that we all cherish, from jurisdictional overreach from Ottawa. We have already introduced Bill 1, the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, to stand up to the federal government overreach and interference in areas of provincial jurisdiction, including in the areas of private property, natural resources, agriculture, firearms, immigration, regulation of the economy, and delivery of health care.

Albertans' rights are sacred, and they are enshrined in Canada's Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor said,

these personal and provincial rights are not something the federal government can simply supersede when it chooses.

Ottawa is not our ruler; Ottawa is our partner, and it needs to begin acting like it.

Like so many other Albertans, I'm a proud Canadian. I moved here about 25 years ago, and this country, and especially this province, has given me a lot: peace, opportunities, raising a family. Like other Albertans, I love Alberta. Our Canadian Constitution is very clear that the federal and provincial governments are equal, each with our own areas of exclusive jurisdiction, and our government will work to protect that.

We will also work to reform Alberta's health care system so that it is there for all our people when they need it. On this we have also taken immediate action by launching the health care reform plan, which nobly aims to improve EMS response times, decrease emergency room wait times, reduce wait times for surgeries, and develop long-term reforms through consultation with front-line workers, including finding solutions to restore decision-making to local health care professionals and authorities. We will not blindly throw more money at a broken system or kick the can further down the road on fixing it. We will act on behalf of health care workers, patients, and all Albertans to ensure that our system is strong and resilient for generations to come. We thank our world-class doctors, nurses, paramedics, and all front-line workers who keep our system running each and every day. They deserve a system that works, as do patients and their families. We're going to deliver that for them. We know this will take some time, but the hard work has already begun, and I have the utmost confidence that we will see measurable improvement soon.

The throne speech set our legislative agenda. It gives us a signpost that will guide our way to a more robust and affluent future. It highlights the challenges that lay before us, but it's also a call for faith and trust in the system we believe in to bring back the Alberta advantage.

After a long time I have seen that more Albertans are coming to than leaving Alberta. This is a sign that our province is back. Alberta is back, and we are moving in a direction where people want to be part of our economy. We are already leading Canada in economic growth, but I believe the legislation initiatives outlined in the throne speech will only further accentuate and enhance the momentum we are already currently seeing in our economy.

I'm proud to see our government pursuing an agenda that is attracting the best and the brightest from across Canada and all over the world to our province, as evidenced by the positive net migration numbers we continue to see. I'm also proud that our government is not shying away from doing the hard work that Albertans expect us to do. I have the utmost confidence that the work we're doing now will pay positive dividends for generations to come. We all look forward to the days ahead and to a stronger and freer future for Alberta.

As my time here comes to an end, Madam Speaker, I would like to say that it's been an honour to speak to this Legislature on behalf of the constituents of Calgary-Falconridge. It's been my honour to move this thanks of accepting the throne speech from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of our great province. After the last few difficult years we've been through as a province, I want families, the business owners, all Albertans across the province to know that we're moving forward, that better days are ahead. Our government cares about you. We will always fight for you.

The Speech from the Throne articulates a broad vision of Alberta moving forward which is inclusive and welcoming to those who come. As I said before, it can be for different economic opportunities or maybe a family union. Alberta will be that place and that beacon of hope for the rest of the country to lead forward with these values that are infused into every single Albertan and infused into our past. That has brought us to where we are today.

It may be the beginning of a new chapter in Alberta's story, I believe, but we have to understand it is one chapter in a longer book. This is the Alberta that I believe in. That is why I'm grateful to move to accept the Speech from the Throne given by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

God save the King, and may God bless Alberta. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Camrose to second, and then the hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre next.

Ms Lovely: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and second the motion to accept the Speech from the Throne given by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The affordability crisis Albertans are facing is very serious. I've consulted with many constituents in my riding who are struggling to make ends meet, purchase essentials, and pay their bills. This is not something that any Albertan should have to deal with, especially at a time when our economy is doing so well.

I want to echo my colleague's comments regarding the federal government. The federal government has many more levers at its disposal than the provincial government when it comes to fighting inflation. The federal government has also helped fuel this inflation crisis through its record spending. We continue to urge the federal government to help make life more affordable for families by scrapping the federal fuel tax and the federal carbon tax along with any proposed plans to increase the carbon tax by 300 per cent. No elected representative who is serious about making life more affordable for families should support these taxes, especially at a time when inflation is so high.

5:00

I'm pleased our government is stepping up to act on behalf of Alberta families. The measures announced so far include but are not limited to extending the fuel tax cut; taking action on utilities, including expanding the electricity rebate to a total of up to \$500; reindexing benefits like AISH, PDD, and income support as well as the Alberta seniors' benefit and the Alberta child and family benefit; providing targeted payments for children under 18, seniors 65 and older, and vulnerable Albertans with household income below \$180,000; and last, providing additional support for low-income transit programs. These measures will help all Albertans, but they will provide specific support to those in need. Our government knows that affordability is the primary challenge facing Albertans right now and that families are counting on us to take decisive action to address the rising cost of living. That is why we are not hesitating to deliver this timely and meaningful support.

I'm also proud that our government is not hesitating in tackling health care reform, which is an ongoing concern in my riding and ridings across Alberta. I know this work won't be easy or fast, but I am confident that the health care reform plan, that has already been initiated, will deliver some immediate positive results for Albertans.

Finally, I'm proud we are addressing our province's relationship with the federal government. For too long we have watched as our provincial rights granted to us under the Constitution have been infringed upon by federal actors. For too long governments have failed to stand up, and enough is enough. The result is grave consequences for our industry, our economy, our workers. We are today saying that enough is enough. As Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor said:

The Canadian Constitution is clear. The federal and provincial governments both have exclusive and sovereign areas of jurisdiction, and this government will no longer sit idly by as Ottawa infringes on our constitutional rights to develop our

resources, develop our economy, and deliver our social programs in the manner that Albertans see fit.

This is why I'm encouraged that the first piece of legislation under our new Premier is the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act. If passed, this bill will be a constitutional shield that will protect the personal and provincial rights of Albertans from any unconstitutional or harmful acts by the federal government. Legislation like this is long overdue, and I'm glad that our government isn't hesitating to get it done for Albertans.

The people of my Camrose constituency are excited for the future again. Alberta has so many good things going on, but we need to get our arms around this inflation crisis before we can truly realize our potential. I would like to once again say that it is an honour to represent the good people of the Camrose constituency, and I am pleased to second the Speech from the Throne.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak in response to the Speech from the Throne, the first speech in this session of the Legislature, and to respond in both of my roles, as the MLA for Edmonton-City Centre and initially as the Official Opposition critic for Health. I listened to the speech yesterday, and health care took up a significant portion of the speech. Certainly, I was reflecting on the response I'd provide today, so I want to speak to some of the comments that were made in the Speech from the Throne regarding health care.

In that speech it states: "The government must take action. More words and platitudes will not shorten wait times or free up hospital beds." Madam Speaker, it's this government's words, its platitudes, its rash, incompetent actions that have left our health care system in crisis, that have led to the situation we find ourselves in today. Throughout the pandemic we saw this government drag their feet. They fell back on words and platitudes when action was needed to curb rising waves of COVID-19. As front-line health care workers were becoming increasingly exhausted, their cries for help were met with words and platitudes from the former Premier, from the UCP's ministers of Health, until the rising case counts and indeed deaths forced them to act, but repeatedly they did so reluctantly. They acted last; they acted least.

The only actions they undertook with relish, Madam Speaker, were to attack front-line health care workers. Let's consider the impacts, for example, of this government's decisive action in regard to doctors in Alberta. They tore up their agreement. They imposed a series of changes that the then Health minister insisted were essential to reform the health care system and keep spending under control, changes that they decisively acted to move forward with in the midst of a growing pandemic, changes that went on to drive doctors out of practice and out of the province, and now we have tens of thousands of Albertans who have no access to a family doctor.

Our public operating rooms are struggling to catch up on waitlists that grew while this government dragged its feet, relied on words and platitudes, and now they're unable to operate at capacity because we don't have enough anaesthesiologists because, again, this government drove them out of the province, all because of this government's decisive action, much like they claim, in the throne speech, that they are going to be taking to reform the health care system today.

And here's the irony, Madam Speaker. The throne speech makes the claim that this government is here for health care workers, committed to ensuring resources are directed to where they are needed most, to emergency and operating rooms rather than to

boardrooms and consulting companies. Every one of those wrong-headed decisions made by this government, the damage that they did, were informed by their initial spending on boards, committees, and consulting companies, on carefully cherry-picked statistics from the MacKinnon report, from their carefully curated Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances, on recommendations from their report generated by their contract with the consulting firm Ernst & Young, a report that led to plans like laying off 11,000 of the front-line health care workers that they now purport they value and thank, including potentially up to 500 full-time nurses.

That's not a record, Madam Speaker, that gives me confidence in this Premier and this government's plan to upend our public health care system in the name of reform under the direction of a single administrator in six months, at a time when this system remains in deep crisis due in good part to the neglect, the attacks, and poor decisions of ministers who still sit in this cabinet, particularly given that this Premier is on the record advocating for policy changes to – and I quote – get used to the concept of paying out of pocket, for Albertans to get used to paying out of pocket for health care. Albertans are rightly concerned that the actions they are seeing this Premier undertake now are simply going to lead to more chaos and conflict at the cost of their access to health.

Now, in contrast, Madam Speaker, in the words of former health columnist Keith Gerein, Alberta's health system enjoyed one of its most uninterrupted periods of stability under the NDP's reign. That was our record from 2015 to 2019. He noted that yearly spending hikes were reduced to about 3 per cent, which made progress in slowing the cost of physicians, pharmacists, and dental care, while columnist Don Braid noted that we "calmed down the system, made significant improvements and provided stability for health planners, professionals and workers."

That's why, as we laid out in our alternative Speech from the Throne, Madam Speaker, we as the Alberta NDP caucus, should we have the opportunity to form government, would be relentless in pursuing and proposing real solutions. In fact, we're going to do that from opposition right now. We're bringing forward legislation this very session, carried by our leader, that will ensure that public health care is protected and strengthened, that would establish health care service standards' openness and transparency to Albertans, who should be able to get an ambulance, go to the emergency room, see their doctor when they need to. They deserve to have the information on how that's progressing. It's legislation that will ensure there's accountability for the care that Albertans depend on.

We're going to introduce the first major plank of our health care platform around community-based family care, primary care, Madam Speaker, something that was not even mentioned in the Speech from the Throne as this government scrambles to deal with the crisis that it created in part by undermining access to primary care here in the province of Alberta. We recognize how important it is that we have family doctors in this province, that we are attracting them to this province, not driving them away, and that we are ensuring that Albertans have access to them. Getting to the root of the issues in the health care system: that is truly preventative care.

We're going to continue to hold this government to account in terms of its promise to somehow in the next six months end the chaos they created in hospitals, in clinics and get EMS back on track. Truly, Madam Speaker, we are only going to get there with a government that truly believes in science and believes in investing in and not undermining our public health care system.

5:10

In regard to my constituency of Edmonton-City Centre, you know, in the throne speech, Madam Speaker, it talked about

protecting and supporting the most vulnerable among us. It says that that always “has and always will be the Alberta way.” Well, it wasn’t this government’s way when they deindexed AISH, income supports, and seniors’ benefits, that were received by hundreds of my constituents. It wasn’t this government’s way when they cut the additional housing support that constituents of mine depended on, pushing some of them out of their homes and onto the streets. It wasn’t this government’s way when it spent over two years refusing to partner with the city of Edmonton and the government of Canada to fund over 250 supportive housing units for those living houseless, many on the streets of my constituency.

This government brags about affordability measures, but they excluded many of my constituents who live in condos or apartments from their electricity and natural gas rebates, and it wasn’t this government’s way when they cut access to harm reduction supports in my constituency, leading to more people in my community being poisoned by a toxic street supply on the street, in our public spaces, and behind businesses and homes. This government was apparently prosperous enough to give billions away to profitable corporations and millions to an embarrassment of an energy war room but not enough to show real compassion for those most in need. Taking actions on those fronts, Madam Speaker, isn’t just the right thing to do for the people; it’s the best thing for our community and our local economy.

Now, for the past three years in my role as the MLA for Edmonton’s downtown I’ve talked with business and community leaders in and around our downtown as they asked how they could get the attention of this government to get them to take action on these issues that I’ve noted and many more. For three years, sadly, there was very little response. Then, finally, earlier this year, as part of the budget for 2022-2023, we did see the government step up in the UCP budget to provide \$5 million for downtown revitalization in Edmonton and Calgary.

Now, Madam Speaker, I will say that \$5 million isn’t a particularly large sum towards revitalization, but, hey, as the old adage says, never look a gift horse in the mouth. But the thing is that this is a horse that has yet to actually leave the barn. Talking with the mayor, talking with folks on the downtown revitalization task force here in Edmonton, that \$5 million has not been paid. We’re only a few months from the end of the budget year, and we have not seen the dollars this government committed in its budget. If this government is truly committed to, as it says in the throne speech, “its steadfast commitment to job creation and economic diversification,” perhaps they can follow through on this promise from 10 months ago.

I also recognize that after three years of asking, just before the former Premier left office, this government did finally step forward with some funding to address some of the serious issues around housing, substance use, and mental health, issues that fall squarely under provincial responsibility but that the city of Edmonton has been bearing a disproportionate burden for. Now, I’ll be watching closely to see if those dollars flow and follow through. I’ll also note that the funding fell short of providing enough funding to cover the number of shelter beds needed this winter here in the city of Edmonton so that Edmonton city council even now is having to debate dipping into their emergency reserve to ensure that the people in my constituency will be guaranteed to be able to have a warm bed if they need one instead of sleeping on the streets in freezing weather.

The city of Edmonton has asked this government for funding for the healthy streets operation centre. That’s a collaboration between the city of Edmonton, peace officers, fire, the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society – their outreach workers – Homeward Trust, police officers, and the HELP unit. That is to address issues around community safety. You know, this centre was in direct response to a

direct ask from leaders in the Chinese community to address concerns in Chinatown, which I also represent a portion of.

Now, my understanding is that the Minister of Culture promised them at a community meeting that that funding would be there for that operation centre, that they would make it happen. Well, presently the city has funded that operation centre for two years. They’ve sent a letter to the Minister of Justice asking for his support, and they have not received a response. This government is once again sitting on its hands, this government is not acting, and this government is not following through on its commitment to its promise to the community and failing to stand up and partner with the city of Edmonton.

They asked the Minister of Justice to consider how that centre could be supported with government of Alberta dollars, with programming or other investments that are discussed in their safety plan that was ordered by them, ordered that they provide by the Minister of Justice. [interjection] Go ahead, Minister.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Member, for accepting my intervention. I want to thank you for raising the issue of Edmonton’s Chinatown. The community has raised this issue. I also want to let you know that I was very pleased that not only myself but the minister of housing at the time and Justice and about six of us went down to Chinatown and met with the community there. Let me tell you this. Just before I changed my portfolio, we did make a public announcement in Edmonton for a \$184 million comprehensive response, not only on homelessness but addiction and mental health. At that time Mayor Sohi was there. Mayor Sohi personally thanked this government for the huge action we’ve taken. You know, just as you’re on this subject, I want to update the House that this comprehensive mental health and addictions and homelessness package: I have never seen that in my career of social work. I’ve never seen that across Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, forgive me for the speaker’s intervention. My apologies. Interventions are not allowed on the throne speech. It’s not a regular occurrence. Not everyone is up to speed. I apologize to the speaker and everyone in this Assembly.

Please continue with your time.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I acknowledge the dollars that this government committed. Let’s be clear. Not all of those \$184 million, as I recall, were for the city of Edmonton; some of those were for Calgary as well. It was a larger package. So let’s be clear about where all those dollars are being divided.

I spoke with the mayor last week, and he is still waiting for a response on the funding for this operation centre, which this minister promised the community they would fund.

I appreciate the minister’s intervention. I appreciate the words that he has given, and I have acknowledged the dollars he has spoken of, but it still does not address the fact that it falls short of the emergency beds that are needed to ensure every person living houseless in Edmonton right now can access a warm place to stay. They still have not funded the operation centre that they promised, not to mention the fact that that was after three years of advocacy by myself, by my colleague for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, and by multiple members of Edmonton city council over the course of two consecutive councils.

Do I appreciate the government stepping up and following through? I do. Do they deserve applause for doing so, once again, last and least? Well, I’ll let the people of Edmonton decide that.

The fact is, Madam Speaker, that this government shows that it is more interested in shaking its fist at Ottawa and creating more constitutional drama and awarding more sweeping power to itself than actually addressing the concrete issues in front of us here in Alberta,

doing their actual job as a government, addressing the crisis in our health care system, a crisis that they made worse at every single turn.

I can tell you that when I talk to front-line health care workers, some just yesterday, they don't trust this government. They do not take the words that are in that throne speech of thanks and support very seriously because they have seen the actions of this government. They have heard the words of this Premier, and they see what her priorities are, which is about the consolidation of power, her own form of political fearmongering, and not truly speaking to the actual roots of the issues that Albertans care about.

I'll watch this affordability act very closely because, again, Madam Speaker, so many of this government's efforts do not help my constituents. They're not eligible for the energy rebates. They're seniors or students who do not drive, so the gas tax does nothing for them.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there others to speak to the throne speech reply? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments in regard to the Speech from the Throne that we heard yesterday here in the Chamber, from the Lieutenant Governor.

5:20

You know, Madam Speaker, I've heard a lot of speeches from the throne in my time in the Legislature, and I must say that this one really misses the mark from where people are at in this province, the needs that they have at this point in time, and for a government to produce a speech like this, so out of step with what's actually going on on the ground: I find it to be quite astounding.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Let's just remember as well – I've heard a number of speakers from the UCP side talking about the words of the Lieutenant Governor in their speeches yesterday. These are the words of the government that she's reading, the words of the UCP, in her throne speech, just to clarify. To suggest that they can somehow disassociate themselves with a preoccupation with their sovereignty act, with going to war with Ottawa, to tilting at the windmills that they always seem to be obsessing about – right? – those are their ideas from this UCP caucus in this Chamber. That's not the Lieutenant Governor by any means, Mr. Speaker, so just as a word of clarification on that.

What I see, again, is a real disconnection between what people are concerned about across this province and then what this document espouses here for the future, for the next few months for the province of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, we're in the worst affordability crisis in more than 40 years here in the province of Alberta. I know that there are many circumstances that have contributed to this affordability crisis, some issues that are outside of our borders, that are global issues as well, but it seems as though this UCP government has gone out of their way to only make those affordability issues worse.

We see in the midst of the very highest grocery prices moving through this province right now – you see record increases for groceries, for example. You see this government (a) not doing anything about that but (b) instead pivoting on to talking about their sovereignty act and spending most of the speech on their sovereignty act, in fact. Where are the issues that really concern people?

In my own constituency in Edmonton-North West people are suffering economically as a result of many larger issues and many specific issues that actually originate from this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. They're not something you can blame on a war with Russia. It's not something you can blame on supply chain issues. They are specific policies that this UCP government has instituted

over the last three and a half years that are hurting people in Edmonton-North West, and they're hurting people right across this province as well. That's what I was hoping this Speech from the Throne would address: these affordability issues and systemic issues that are causing people to get left behind here in the province.

I don't cheer for failure for this government or any other government because at the foundational level, Mr. Speaker, we are all here to serve the people of Alberta in the best way possible. When I anticipate a Speech from the Throne at a juncture when there are so many burgeoning crises around, then suddenly I'm looking for something that we can find hope in, something that can perhaps give us some vision for the future. Unfortunately, I just don't see it in this Speech from the Throne. In Edmonton-North West people are noticing that, and certainly I travel around a lot to other constituencies around the province. I didn't hear anybody talk about the sovereignty act when I banged on their door.

I was in Edmonton-North West a lot, but I was in places in Calgary, in Leduc, in Sherwood Park, all across the province. No one said: "Yeah; you've got to do something about this sovereignty thing. That's what we need to do," right? No. They talked about their car insurance being out of control, so they had to park the car. They talked about their grocery prices. They talked about the high cost of tuition and problems associated with K to 12 education. They talked about having a lack of security in knowing that the hospital emergency ward will be there when they need it for themselves and their families within a public health system. Those are the things that people talk about every single day, not the sovereignty act, not about tilting at windmills with Ottawa and so forth, right? They need to make sure that they are secure and safe in the place that they live and they're safe and secure for their families and for the next generation, too.

A lot of governance has a lot to do, Mr. Speaker, with trust. You see this UCP government scrambling. They've changed another Premier. I've seen this so many times; it's a pattern that's played out over the last 10 years or more. They dig themselves into a corner and try to change the leadership, they clean house and get a new Premier in place, and then they claim everything is better. Well, it's not. It's not better at all. A lot of people are literally falling behind. Wages are falling behind at the highest rate in the country here in the province of Alberta. Wait times for surgeries are falling behind as well. It compromises the safety and the security of everybody for these things to happen.

We know in smaller centres, as well, these problems get even worse. You have places where hospitals and emergency care centres, response centres, are literally closing. Their doors are closed. I've talked to people at the Rural Municipalities association, for example. They talked about how it would feel if you went to your hospital – in Boyle, let's say, for example – and the door is locked because there's inadequate staffing. The staffing is not there. The doctors aren't there. The nurses are not there. This is a long problem that this UCP government started when they went to war with health care workers here in the province of Alberta.

You can't just simply fix that with a new Premier and six months left in their term – right? – and say: "Oh, yeah. Well, we've turned a corner on that. You know, we're really sorry." It takes years to build capacity for our health care system to have trained the nurses, doctors, and support staff to fill those positions, to make sure that they have a long-term, stable, secure relationship with the government so that people can go into those professions and not say: "I'm not going to be a nurse; look, they treat them like dirt in Alberta. Why should I take four years of training and take \$50,000 worth of student loans when the job has been made insecure by this UCP government? Maybe that's not the way to go." That's the situation that we're facing, Mr. Speaker, right now. It's going to

take an effort, and it's going to take an investment in order to turn things around.

We're in the opposition now. Hopefully, we won't be for long, but while we are, we can still bring forward motions and initiatives here during this session to make life better for Alberta people. We will introduce a health bill here in the next few days where we would expect and demand support from all MLAs to build a strong public health system that will be there when people need it for themselves and their families. Make a significant investment not just in trailers in the parking lot for people to wait for emergency but an investment to train nurses, to train LPNs, to make sure that we have nurse practitioners, doctors, regular RNs going through the system not just to deal with the next six months but to deal with the next 50 years with a generation of renewed investment in public health care. That's what we need, and that's where we can start today.

We will bring forward a bill to freeze car insurance. Car insurance has been so out of control here in the last year, two years since this government gave such a wonderful deal to the insurance companies and allowed them to increase their car insurance so much that many people have to park their car. We will introduce a bill here, which I expect everyone will consider and support, that would freeze and make car insurance affordable again here in the province of Alberta.

We'll bring forward a motion on the investigation on grocery prices, that we can use the power of this legislative body to investigate and start to turn around this dreadful profiteering that we see in our retail food industry. We know it's happening; we can investigate, and we can send a strong message to turn that around.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, it's all about trust. You see some affordability issues being addressed in this throne speech. They all have a due date around election time. That's the kind of affordability that this government suddenly steps up and takes notice of. Yeah, they're behind in the polls. Let's give some people some money up till the next election. That's not an affordability strategy; that's a sign of desperation by a government. It's an election strategy. People aren't stupid; they can read it right away. They're saying, "They're going to try to bribe us with our own money," and I'll say, "Well, I don't know," and then, boom, sure enough, they did exactly that.

You need to make sure that you find the roots in places like with car insurance, with tuition, with groceries; you need to find the root and not just give people a hundred dollars for a couple of months, until the next election, but you need to find a way to make life affordable for Albertans on an ongoing basis.

5:30

I stand here as the MLA for Edmonton-North West but also as a representative who takes seriously the responsibility for all Albertans in this province of Alberta. You know that the Official Opposition is here to do so. We're here to help and certainly to be constructively critical in all ways possible. That's my take on the Speech from the Throne.

I would move, Mr. Speaker, to adjourn debate at this time.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Motions

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a whole bunch of motions here we're going to move, so I'll get a glass of water here. We're going to get through these. Okay.

Constituency Week

5. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that Standing Order 3(6), which provides for one constituency week for every three sitting weeks, not apply to the 2022 fall sitting.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. the Government House Leader has moved Government Motion 5. This is a debatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 18(1)(j). Are there any members wishing to join in the debate?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call on the hon. the Government House Leader to close debate.

Mr. Schow: Waive.

[Government Motion 5 carried]

Committee Referral for Conflicts of Interest Act

7. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that

- (a) the Conflicts of Interest Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship and the committee shall be deemed to be the special committee of the Assembly for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review pursuant to section 48 of that act;
- (b) the committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned or prorogued; and
- (c) in accordance with section 48 of the Conflicts of Interest Act the committee must submit its report to the Assembly within one year after beginning its review and that report is to include any amendments recommended by the committee.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Government House Leader has moved Government Motion 7. This is a debatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 18(1)(j). Is there anyone wishing to join in the debate?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call on the minister to close debate.

Mr. Schow: Waive.

[Government Motion 7 carried]

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a long one.

Committee Membership Appointments

8. Mr. Schow moved:

Be it resolved that the membership of the Assembly's committees be replaced as follows:

- A. on the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund that Mr. Orr replace Mr. Rowswell as chair, Mr. Orr replace Mr. Rowswell, Mrs. Allard replace Mr. Jones as deputy chair, Mr. Gotfried replace Mr. Jones, Ms Pon replace Mr. Rehn, and Ms Issik replace Mr. Singh;
- B. on the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices that Mr. Smith replace Mr. Rutherford as chair, Mr. van Dijken replace Mr. Milliken as deputy chair, Mr. Hunter replace Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Toor replace Mr.

- Milliken, Mr. Rehn replace Mrs. Allard, Mr. Panda replace Mr. Long, and Mr. Orr replace Ms Rosin;
- C. on the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills that Mr. Williams replace Mr. Rutherford as chair, Mr. Williams replace Mr. Rutherford, Ms Rosin replace Mr. Jeremy Nixon as deputy chair, Ms Lovely replace Mr. Jeremy Nixon, Mr. Jason Nixon replace Mr. Amery, and Mr. Panda replace Mr. Long;
- D. on the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing that Mr. Reid replace Mr. Smith as chair, Mr. Jason Nixon replace Mr. Smith, Mr. Gotfried replace Mr. Reid as deputy chair, Mr. Rehn replace Mr. Neudorf, Mrs. Allard replace Mr. Stephan, and Mr. Yao replace Mr. Williams;
- E. on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that Mr. Hunter replace Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk, Mr. Stephan replace Mr. Rowswell, Mr. Turton replace Mr. Reid as deputy chair, Mr. Panda replace Mr. Reid, and Mr. Yaseen replace Mr. Walker;
- F. on the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services that Mr. Williams replace Mr. Schow as deputy chair, Mr. van Dijken replace Mr. Schow, Mr. Rowswell replace Mr. Sigurdson, Mr. McIver replace Mr. Neudorf, Ms Pon replace Mr. Long, and Ms Fir replace Mrs. Allard;
- G. on the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future that Mr. van Dijken replace Mr. Neudorf as chair, Mr. McIver replace Mr. Neudorf, Mrs. Allard replace Ms Rosin, Mr. Carson replace Ms Sweet, Mr. Feehan replace MLA Irwin, and that Mr. Stephan be appointed;
- H. on the Standing Committee on Families and Communities that Mr. Long replace Mr. Amery, Mr. Yaseen replace Mr. Hunter, Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk replace Mr. Reid, Mr. Yao replace Mr. Loewen, and that Ms Fir be appointed;
- I. on the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship that Ms Issik replace Mr. Guthrie, Mrs. Aheer replace Ms Lovely, Mr. Orr replace Mr. Rehn, Mr. Sigurdson replace Mr. Yao, Mr. Feehan replace Mr. Ceci as deputy chair, and Mr. Nielsen replace Mr. Ceci;
- J. on the Select Special Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner Search Committee that Ms Rosin replace Mr. Jeremy Nixon as chair, Mr. Smith replace Mr. Jeremy Nixon, and Mr. Williams replace Ms Rosin as deputy chair.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this is a debatable motion pursuant to Standing Order 18(1)(h). Are there any members wishing to join in the debate?

Seeing none, I am prepared to call on the Government House Leader to close debate.

Mr. Schow: Waive.

[Government Motion 8 carried]

The Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, I also understand that this is a significant government motion to be moved. If he is agreeable, he's welcome to, in his opening remarks, move the motion as proposed on the Order Paper, and we will accept that as part of the debate, and then you can proceed with some comments regarding that. The hon. the Government House Leader.

Amendments to Standing Orders

9. Mr. Schow moved:
- A. Be it resolved that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, effective February 23, 2022, be amended as follows:
- (a) in Standing Order 7
- (i) in suborder (1) by striking out "God Save the Queen (Thursday)" and substituting "Royal Anthem (Thursday)";
- (ii) by striking out suborder (3) and substituting the following:
- (3) When Introduction of Guests is called and for a period not exceeding 4 minutes, brief introductions, each not exceeding 20 seconds, may be made of groups of students and, with the prior permission of the Speaker, of other visitors in the galleries.
- (iii) in suborder (4) by striking out "9 Members" and substituting "7 Members";
- (b) in Standing Order 8
- (i) by striking out suborder (1) and substituting the following:
- 8(1) On Monday afternoon, after the daily routine, the order of business for consideration of the Assembly shall be as follows:
- Written Questions
Motions for Returns
Motions for Concurrence in Committee Reports on Public Bills other than Government Bills
Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders
At 5 p.m.: Motions other than Government Motions
- (ii) in suborder (7)(c) by striking out "4 sitting days" wherever it occurs and substituting "8 sitting days";
- (c) by striking out Standing Order 13(5.1);
- (d) in Standing Order 23(k) by striking out "Her Majesty" and substituting "His Majesty";
- (e) in Standing Order 52(1)(c) by striking out "Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills" and substituting "Private Bills";
- (f) in Standing Order 52.01(1) by striking out clauses (a) to (c) and substituting the following:
- (a) Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future – mandate related to the areas of Advanced Education; Culture; Forestry, Parks and Tourism; Infrastructure; Jobs, Economy and Northern Development; Skilled Trades and Professions; Technology and Innovation; Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism;
- (b) Standing Committee on Families and Communities – mandate related to the areas of Children's Services; Education;

- Health; Justice; Mental Health and Addiction; Public Safety and Emergency Services; Seniors, Community and Social Services; Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction;
- (c) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship – mandate related to the areas of Affordability and Utilities; Agriculture and Irrigation; Energy; Environment and Protected Areas; Indigenous Relations; Municipal Affairs; Transportation and Economic Corridors; Treasury Board and Finance.
 - (g) by striking out Standing Order 59.01(12);
 - (h) in Standing Order 74.1
 - (i) in the heading by striking out “Government Bill” and substituting “Bill”, and
 - (ii) in suborder (1) by striking out all of the words after “read a second time,” and substituting “the following Members may, without notice, move a motion to refer the Bill to a standing or special committee:
 - (a) with respect to a Government Bill, a member of the Executive Council;
 - (b) with respect to a public Bill other than a Government Bill, the sponsor.”
 - (i) by striking out Standing Order 74.11;
 - (j) by striking out Standing Order 83(1) and substituting the following:

83(1) The Assembly shall not adopt or pass any vote, resolution, address or Bill for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue, or of any tax or impost, to any purpose that has not been first recommended to the Assembly by Message of the Lieutenant Governor in the session that the vote, resolution, address or Bill is being proposed.
 - (k) by striking out Standing Order 89 and substituting the following:

Publication of deadline

89 The Clerk of the Assembly shall publish a notice on the Legislative Assembly website that indicates the day on which the applicable period for receiving private Bills will expire

 - (a) when a calendar is published under Standing Order 3(7), and
 - (b) prior to the commencement of the first session of a Legislature.
 - (l) in Standing Order 91
 - (i) by striking out suborders (1) and (2) and substituting the following:

91(1) The petitioner shall publish a notice of the application once a week for 2 consecutive weeks in at least one newspaper of general circulation in each area of Alberta
- to which the application relates, commencing not earlier than November 1 of the year preceding the year in which the petition will be submitted.
- (2) The notice shall clearly specify
 - (a) the nature and object of the private Bill,
 - (b) the area of Alberta in which any proposed work or activity authorized by the private Bill may take place, and
 - (c) the location of any property that may be affected by the private Bill.
 - (ii) in suborder (4) by striking out “Private Bills and Private Members’ Public Bills Committee” and substituting “Private Bills Committee”.
 - (m) by striking out Standing Order 93;
 - (n) in Standing Order 94 as follows:
 - (i) in suborder (1)
 - (A) by striking out “shall, within the time limited by suborder (2) deliver to the Clerk of the Assembly” and substituting “shall, in accordance with suborder (2), deliver the following to the Clerk of the Assembly.”;
 - (B) in clause (b) by striking out “publication of a notice in accordance with Standing Order 91 by a statutory declaration” and substituting “publication of a notice of application, in accordance with Standing Order 91, in the form of a statutory declaration”;
 - (C) in clause (c) by striking out “fee required by” and substituting “fee required under”, and
 - (D) by striking out clause (d);
 - (ii) in suborder (2)
 - (A) by striking out “The fees and documents listed in suborder (1) shall all be delivered” and substituting “The petitioner shall deliver the fees and documents listed in suborder (1)”, and
 - (B) by striking out “by the 15th day following the first day of the first sitting in any year” and substituting “no later than the 15th day following the first day of
 - (a) the first sitting in a calendar year, or
 - (b) the first session of a Legislature.”
 - (o) in the following Standing Orders by striking out “Private Bills and Private Members’ Public Bills

- Committee” and substituting “Private Bills Committee”:
 Standing Order 96(2)
 Standing Orders 98(1) and (3)
 Standing Order 100(1)
 Standing Order 101
 Standing Order 102
 Standing Order 103
 Standing Order 104
 Standing Order 105(1)
 Standing Order 106;
- (p) in the headings preceding Standing Orders 98, 100, and 105 by striking out “Private Bills and Private Members’ Public Bills Committee” and substituting “Private Bills Committee”;
- (q) in Standing Order 108.1(b) by striking out “substitute” and substituting “shall substitute”.
- B. Be it further resolved that upon passage of this motion a bill that was referred under Standing Order 74.11(1) before the passage of this motion be placed on the Order Paper for second reading.
- C. And be it further resolved that the amendments in this motion come into force on passage.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think everyone in this Chamber knows I am very agreeable.

I do rise to move Government Motion 9 on the Order Paper. I think, Mr. Speaker, that you are okay if I do not read that out in full, as you’ve mentioned. The changes proposed in Government Motion 9 will return the process of private members’ bills to that which existed prior to May 2019. It will also return the practice of members introducing their guests but with some time parameters. We’re also proposing to remove the ban on desk thumping.

[interjections] Feel free. I guess we have to approve the motion first. Members’ statements will go to seven per sitting day. The mandates of the legislative policy committees are being changed to reflect the new government ministries, and sadly a couple of changes were needed as a result of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Finally, recommendations were presented to us to improve the process for private bills, and we have presented those as part of this motion.

In closing, I do want to say that the government has worked collaboratively with the Official Opposition House Leader on these proposed changes. I do want to thank her and all the members of her caucus for their participation. I’m encouraged by the amount of collaboration we’ve had going forward thus far.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. the Government House Leader has moved Government Motion 9 as per the Order Paper. This is a debatable motion. Is there anyone wishing to join in the debate?

If not, I am prepared to call on the hon. Government House Leader to close debate.

5:40

Mr. Schow: Waive.

[Government Motion 9 carried]

The Speaker: Hear, hear.

The hon. the Government House Leader appears to be rising.

Mr. Schow: Man, that felt good. Mr. Speaker, thank you, and I thank all members of the Chamber this evening for your participation and bearing with me through those motions. At this time I do move that the Assembly be adjourned until 7:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:41 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Prayers	7
Peter Trynchy, August 22, 1931, to November 21, 2022.....	7
Statement by the Speaker	
Proposed Amendments to Standing Orders	7
Introduction of Guests	8
Rotation of Questions and Members' Statements, Private Members' Business Rules and Practices of the Assembly.....	9
Introduction of Visitors	7
Introduction of Guests	7
Members' Statements8	
Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act	8, 9
Postsecondary Education Funding	8
Former MLA Peter Trynchy	8
Seniors' Support	9
Pacific NorthWest Economic Region	18
Northern Alberta Land-use Planning	18
Oral Question Period	
Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act	10, 12, 15
Health Care System	11
Children's Health Care and Hospital Capacity	12
Health Spending Accounts	13
Affordability Plan	13
Health Care Workforce Supply	14
Education Funding.....	15
Queen Elizabeth II Highway 65th Avenue Interchange in Leduc.....	16
Alberta Sovereignty Act and Indigenous Rights.....	16
Organizational Vaccine Policies and Provincial Funding.....	17
Spinal Muscular Atrophy Treatment	17
Notices of Motions	18
Tabling Returns and Reports	19
Tablings to the Clerk	19
Election of a Deputy Chair of Committees	19
Motions under Standing Order 42	
Children's Health Care and Hospital Capacity	20
Orders of the Day	22
Government Motions	
Fall Sitting	22
Evening Sittings	22
Constituency Week.....	36
Committee Referral for Conflicts of Interest Act	36
Committee Membership Appointments	36
Amendments to Standing Orders.....	37
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 1 Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act.....	22
Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech	31

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