



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 28th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Alberta's Economic Future

Bill 9, Public Sector Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2014
Bill 10, Employment Pension (Private Sector) Plans Amendment Act, 2014
Public Input Meeting in Lethbridge

Tuesday, June 24, 2014
6 p.m.

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The 28th Legislature
Second Session**

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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6 p.m.

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

[Mr. Amery in the chair]

Location: Lethbridge

The Chair: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Minister Weadick, good evening. I would like to welcome all members, staff, and guests in attendance at today's meeting of the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future.

I would like to call this meeting to order and ask that members and committee support staff at the table introduce themselves for the record, and would members attending as substitutes for committee members please also indicate this in your introduction. I will start. I am Moe Amery, MLA for Calgary-East and chair of this committee.

Mr. Fox: I'm Rod Fox, MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka, deputy chair of this committee and member of the Official Opposition.

Mrs. Sarich: Good evening and welcome. I'm Janice Sarich, MLA, Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Rowe: Good evening. Bruce Rowe, MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Ms Pastoor: Good evening. I'm the MLA for Lethbridge-East.

Mr. Stier: Good evening. I'm Pat Stier, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod, which is a riding to the west, and I am a member of the Wildrose Official Opposition.

Mr. Rogers: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is George Rogers. I'm the MLA for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. McDonald: Good evening. Everett McDonald, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Eggen: Good evening. My name is David Eggen. I am the MLA for Edmonton-Calder with the Alberta New Democrats.

Mr. Quadri: Good evening. Sohail Quadri, MLA, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Luan: Jason Luan, MLA, Calgary-Hawkwood.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Hi. I'm Donna Kennedy-Glans. I'm the MLA for Calgary-Varsity, and I'm an independent.

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you, all. Thank you, all, very much.

Just a few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. All microphones are operated by the *Hansard* staff. Please turn off or mute all cellphones, iPhones, and BlackBerrys.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's so nice to be in Lethbridge today. By way of background, on May 5, 2014, the Legislative Assembly passed motions referring Bill 9, Public Sector Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2014, and Bill 10, Employment Pension (Private Sector) Plans Amendment Act, 2014, to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future for review. The committee began its review by meeting for three full days with pension experts and stakeholders. The committee is now conducting public meetings in seven locations around the province and has also invited interested Albertans to send in written submissions by August 15, 2014. We look forward to hearing from those who will be presenting this

evening. The meeting will conclude at 9 p.m. or earlier, depending on the number of presenters we hear from this evening.

Just a few housekeeping items to address before we begin the presentations. Each presenter will have a maximum of five minutes to make their presentation, and we will be using a timer to help us keep to our schedule. Presentation time will be followed by time for questions from the committee members. Should any presenter wish to follow up with additional information regarding his or her presentation, they may follow up in writing through the committee offices.

Audio of committee proceedings is streamed live on the Internet and recorded by *Alberta Hansard*. The *Hansard* transcript for this evening's meeting will be available on the Legislative Assembly of Alberta website later this week, and written documents will also be made available to the public.

Ladies and gentlemen, just a few brief comments about the role of this committee. The Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future is an all-party committee consisting of 15 Members of the Legislative Assembly. It may meet to review a bill or to consider an issue referred to it by the Assembly and can also meet on its own initiative to consider issues within its mandate. Bills 9 and 10 have been referred to the committee by the Legislative Assembly to deliberate on the content of the bills and to seek further information in regard to the points laid out in them.

That is what we are here to do today. We are here to listen to the citizens of the province of Alberta, to get their perspective on the content of these bills. We have not come here with any predetermined outcomes or ideas. It is our job to try to gain as much information as possible to advise the House on what we have heard both from experts on the subject and from the public. As such, I would like to invite you to make your presentations with the comfort that we are genuinely here to listen to you, and we look forward to what you have to say.

As I said earlier, it's so nice to have Mr. Weadick here with us and also your other MLA, Ms Pastoor.

Now we will start with the presentations. I will call the first presenter, Melanie DeCillia, please. Introduce yourself for the record. I see we have a copy of your written submission.

Melanie DeCillia

Ms DeCillia: Hi. I'm Melanie DeCillia. I'm fortunate to have a full-time job working with children and families with Alberta Health Services, child and adolescent addiction and mental health. I'm paid a fair wage and live and work in Lethbridge. I spend my money here and own property. I feel very fortunate.

I moved to Alberta and began working several minimum-wage jobs at the age of 19. I didn't like living below the poverty line and decided to go to school. I was lucky that my parents had a school fund saved for me. I continued to work while I attended school. I began my career at the age of 24 and started to save for retirement. For the first eight years of my career I participated in many workplace and private financial plans to save for retirement. The only consistent factor was that none of the plans were guaranteed. I have lost and earned. I cannot plan a stable, modest retirement in a roller coaster market. I do not want to gamble my basic needs. I will one day depend on my pension.

I'm very fortunate to do what I love for a living. However, working with children and families that need your help takes a toll on your heart and invites stress into your life. Since beginning with Alberta Health Services and a defined benefit pension plan, I have felt secure. I know what to expect. That is real peace of mind. I see every day the effects poverty has on families, health, and personal well-being. I have a plan to retire with no debt or

mortgage payments. I want to be able to maintain a life with dignity. I want to continue to support myself. I want to know what my income will be when I retire. Due to the high stress in my job I was hoping to use my 85 factor and retire at the age of 60. I want to have a few years of being active in my retirement.

Why I asked to speak tonight was to remind you that an independent actuary has said that there is no problem with our pension. I want to say that there is one problem. I don't want the Minister of Finance now or ever to be the legal trustee of my plan. I want to tell you that I know how hard previous Albertans and Canadians have fought for our labour rights. I want to assure you I will make it my main goal to keep these labour rights and to make them stronger and better. I am young, intelligent, and ready to fight for this. We all need a stable plan for our future.

The Chair: Thank you, Melanie.

Any questions for Melanie?

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Melanie. That was an awesome presentation. HSAA has negotiated your contract for you, for your wages and your pension as well, right?

Ms DeCillia: Yes.

Mr. Eggen: So they negotiate that as a whole package, how much money you're getting for your wage and your pension as a whole kind of package together.

Ms DeCillia: Yes.

Mr. Eggen: What's changing here now, I wonder.

6:10

Ms DeCillia: Well, the contract would be breached.

Mr. Eggen: Like the contract that you have for everybody that was negotiated in your collective bargaining?

Ms DeCillia: Yes.

Mr. Eggen: Yes. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Done, Mr. Eggen?

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you very much. I wanted to ask – I've pretty well been asking the same bundle of questions from my perspective just to gain a better understanding of a couple of things. I was wondering if, because Alberta Health Services would be part of the LAPP, you had the opportunity to go onto the LAPP website to try out their pension estimator.

Ms DeCillia: Yeah.

Mrs. Sarich: Was it helpful, or did it give you any indication?

My second question, really quickly, is also: did you have an opportunity to sit down with a representative from the LAPP to kind of chart out where you are now and what some of the changes would mean directly to yourself as a young person coming into the pension plan?

Ms DeCillia: I have been on the website, and I haven't actually sat down with somebody. I will in the future. I just did attend a

pension workshop, and they did talk about the changes, and I would probably lose about \$500 a month. That's big for me.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. All right. That's very helpful, and I thank you for sharing that. Thank you.

Ms DeCillia: Thanks.

The Chair: Mr. Stier? No? The question was answered.

Mr. Quadri: You say that you will lose \$500 a month?

Ms DeCillia: About there, yeah.

Mr. Quadri: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Mr. Rogers: Thank you again for your presentation, Melanie. I'm just wondering if you might elaborate. In answering Mr. Eggen's question, you said that you felt the proposed changes would be a breach of contract. Could you elaborate on what you would attribute that to?

Ms DeCillia: Well, I think that a negotiated contract is a contract that needs to be upheld and that my pension is part of that contract, so if it's changed, then it would be a breach of contract, don't you think?

Mr. Rogers: Well, I guess I'm not going to try and argue with you, but I'm just thinking that because of the nature of what we're dealing with here, that's covered by legislation, it's realistic to expect that from time to time the legislation may need to be adjusted. Now, whether that's good or bad for your benefit is another story. But I'm just trying to get a sense in my head of how it would be a breach of contract, whether you're suggesting, then – and it may be something that we would take away from here – that any changes like this would have to be part of your negotiations when you are renewing your contract. Is that what you're suggesting rather than being legislated and then you're forced to live with whatever comes out of it?

Ms DeCillia: I wasn't suggesting that; you were.

Mr. Rogers: Okay. Well, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Melanie. Thank you.

Bryan Firth

Mr. Firth: Good evening, everybody.

The Chair: Good evening.

Mr. Firth: First off, I'd like to thank you, all, for taking time to hear us on this issue. My name is Bryan Firth. I have been a caretaker for the public school board here in Lethbridge for just coming up on 33 years. Pensions are something that a lot of people don't fully understand, including myself. Pension experts, for the most part, do not talk in a way that the average worker can understand. They're talking in terms whereas we just more or less talk in plain and simple English. I am about to take my pension, but with these changes that are being proposed, I might not be able to.

I just got my pension statement here a little while ago, up to the end of December, and it said that to date I have paid 82,250 bucks into my pension, \$4,575 alone last year. I believe it said that my

pension would be \$1,700 right now. Even that's not enough for us to live off. I'm the only one in my family who works, because my wife is blind and cannot work. Any changes to these plans are going to seriously affect how much I will get in my old age. I have been a trade union member almost all of my working life and will not stand for anyone trying to claw back my pension, and I feel that this is what this is. It's a clawback, in my opinion. There are over 300,000 members right now paying into LAPP. This fund is not in trouble as it is right now about 92 per cent funded. That comes from one of our staff reps, Bruce McLeod, and if he doesn't know it about pensions, you don't need to know it.

There is also a plan in place where this pension will be one hundred per cent self-sufficient by 2022, and we are all as LAPP members right now paying a couple per cent extra, but that day will come when that's supposed to end. The money comes off our paycheques. This is our money plus our deferred wages. I refuse to be brainwashed into believing what you are telling us. It is not in my best interests or anyone's best interests to see pension benefits cut.

When I'm in my 80s, I won't be able to work, and I will be the only one getting a pension. If you think there needs to be changes, than do what other provinces do: sit down and bargain and negotiate. We get by from our employees, and we will probably find better ways to save money in our seniors' lives.

The members of CUPE are willing to stand up and fight for our rights. I am a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employers. I probably forgot to mention that. CUPE has been talking to our lawyers about taking this to court. If they do so, I will be supporting them one hundred per cent, and I will be on the front line even if I'm there with my walker. [some applause] Thank you.

The Alberta government claims that there's a \$7.4 million deficit in the pension plans. This is a misleading statement. They do not talk about the fact that there are things in place to bring that to a hundred per cent. Employees and employers are paying extra right now to get to that hundred per cent. They do not mention that the payments will end in a few years. All the experts say that there is no crisis other than the one that the government is trying to make up. LAPP on average pays about \$15,000 a year right now to its members, and that's, I would say, probably if you would have your 85 points.

Add that to the Canada pension; you will be getting approximately \$22,000 a year between your LAPP and Canada pension. In the AUPE especially it is predicted that they will only get about \$12,400 a year. Now, I'd like to see the government and anybody in the government try to live on \$22,000 a year. You can't do it.

They are also trying to take away the cost-of-living allowance. The longer we live on these pensions, the less we get. Under the current rules your proposed changes take away what little increases pensioners get to help keep up with inflation. Every time we turn around, people are trying to blame workers for everything. Well, we the workers did not create this mess; the government did. You are condemning an entire generation of workers into poverty. If the government goes through with these changes, it will be harder to attract and keep people in the public-employee sector. Even Mayor Nenshi has recognized and said that he is worried about keeping talented employees.

Look at what just happened in Quebec. The government is trying to push through similar pension changes, and 50 firefighters retired rather than face changes. That's a small example of what we face. If Quebec loses 50 firefighters, imagine what will happen in Alberta when we already have a labour shortage.

The Chair: Thank you. Thank you very much, sir. That's your five minutes.

Mr. Firth: Okay.

Mrs. Sarich: It's Bryan, right?

Mr. Firth: Yes.

Mrs. Sarich: You have a couple of extra things that you'd like to share with the committee this evening, so just go ahead.

Mr. Firth: I've got one more page if it would suit the committee.

Mrs. Sarich: Yeah. Go ahead. Please finish.

Mr. Firth: Okay. Just let me find where I left off here. A defined benefit pension is a part of what attracts people to the front-line public-sector jobs, and it is a great part of what keeps us from leaving, and it's one of the things that has kept me with the school board for coming up on 33 years. If you want changes, then bargain them.

I would like to say that everyone has the right to have a job that pays a living wage. Everyone has the right to good benefits. Everyone has the right to quality health care and not-for-profit health care. Everyone has the right to a retirement pension they can live on. Everyone has a right to live in dignity and enjoy a good life. Remember: we are ready to fight, and we are fighting. If we lose, we will win at the ballot box.

6:20

In closing, I would like to read a few labour quotes to the many people here tonight. The first one says – and I changed this one a little bit from one man to one person – that one person can make a difference, and every person should try. President Kennedy.

Our... unions are not... self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and the grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor.

Again, that's President Kennedy.

"The future depends on what we do in the present." Mahatma Gandhi. Here's one I really like: "I'm not a humanitarian, I'm a hell-raiser." Mother Jones.

Thank you.

The Chair: Bryan, we might have some questions for you from the committee.

Mr. Firth: Go ahead.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you very much, Bryan. As a former school board trustee the work that you've provided to the school boards and all of your colleagues is very important, and I wanted to thank you for that. Please sit down. Thank you for having the courage to share your thoughts this evening. I'm asking the same questions. I'm very curious. You've given 33 years if I heard you correctly.

Mr. Firth: Just coming up.

Mrs. Sarich: Yes. The LAPP had the calculator. Did you venture out and have a look at the calculator for yourself?

Mr. Firth: I tried to get on it a couple of times. I couldn't get through. I tried again here just recently, but our school board is having serious problems with their network, and we're having trouble accessing the Internet right now.

Mrs. Sarich: Yeah. How about a pension representative from LAPP? Have you had an opportunity to sit down and kind of walk through? Your story, your years of service in LAPP are very common from what we've heard as a standing committee in other spots in Alberta. I'm just was wondering if there's something that we should be learning from the pension representative if you had that opportunity to discuss . . .

Mr. Firth: I haven't had a chance to speak with them yet. They only come here, apparently, about twice a year, and I believe the next one is coming sometime in October.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay.

Mr. Firth: Our school board sets that up for us when they do come.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. Yeah. Would that be something of interest for you?

Mr. Firth: Yes. I am going to try to get into that next one when somebody does come around.

Mrs. Sarich: Yeah. Okay.

Mr. Firth: Our benefits co-ordinator lets us know when that's happening.

Mrs. Sarich: Very good. That's all I have. Thank you very much.

Mr. Firth: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Sarich.
Mr. Stier.

Mr. Stier: Yes. Good evening. Thank you, Bryan, for your presentation. I'm very glad to hear from you tonight. Thank you for your service.

I just had one question, and I'm going to probably be asking this a couple of times this evening. I'm just wondering: have you ever received any information directly from the government with these proposed changes or been notified directly from the government in any regard to these proposed changes in the past year and a half, since these bills have been launched?

Mr. Firth: Do you mean, like, say, through the post office, having stuff mailed to my home?

Mr. Stier: Directly to you, without coming through your union representative, and so on.

Mr. Firth: No, not personally.

Mr. Stier: Have you ever seen the government consult with members individually with their opinions on what proposed changes may be in consideration?

Mr. Firth: I haven't seen anyone from the government speak to anyone individually that I know of.

Mr. Stier: Okay. That's all I had, then. Thank you very much again.

Mr. Firth: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stier.
Any other questions for Bryan?
Bryan, thank you very much.

Mr. Firth: Thank you for hearing me.

The Chair: Thank you.

Karen Weiers

Ms Weiers: Good evening.

The Chair: Good evening.

Ms Weiers: My name is Karen Weiers. I'm a member of LAPP and a 35-year employee of what's now called Alberta Health Services. I'm opposed to both bills but will be speaking in opposition to Bill 9 as it affects me the most.

As I have my own concerns about these unnecessary changes, I also want to talk a little bit about my co-workers and how this will impact them as well. I belong to a grouping in Alberta Health Services known as general support services, or GSS, covering about 23,000 workers across this province. While doctors and nursing care staff are front and centre in the public image of who health care workers are, GSS staff are sometimes the invisibles of the system.

There are over a hundred different types of jobs that are done to support the necessary care provided in Alberta Health Services. We are clerical staff; maintenance; trades; housekeeping; finances; food and dietary services; porters; and the surgical processors, those who keep the things that go into your body clean and ready for operation; just to name a few. We are the glue that holds the system together.

While much public attention was paid to the salaries of the doctors and the bonuses and payouts to Alberta Health Services executives that seem to just come and go, loyal workers like myself are told that pensions are unsustainable. Most people are unaware that some GSS staff are paid as low as \$15 an hour. Living paycheque to paycheque for GSS workers is a reality. Deciding whether to buy food for your family or pay the light bills is a reality. Like most public-sector workers, we are mostly women, and most of us are supporting families on our modest incomes.

I am also here as one of the vice-presidents for the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, representing over 80,000 members that will be affected by these changes, changes that are unwarranted, unjustified, and unfair.

Our pensions, the money we contributed, for many of us represents our life savings. When I started working in health care 35 years ago, I had understood that my pension would be there for me. This is true for every other public-sector worker as well. This was never discussed as a subject for future negotiations or, "It might be nice if you get the pension you were promised," but it was as a secure defined benefit plan.

I have kept my promise to my employer, with over 35 years of dedicated service, and I am asking the same in return. These proposals stand to fundamentally erode pension benefits for the present and future pensioners. By putting a cap on the contribution rates, what would happen should there be another market crash? The government hasn't explained this part of their plan, but it would mean significant cuts to everyone in the plan, including current pensioners, and major cuts to the benefits earned after 2015. The shortfall could only come from the benefits that people would be receiving.

Another huge concern for many is the 85 factor. People are working short, carrying heavy workloads due to this government's cutbacks. They are being physically and emotionally drained by their work, yet they stay with their employers. And you bet; part

of the reason they stay is because they're proud to help other Albertans in need.

It would be nice to have some recognition as well. After bills 45 and 46, public-sector workers are being told by their employer, this government, that their rights and their voice are secondary to mean-spirited agendas of cutbacks, downsizing, and privatization. So without feeling like their employer is in their corner, some workers at least had a pension to look forward to until Bill 9.

As public-sector workers we have seen many callous, reckless bills brought forth of late. My firm belief is that if you do anything, keep your politics away from our pensions. Give us joint governance between employees and employers, and keep MLAs and ministers out of the picture.

This government talks about pension plan unsustainability. Perhaps if there was concern about retirement security, this government needs to make it easier to unionize.

Finally, perhaps there shouldn't be so much focus on those of us that currently have pensions and more focus on those that do not. Living in the richest province in this country, there should be secured pensions for all Albertans.

I would almost like to thank this government for engaging Albertans in the political aspect of our province. Albertans have recognized that this government is no longer listening to them but to that of their own agenda. The controversial bills that I have mentioned and that have been introduced and some which have passed have further awakened and united public-sector workers and their unions. Again, never before that I recall have Albertans been so politically engaged and enraged.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight, and I really hope that these changes are never heard in the Legislature again.

The Chair: Good timing. Thank you, Karen.

Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you very much. Karen, thank you for, if I heard you correctly, your 35 years with Alberta Health Services and your tireless dedication to that particular profession.

The question I have is: because we have been hearing through the various spots that we've been travelling to throughout Alberta that people that are part of the LAPP – there seems to be a little bit of a disconnect in terms of receiving information. I was wondering if you had received updates from LAPP, because LAPP as a group has been at the table in discussions with the government for some time, so I'm just wondering how well they informed you. Have they provided you directly with updates about their activities and the dialogue with the government?

6:30

Ms Weiers: Being part of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, we actually have members that sit on that board. Being one of the vice-presidents, I am aware of it, of what's been going on through LAPP, but the most information that I've ever received – and to answer your question before you ask it, Mr. Stier: no, we have not heard anything directly from the government, and, no, we have not heard anything directly from Alberta Health Services. The most information that we have received is through AUPE, our union, that has given us the information and the information on what's going on.

Mrs. Sarich: Right. And my question was about LAPP directly.

Ms Weiers: Not from LAPP directly, no.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. That's very helpful.

I would like to thank you for having the courage to bring forward your perspectives to share with the standing committee. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Sarich.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Karen. I'm just starting to realize that in many different jobs where we're seeing these pensions potentially being cut, people aren't even making it to that full pension level anyway. I'm wondering if that's the case in your area amongst general service workers. Why are workers not making it to the end to get that full pension benefit?

Ms Weiers: I'm very fortunate because I have been there, and I will make it to the levels. My concerns are the COLA and the cap. But for those people that are not as fortunate as I am to receive the full pension, with all the cuts that have happened, people aren't staying. The retention is not there for people to even stay in Alberta Health Services and a lot of government services, too. There's a retention issue and also a recruitment issue. When you lose respect for your government, it's hard to even fathom staying with the government when you can't believe them. You know, Bill 9 is another issue with that as well. People won't stay because of situations just like this.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Eggen.

Ms Kennedy-Glans, please.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you. Thanks very much for coming tonight and for contributing. There may be a silver lining in this in that – and I know it's very sensitive, and I don't mean it facetiously – Albertans will need to figure out how to talk about pensions. I'm just wondering. You've got the experience now of looking really hard at your pension and understanding all the implications, and you probably have done that for quite some time, but lots of people in Alberta haven't, including my kids, for example. How would you recommend that we as a government, all parties, talk about pensions in a way that can be understood by all Albertans? What can we all do to make sure that people understand what we're talking about? This is a big deal. This is obviously a big deal if there are this many people in the room.

Ms Weiers: Well, first of all, I believe that this is a political problem, not a communication problem. I also believe that when we go to talk about pensions and about the issues concerning pensions, we can't dissect it into different areas as well. When we hear of different subjects such as bringing in pensions at a different level or stuff like that, that should be a non-issue. When we look at the retirement age for seniors as well, where this could affect seniors, we need to look after all Albertans, not just those currently paying into the plan, those receiving the plan, and the younger generation who will get the plan. Talk absolutely needs to happen, but it also needs to happen from a political aspect of staying out of it and letting the governing bodies of employers and employees who contribute to the plans monitor the plans.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Karen.

Chris Ingold

Ms Ingold: Good evening. My name is Chris Ingold, and I am president of CUPE local 70 in Lethbridge. CUPE stands for Canadian Union of Public Employees. We represent municipal

workers for the city of Lethbridge. We have approximately 800 members, and the majority participate in the local authorities pension plan.

At last we have the chance to voice our concerns on the drastic changes to our pension plan, changes that are unreasonable and totally unnecessary. Many of our members wrote to their MLAs and the Minister of Finance. They received a generic response thanking them for writing and assuring them that their comments would be considered as part of the government's consultation process. The response indicates that the government's proposed changes will help address the long-term sustainability of the plans by making them more adaptable, affordable, and secure even though all the independent evidence says that there is no problem with the financial health of the plan. Where is the government getting their data from? How can they say that the proposed changes should not affect their retirement plans? Taking a guaranteed benefit and converting it to a target benefit affects our pension plans. Robbing the plan of future revenue if and when the market crashes again will leave future governments with only one option, to reduce benefits for retirees. This is not right.

I have some major concerns with the proposed changes. Our members are going to be forced to stay longer at physically demanding jobs than is healthy. We are going to be affected financially, emotionally, and psychologically. More people will leave the public sector for more lucrative positions in the private sector. The elimination of the guaranteed cost-of-living adjustment with a so-called targeted adjustment: whatever that means.

The special forces pension plan has not been required to make any significant changes. The only change they have had to make is to move to an ad hoc cost-of-living adjustment system. Our members don't understand why it is that one pension plan requires only minimal changes while ours is subjected to major changes imposed on us against our will. Making multiple changes is unnecessary and irresponsible as it affects many people who will not be collecting high pensions to begin with and can cause undue hardship for them. The promise of the 85 factor, that LAPP was founded on, would also be scrapped.

Several of our members wrote in, and one of our members wrote: "I have experienced some depression, anger, and anxiety since the war on my pension began. I feel bullied and betrayed by the PC government and no longer trust that this government is looking after our best interests."

Another member wrote to our MLA with the following: "The government is saying that the pension fund is not sustainable while pension trustees, the people who oversee the fund, say leave it be, and it will come back around to being good again. If there is no immediate threat to the fund, as the government is saying, why not give it a chance to turn around? Then you and yours will be seen to have done the right thing instead of this knee-jerk reaction to a problem that hasn't happened yet. It is like taking a drug for an illness that you don't have. Why would you do that? Have some patience, and let time be the judge. Financial investments need time to recover from what was a shock to the system. It is not life threatening."

I was very pleased to see a letter from Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi, dated May 2, to Premier Dave Hancock. I believe his letter was instrumental in setting up these pension forums to hear from the people. It was so nice to see Mayor Nenshi standing up for his city and his staff and making his concerns heard. His letter outlined the crippling effect that Bill 9 as currently drafted could have on the labour force, operations, and finances.

I would like to close with this last statement. Think before you change people's futures based on the thoughts of a few and not in the best interests of many. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Chris.

Any questions from any of the members?

6:40

Mr. Luan: Chris, I want to thank you very much for your thoughts and passion. Obviously, you've done a lot of preparation and research on this. I want to assure you that I am a PC MLA, but I also have a background of being a past member of AUPE and a past member of LAPP. It's interesting when I sit on this committee observing and listening to the government's rationales, experts' rationales, and our different union groups' rationales about this issue.

I want to go back to what MLA Kennedy-Glans said earlier. On the pension issue we've got to get back to the science and facts part of that. You know, when we start to polarize the issue to have it become an ideological kind of debate, I find that I'm losing an understanding of the real need. I can tell you that on the first day, when I heard the national experts from different parts of the country, who had no interest in our political landscape here and talked purely about their experience when they had to measure the challenge and the crisis and so on and so forth, I was quite taken. My learning from that is that the overall pensions that we set up years ago share a common issue. It doesn't matter that it's Alberta. It's the whole nation. It's the whole developed country.

Pretending that nothing is wrong, so let's just not do anything: to me, that isn't very responsible. When everybody talks about the need to preserve the pension, to keep the promise that we made alive, I think that on that one I don't see much issue. Where I do see an issue is how to get from A to B. There are various ways that people presented. I'm so glad that our government decided to open this up, to hear the public, and to engage with the population to figure out the better way to approach this. I'm sitting here listening. Lots of good points were made, including from the previous speakers talking about: when I was engaged in public service, this was part of the compensation package. I can totally relate to that. I myself had 21 years of service in that regard.

The question I have is: how do we work together on this versus polarizing the issue?

Ms Ingold: Listen to us.

Mr. Luan: I like that one. Yeah.

The Chair: We have one more question. Mr. Eggen, please.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks. Well, Chris, I don't know if you were following the expert panel part of this tour that we've been doing. Did you know that of all the expert advice that we brought in, the only people that said that we needed to make major changes were the deputy minister of this government and the New Brunswick expert that they were trying to copy? The other people that we brought in from Ontario and other places demonstrated quite amply that the fundamentals of our pension are sound. Did you hear that?

Ms Ingold: No, I did not.

Mr. Eggen: Well, check it out. It's good to see.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Ingold: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Lewis Callahan

Dr. Callahan: Greetings. Welcome to Lethbridge. My name is Lewis Callahan. I'm a member of LAPP, and I've been a member of that pension plan for 24 years. Over the past year pension plans have done exceptionally well because the stock market has finally taken off after many years of flat performance. Even before this past year the LAPP pension board estimated that the pension was to be free of unfunded liability by about 2026. The pension plan had surveyed members about what they wanted in 2013 and concluded that no changes were necessary to the pension or to the 85 factor.

Nevertheless, if it was determined that changes did need to be made, I'd like to make the following recommendations. One, changes to the factor to qualify for a pension without penalty from 55 years old and an 85 factor to, say, 60 years old and a 90 factor should be grandfathered in and applied to new hires only.

Bill 9's use of a single, arbitrary date, December 31, 2015, is unfair and even more so given that the date is not very far in the future. To demonstrate the unfairness of a single date, consider two twins, one born, say, December 31 at 11:58 and the other born a half-hour later, on January 1. Assume that they began working for an organization that had LAPP as its pension. On December 31, 2015, the first twin has exactly the 85 factor and is 55 years old, but the younger twin is just one day short and, as a consequence, must work until he's 60 years old or be penalized whereas his brother can retire without any penalty whatsoever. What could be less fair given that they both worked their entire careers with the factor and age of 85 and 55 in mind? Granted, circumstances change, but several years of notice and either a grandfathering in of the rules or at least a graduated transition make for fairness.

If the new factor of 60 and 90 is not grandfathered in, at least phase it in as a less desirable but sensible way of transitioning. For example, on the date of pension change, December 31, 2015, anyone with less than a total factor of 55 and 85 but having between, say, 80 and 84.99 would need to work until they had an age factor of 56 and 86. If they had between 75 and 79.99, then 57 and 87; between 74 and 74.99, 58 and 88; between 65 and 65.99, 59 and 89; and if they had less than a 65 factor on that date, then they would have to go to the full 60 and 90.

Two, changes to contribution rates. By grandfathering or phasing in new, larger factors to qualify for pension without penalty, people will not be drawing on the pension plan for as many years, thus taking pressure off contribution rates. Recent gains in the stock market that have reduced unfunded liabilities have the same impact. It needs to be stressed that LAPP only pays a 1.4 per cent pension per year as a base. Most other North American jurisdictions have defined benefit pension plans that pay 2 per cent per year, but some are as high as 2.5, like the state of Illinois.

If contribution rates were reduced in Alberta, then the current 1.4 per cent per year base would likewise be reduced commensurately. Talk of reducing pension contribution rates to Alberta's public pension plans, already among the least generous defined benefit pension plans in North America, will further reduce the attractiveness of Alberta's public pension plans and will exacerbate Alberta's ability to attract and retain professionals and other employees in the public sector.

Finally, we need to be ethical. When someone works for years towards a public pension for which they were allowed commensurately less RRSP contribution room and in many cases

gave up opportunities to earn more salary in the private sector, to make sudden, drastic changes to contribution rates or pension factors without either grandfathering or phasing them in is tantamount to reneging on a contractual commitment.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Kennedy-Glans.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you. The points you raised – and I appreciate it very much – beg a question, and it's a really tough question about intergenerational fairness. I'm wondering: within your union membership how do you have the conversation with younger workers and with people who are already retired and people who are about to retire about what is fair? It's a very honest question. I think it's a really hard question for all of us, whether we're talking about this pension or CPP. How do you have that discussion, and how would you like that discussion to happen?

Dr. Callahan: Well, that's a good question. I think that because people had essentially relied on 55 and 85, there hasn't been a need to discuss that or even ask that question until very recently, so it's not a question that has been around for a long time.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: How would you like to have that question, though, going forward? We're all going to have to have that question.

Dr. Callahan: Well, I acknowledge that if it were a hundred years from now and if the average lifespan was 150 years, we would need to phase something in, hence my emphasis over and over again on phasing in or grandfathering in.

6:50

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Yeah. But you're talking about new people to the plan having a different plan. I'm not being accusatory here. It's a really big discussion about how we be fair. I'm asking the question.

Dr. Callahan: Well, I gave an example of transitioning in, where it would be graduated. For instance, everybody here knows, I think, that the age for OAS has increased to 67 for certain people, but that was done many years in the future, so many years in the future that it doesn't seem to have caused a ruffle.

Lesser known, I suppose, is that the CPP penalty for early withdrawal has increased, but that was graduated in ever so slightly, little bit by little bit, to the point where it doesn't really bother people. It hasn't caused a ruffle. You probably haven't heard of it.

In the United States, where they increased social security, rather than saying that you have to go from this age to that age, they phased it in so that people went in three months longer at a time, which is sensible. I mean, we acknowledge that changes need to be made. They need to be done intelligently and fairly. That's how I'd like to see that addressed.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you.

Dr. Callahan: My pleasure.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you for your presentation. I think it's important to understand that you are in the best position to negotiate strongly for a pension if you stand together in solidarity with people of all ages. You know, if you're using the same

thought experiment that you have here, imagine a person born in 1962, and imagine a person born in 1992. That would be myself and my daughter, let's say. I would expect that she would need for herself and her family the same level of pension that I could get from my job. There's nothing that's changed. My suggestion to you is to stand together in solidarity with people of all ages, and don't compromise that.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you very much.

Michael Persinger

Mr. Persinger: Thank you, all, for coming down to meet with everyone here this evening. I'm probably about the fifth or sixth presenter, so I don't know how much new information I will have for you. But you made the trip down, and I typed this up, so I'm going to read it through anyway. Feel free to take notes on your tablet as well.

The Chair: We're here to listen.

Mr. Persinger: As you can see here tonight, there is great interest from the public. There are many more that could not be in attendance here this evening through various family commitments. I spoke to many in my workplace, and I'll be covering some of their concerns as we go through this here this evening. I would like to focus on Bill 9 and, specifically, the PSPP.

As a taxpayer first and foremost, a member of the AUPE, and an employee of the University of Lethbridge I am concerned about the future sustainability of the public service pension plans. It's no secret that the pension plans in Canada and across the world face unprecedented challenges moving forward. Market fluctuation, low-interest returns, unfunded liabilities, and an aging workforce are just some of the factors that will necessitate a review of the pension system moving forward to ensure that these plans are healthy, sustainable, and affordable. But at this time these are just future challenges, not an immediate crisis, as admitted by the government and independently verified.

I'm happy to see that Minister Horner has referred this to committee. This is the first step to show that we are on the same page, and we must advance and move together. It is important that the government and the stakeholders establish a framework and move forward together to manage future sustainability. That's the key word there, sustainability.

The plans are not in crisis, and I believe that these changes would negatively affect the long-term sustainability of the plan. These do not require an extreme, fundamental change, which I believe is what is being proposed here so far. Specifically, the cap on contribution leads to a plan that is unsustainable. The unpredictability of markets must be offset by a means to recoup those losses. If a cap is put in place, the only way to make up the future shortfalls is to reduce benefits. Benefit reductions to members put significant risk at a point in their lives when they are most vulnerable and least able to make up the difference.

One of the most contentious issues among members that I have spoken with is regarding COLA. The change in the term from "guaranteed" to "targeted" is one of the most frightening single-word changes and is causing the most apprehension among members. No guarantee in terms of COLA combined with a cap on contributions is an attack on our citizens at the time when they are least adaptable to unanticipated changes.

The weakening of what is now a sound pension plan would have another negative effect. The public sector has a vested

interest in attracting quality people to the workforce. The public sector has long been known to offer better pension and benefits that offset the traditionally higher wages offered in the private sector. As a recent university graduate and one that has recently entered the workforce, I can attest to this.

This committee must be mindful of the recommendations for proposed changes as this matter affects all Albertans. Challenges lay in wait on the road ahead but do not require the fundamental changes that are being proposed today. Instead of an attempt to implement a framework to work with stakeholders and constituents to address this, the minister presented changes that are sweeping. Where there is no crisis, please do not create one.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Quadri.

Mr. Quadri: Thank you. I appreciate that you're allowing me to take some notes.

You mentioned about the framework, so what do you propose in terms of framework?

Mr. Persinger: This is a good start, a good step 1, coming around and discussing with everyone what their ideas are. The doctor before me had some great proposals and ideas, and I believe, you know, from the press conference announcing this, that Guy Smith and Minister Horner had several discussions with others as well. I believe we are moving in the right direction, not only getting input from the general public but sitting down in closed-door meetings with different representatives and pension gurus from around the world and maybe coming up with a plan that is palatable to all groups and discussing it.

Mr. Quadri: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Quadri.

Mr. Stier.

Mr. Stier: Yes. Good evening and thank you. I appreciate your comments. I noted, Michael, that you are at the University of Lethbridge, right? I'm just wondering: when you have all these people working in one large area there, information sharing at a location for education, do you recall, beyond the information you received from your union, any kind of contact or any kind of consultation from the government regarding this set of proposed changes in any way?

Mr. Persinger: No, I do not. And you're absolutely right. At the university there are several different groups working together, so it's very hard to get information from one to another. The only information that was disseminated through meetings and through mass materials was from the union. I e-mailed Mr. Weadick to get some additional information, and someone from his staff was able to e-mail me back, but that's the only contact that I've had with government.

Mr. Stier: Okay. Through the chair, just one more add-on to that if I could. Do you not think that that's perhaps a little bit odd, that the government is going to change how they're dealing with their employees and they don't let them know that they're considering something?

Further to that, if I may, did anyone else at the university talk about that kind of thing on the employee side of it?

The Chair: Well, Mr. Stier, that was a nice attack on the government through the chair.

Mr. Persinger: In terms of the employer, no, there wasn't much discussion. You know, when you're talking about sweeping changes – I mean, I'm just entering the workforce, so I don't have the same concerns as others, but this is definitely a big issue that should be communicated to everyone in Alberta. I believe, you know, that in going on the website to find additional information, I had to really, really search for it. Once I got there, it was beneficial, but I really had to look for it. So maybe more of those materials more readily available. That's all.

Mr. Stier: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stier.

Mr. Luan.

7:00

Mr. Luan: Thank you very much. I really love the specific suggestions that you've been mentioning: the framework, the ways of communicating, how to bring people together. I really like that.

Now, I'm thinking: obviously, you've done some work here in terms of your group, university, your union perhaps. Is there any way that you can think of, looking forward, if we need to work together, to find the best ways of resolving this? How best do we do that? Can you give some further ideas in that way?

Mr. Persinger: I'm not a vice-president of the union. I mean, I don't want to get into too many specifics, but I'm just thinking: any way that you can engage different . . .

Mr. Luan: Working groups, focus groups.

Mr. Persinger: Absolutely. Working groups, focus groups – and then get a little more fine-grained – and then those meetings with just yourselves and those pension experts.

Mr. Luan: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Luan.

Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you. You said that you were involved with AUPE. Has the AUPE informed you that the government has released a consultation paper on the caps and is inviting feedback up to July 31 of this year? I see that you're moving your head as a yes, possibly.

Mr. Persinger: I was aware of that. I'm not sure of the source. I'm pretty sure it was from the AUPE, but I am aware.

Mrs. Sarich: Yeah. Have you had an opportunity yourself as somebody involved with the AUPE to take a look at that? Have you put forward any opinions? You're asking for a framework, a dialogue, opportunities to consult.

Mr. Persinger: Right. I'm working on it right now, and I will hopefully get a written submission in.

Mrs. Sarich: Oh. Thank you very much for sharing that. Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Thank you very much.

Mr. Persinger: Thank you.

Brian Cook

Mr. Cook: Good evening.

The Chair: Good evening.

Mr. Cook: Thank you, all, for being here this evening. I appreciate that you're here to listen to us. I'm Brian Cook. I have worked for the government of Alberta for 40 years with Alberta Agriculture, working mainly in the irrigation industry, and I am a member of AUPE. I will retire with full pension, for which I am grateful. However, my pension sucks. My wife worked for a nonprofit agency for 10 years and will receive more than half the pension that I will receive after 10 years.

For 40 years I believed that I had a pact with the government of Alberta. I have been paying for a defined pension plan. I've been paying for this for 40 years. I believe that it was promised to me. Now I find that you're trying to steal it from me – what else can I call it? – and you're trying to justify that with lies. How would you feel, every one of you – ask yourself right now – if all of a sudden one-third of your retirement savings plans evaporated, if somebody just came along and took them? This is money that you have been planning on for your retirement. I'm sorry if I'm getting passionate, but this is my life. This is a big part of my life from here on. If you lose one-third of your retirement savings plans, how are you going to feel? I'm sure that you would be very passionate.

Your figures, from what I understand based on talking to members of the PSPP board, were based on 2008 market returns. The investments that were made by the pension plan did very poorly. They did less than the average returns of the stock market. My pension plan should be run by workers that have a vested interest in its success.

After the bills that have been presented in the Legislature last winter, I can't trust our MLAs. No. You've lost our confidence. Everybody at work feels betrayed. We work for the government. We feel betrayed by our employer, and it shows in morale.

While a contribution cap may sound good, it will only hinder the pension boards' future ability to deal with unfunded liabilities. I and all my co-workers have contributed to a defined pension plan, and that is what we expect to receive. Anything else would be theft.

Since you proposed the changes to our pension plan, morale amongst staff has dropped, and many have accelerated their exit plans either through early retirement or looking for other jobs. Any changes to our pension plan that will only affect new staff are totally unfair and discriminatory and will create huge morale problems.

If the COLA is reduced, my pension will be reduced to a poverty-level income within 10 to 15 years.

That was basically all I've written, but I'm going to take the opportunity to answer some of the questions that have been asked by you people before you ask them. Ms Kennedy-Glans, you asked: what can we do to get all Albertans thinking about their pensions? I say: start teaching personal finances to kids in elementary school. The lack of knowledge of personal finances amongst teenagers and young people in this province is almost criminal. People know more about the tunes on their iPod than they do about where their next payment for their vehicle is going to come from.

You've asked if we've received anything from the government. I wish we had. If we had concrete, real information from the government, then the whole situation might not be as bad. [Mr. Cook's speaking time expired]

The Chair: Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Go ahead, Brian.

Mr. Cook: No, no. Carry on.

Mrs. Sarich: No. It's quite all right. I think that, from my perspective, it's very interesting, and I thank you for capturing some of the questions and providing some ideas and thoughts for consideration. Please proceed.

Mr. Cook: I am finished.

Mrs. Sarich: Oh, you are. Darn it. I thought that there was more.

I'm interested because I've asked the question, you know, about the information. For you, serving 40 years with Alberta Agriculture in irrigation – it's very important, agriculture. We try to support the minister as much as possible because without food how do we support and sustain a population? We need irrigation in this part of Alberta. When you said that you wished that you had received information from the government – let's stretch a little bit here. Did you receive anything from the LAPP or . . .

Mr. Cook: I'm public service pension.

Mrs. Sarich: PSPP. My mistake; I apologize. Anything directly from them?

Mr. Cook: No.

Mrs. Sarich: Nothing from PSPP. It's a very important question because we need that information to help us as a committee. Then the other part being: from the government itself or the minister have you seen anything, heard about it, read about it, or anything like that?

Mr. Cook: Other than vague news releases, no.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. That's very important for us.

About the dialogue: MLA Donna Kennedy-Glans asked about it, you know; even the Auditor General for the province of Alberta has suggested that we need to start having this conversation. To stretch a little bit further: what would the expectation be? What would that look like if we were going to have further conversations around the issue of pension sustainability for the future? Things look good – people have been pointing that out – but we may want to consider running a scenario where maybe there could be some problems in the future. What would that conversation look like?

7:10

Mr. Cook: I think that to begin with, the conversation has to be based on real facts. People have to be willing to listen to each other. People have to believe the person sitting across the table from them. You have to have trust in the people that you're dealing with, and I think that a lot of that trust has been lost. There has been talk from the PSPP board: these changes are going to be made to the board, and after they're made, then we'll let you run the board. You know, the changes are being dictated to the board. I'm sorry; that's not a fair and honest way to deal with the board. Let the board work from within, let the board recommend changes, and then let the governing parties bring forth those changes.

Mrs. Sarich: Those are fair comments for consideration, and I thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Sarich.
Ms Kennedy-Glans.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you. You mentioned the point about accelerated retirements, the people that you work with considering retirement or having already retired in anticipation of these changes or worrying about them. That's very, very concerning. I believe it, and we've seen it in other provinces. Do you have a sense of numbers? Is it a really nervous 1 per cent?

Mr. Cook: I work in an office of approximately 50 people. The moment these changes to the pension were announced, names went up on a board. Of the 50 people in our office there were over 15 names on that board with proposed retirement dates. If these changes had gone into effect, approximately half those people would be gone by next Christmas, and the rest would be gone before the changes came into effect. That's 15 out of 50. Those are the numbers that I know of in my own office.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you. Just for everybody's sake I think that information is really, really important. Thank you.

Mr. Cook: By the way, we had to take the names down off the board after a couple of days. It didn't look good.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Thank you, Brian.

Following these very passionate presentations, we would like to take a 10-minute break. We'll be back here at 7:22.

[The committee adjourned from 7:13 p.m. to 7:24 p.m.]

The Chair: Well, welcome back. We will resume our schedule and our activities.

I will call on the next presenter.

Merna Baker

Ms Baker: Good evening.

The Chair: Good evening.

Ms Baker: I'm not going to be speaking like a lot of the other speakers have, talking about what's happening in my union or whom I'm representing. I'm just here talking to you because I'm going to be retiring in a year and a half. I'll be 65 years of age, so that's going to put me right in that 2015-2016 category. I have gone and done the pension calculation. It's not going to make any difference to my pension, but what it will do is to the COLA.

I have worked many years. I work for the city right now, and I've been there for 17 years today. My pension is not going to be huge. It's going to be small. Over the years I've planned on putting money aside for my retirement. One of the things that I've counted on is having my pension indexed. It may not be fully indexed, but I've counted on that. A year and a half away does not give me time to prepare to try and change and accommodate the proposed changes that are coming forward from the pension plan. That's not fair. How do you expect me or anybody else that's close to retirement to be able to accommodate the changes that you're proposing? I'm not going to be able to in a year and a half put away enough money to make up for that loss of COLA.

The government has stated that people should be putting aside money for their retirement. Well, here they are turning around and now taking it away. People are going to be suffering as a result of this. It's not just myself but anybody else that's going to be retiring right away with these plans. I have a job at the city of Lethbridge, and I have answered the telephone from little old

ladies, seniors, phoning me crying and saying: "I'm losing my home. You're taking my money. You're stealing from me. You're not allowing me to have a life." This deterioration of pensions is exactly what these people are dealing with all the time. When the future value of your money just keeps deteriorating, how are you supposed to keep up with expenses?

You've heard this already, but the pension board has already dealt with the shortfall by putting an additional levy on us, and our pension is going to be back fully funded in just a few years. So why turn around and put such hardship on people that are going to be retiring?

Also, if you put the cap on contributions, you're virtually guaranteeing that COLA will be nonexistent in the future. You're taking the legs right out from underneath the pension, and you're stopping the pension board from having that ability to be able, if a levy is needed, to bring our funding back up.

That's it. Just as a retiree I want you to know that this is going to affect me and many other people and how it's going to affect us. Thank you for taking the time to listen to us.

The Chair: Thank you. Thank you, Merna.

A question for you, I think, from Mr. Eggen.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you for your very candid comments. I guess this question is as simple as it gets. We are here to listen. We are here to take advice back to Edmonton. What would you like us to do?

Ms Baker: Discontinue the idea of the cap. Maintain COLA to retirees. I mean, 25 years after you get your pension, how can you even pay a bill with that pension anymore if it's 25 years later and your amount hasn't gone up at all? I mean, it may seem like it's just little bits. Maybe it's a per cent, maybe it's half a per cent, maybe it's 2 per cent, but that makes a huge difference in the future value of your money and being able to pay your bills. So I definitely need you to not implement that target COLA.

7:30

Mr. Eggen: Thank you. Absolutely.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Merna.

Ms Baker: Donna had asked a question earlier – I think it was you – about: how do you talk to the people? I've talked to people in my workplace. So here I am. I'm close to retirement. I've got a young gal who just started working for us, just been here a very short time. I have somebody else right in the mid-range. We all three had very different opinions.

The young gal said: "I don't want your pension. I'm taking care of it myself. I'm putting away." You know, you have to talk to people because everybody has their own opinion. When you're talking about phasing in or different options, you've got to talk to the people. I was very surprised to hear her say that. When I told her, "You know, your pension is going to be about 30 per cent less under these new regulations than it would be if they just left the pension plan alone, the way it is," she was not interested at all. She said: "I don't care. I'm taking care of that myself. I don't want your pension." So it's really going to vary, and you need to talk to people. You can't just say: "Hey, guess what, guys? We're taking away your pension; we're taking away your COLA; we're taking away, taking away, taking away." It's not fair.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much.

Our next presenter is Suzanne Shelton, please.

Susan Shelton

Mrs. Shelton: Good evening. Thanks for coming down. My name is Susan Shelton.

The Chair: That's my second mistake tonight.

Mrs. Shelton: I won't say that you're the first person to make it.

Like I said, my name is Susan Shelton. I live here in Lethbridge. I've raised my family here. I am a member of United Nurses of Alberta. I am currently the president of local 120, which represents the hospital and the correctional staff, our nurses out at the correctional centre, as well as being a member of a union that has greater than 24,000 nurses working in the province of Alberta, who are either LAPP members or potential LAPP members. I'm a third-generation union worker with two grown boys who are entering the workforce as public service union workers.

I am upset with our current government regarding Bill 9 and my pension as this was collectively bargained. This government has shown bad faith not only with our pensions and the proposed changes but proposed changes with reforms like Bill 46 in taking away our right to collectively bargain and bargain in good faith.

The proposed changes that this government is putting forth regarding our pensions are going to force members to work longer. I work in a profession as a registered nurse, where my job is very physical. So asking nurses to work another five or 10 years in order to reach a full pension is very difficult because we already do a very physical job. I would hate to say that if you were asking people to work longer where they work very physically, you risk people getting hurt at work. Now that becomes something that workers' compensation has to deal with. It's a problem for the employer. I don't see that as being a good solution to our pension issue.

I'm insulted that this government has suggested that certain groups will be pulled out of these proposed changes – the firefighters, police, guards – and I can say this educated because I live with and am married to a fireman. I think that all of those groups that we've mentioned do exceptional work. Their jobs aren't easy. At times they're very dangerous, and that should be recognized. But all public service workers in Alberta that hold pensions have the same amount of stress and fatigue, and they work just as hard as my husband.

If we're going to talk about my union specifically, as registered nurses I would say that the largest part of my union is women. I feel like we've rolled ourselves back about 60 years because now we're marginalizing a group of people, women, and saying, "Well, you can do with less" when we have fought through the years, as history will prove, to get where we are today. Our pensions are modest. What we are going to get paid out if we make it to full pension is not significant. It won't make us rich. We won't be buying new cars and RVs and touring the country. We will just be making enough to pay the bills, and that's provided that we have set aside additional funds to supplement our pensions.

With the proposed changes, how do you expect to attract new contributors? I agree with Mr. Eggen. If you make this a tiered system, with the new staff that are coming to whatever profession in the public sector, how are you going to attract them to a pension plan when you're saying: "Well, it was good for this generation. This is what they get, but you get less"? We need to make it fair, we need to make it attractive, and we need to not segregate certain workers. I feel that when you jeopardize somebody's ability to retire based on a promise and an expectation, you are going to create a new generation... [Mrs. Shelton's speaking time expired]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Sarich: Susan, it's obvious that you have a few more points that you'd like to make. Once you've finished, I do have a question for you.

Mrs. Shelton: Sure. Thank you.

I think you risk making a new generation of socially dependent individuals.

Where is the transparency in this government? The question has been asked: what have you heard from your government? I've heard nothing. Nobody has engaged the people that this affects. I mean, we're asked to contact our MLAs' offices, but we get form letters in return. Why are MLAs not coming to us? There are a number of union leaders in this room, both at the local and provincial levels, who would be happy to sit down and engage you in conversation and take that conversation back to our memberships. I don't see that happening.

I think that it's a big pill to swallow, asking your front-line labour force to be fiscally responsible and to make changes in their pensions when this government has failed to do that themselves.

This is a statement to our sitting government. The PCs set out to attack public-sector workers in Ontario. I would like everyone in this room to acknowledge how that worked out for them. Albertans are paying attention. We will hold each and every one of you accountable for the decisions you make regarding our pension plan. I appreciate this panel coming down and listening to our questions and our concerns, but I really hope that at the end of all this you take back what you've heard and you consider it thoughtfully, because I don't think that what Albertans are telling you is that they want you to mess with their pensions.

Thank you.

7:40

The Chair: Thank you. Are you done, Susan?

Mrs. Shelton: I am.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. If I heard you correctly, Susan, you had an emotional response for the exempted groups that you are aware of even in your family and that. You are as a registered nurse part of the LAPP. I'm wondering: has the LAPP as your pension provider provided any information to the government about a position that they took on the exempted groups?

Mrs. Shelton: No. I did not receive that. I received that through both my local and my husband's local.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. You know, what I'm trying to do is just connect: did LAPP on behalf of their membership put some information forward about somebody who belongs to LAPP not being happy that there are other professionals exempted in some of the proposals?

Mrs. Shelton: No. I think that LAPP could definitely do a better job in communicating to those people that are contributing.

Mrs. Sarich: Okay. That would have been my second question. How much did the LAPP do to inform you as a registered nurse about their dialogue that they've been having for a number of years with the government on pension changes?

Mrs. Shelton: No. I wasn't aware.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Great, Susan. Thank you very much.

Our next presenter is Margie Huchala-Emes. Did I commit my third mistake?

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: You did not too bad.

Margie Huchala-Emes

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: I'm Margie Huchala-Emes. I am a registered nurse who is currently working for Alberta Health Services. The proposed changes to LAPP are particularly concerning for me and for other registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses in our province. I am in my 16th year of service as a registered nurse, all of which have been in Alberta. For these past 16 years I have planned for my future and for the future of my family based on my negotiated pension plan. I am the mother of three children, all of whom are school-aged, and my spouse and I have been planning for our retirement based on my future pension and on my husband's retirement without a pension. The proposed changes create an unstable and uncertain future for our family and serve to undermine the planning that we have done as a family so diligently for the past 15 years.

Just like many other speakers before me, I am concerned about the elimination of the 85 factor. As a registered nurse I work long hours. We work shift work. Our jobs are physically and mentally demanding. The 85 factor is of great value to us as those physical and mental demands are taxing to our bodies and our minds, especially as we age. I have planned for my retirement at approximately age 60, and all that I can do is hope that I have the financial stability at that time and that my negotiated pension will be able to provide a modest income.

Other male-dominated professions, as Susan has alluded to, are exempt from these proposed changes, including firefighters and police. However, their jobs require many of the same physical and mental challenges as ours do, but there has been recognition by this government that these reforms will not be applied to them based on those demands.

There are 30,000 registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses in this province, and the bills proposed by the PC government have created a climate where nurses are more engaged than ever to send a message to the government to back off. The government forged ahead with these bills with no true consultation. Any input or recommendations that our unions put forth were ignored. The bill looks to remove the 85 factor, to increase early retirement penalties, and to remove the guarantee of an already inadequate cost-of-living adjustment. These are all changes that I'm angry about and that my colleagues are angry about, and I cannot support a government that has on numerous occasions forgotten to support working Albertans, including the nurses of this province.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Sarich: Thank you very much, Margie, for your presentation. If I heard you correctly, you had said that your union group, and that would be the . . .

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: United Nurses of Alberta.

Mrs. Sarich: That's correct. The United Nurses of Alberta put forward ideas. Maybe that's my word. You put forward to LAPP. Did it go to Alberta Health Services, or was it directly to the minister? I'm just trying to figure out where those ideas landed on behalf of your group.

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: To be honest with you, I'm not exactly sure whom it would have all included, but it certainly would have included LAPP in terms of when they were looking at those changes, when they were asking not only our union but other unions affected by this to add their input to the process.

Mrs. Sarich: Yeah. In fairness to the group that you belong to – and their contribution in the health care system is undisputed, it's tireless, and I appreciate it – I'm wondering: would you be interested in following up and providing some more information for us as a standing committee so that we could take that in?

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: Absolutely. I can do that.

Mrs. Sarich: I really would like to know where it went – LAPP or if there were a few stakeholders involved there, it would be most helpful – and any other information that you feel would be important to share with the committee because, after all, we're going to have a look at all the information and make a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly or a series of recommendations. I'm not sure what the outcome is going to be.

Thank you for having the courage and for pointing out the contribution that you and all those that you represent make for Albertans each and every day. Thank you.

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. Sarich.
Mr. Rogers, please.

Mr. Rogers: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Margie, thank you for your presentation and certainly for your service. In regard to the piece where we've looked at, essentially, no changes for the 85 factor for the groups – policemen, firemen, and so on – are you suggesting that we should not look at exempting any group or, if we looked at changes like that, that it should be right across or maybe for a larger group? You're not the first nurse that I've heard mention, and Susan before you, that your work is physically demanding as compared to firefighters and police, corrections officers, and others. I'm just wondering if you could expand a little bit more on that piece. If we were looking at that type of a change, who should be included?

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: Well, certainly, I speak from a nursing perspective, and as a registered nurse those are the demands for me. However, also as a health care professional I see that those demands, not necessarily only for myself but for people in the public, can also have severe health effects for people. I would say that the 85 factor, again, should be extended to everyone. We shouldn't be looking at an exemption. There should be no one group exempt. It should be extended to each and every one of us.

Mr. Rogers: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rogers.
Deputy Chair Fox, please.

Mr. Fox: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Making you nervous here?

Mr. Fox: Yeah, making me nervous. I have a lot of respect for the nurses here in the province.

Thank you for the hard work that you do and that all public servants do here in the province. One question that's come up over and over again is about communication from the pension boards. I'm wondering if you think it's prudent for the pension board to speculate to the members of the pension plans on what changes the government may or may not make to your pension, or do you think the government should communicate its plans and information better with the members of the pension plan themselves and with Albertans here in the province?

Mrs. Huchala-Emes: Well, I believe that it should likely be a joint endeavour. I think that that has been certainly an issue, the lack of communication up to this point. I do believe, you know, that there was some indication of these changes coming. I don't think that any of us could have ever anticipated the degree to which it would affect us. I do agree that the communication will have to be joint communication from here on out in terms of where we're going from here.

7:50

The Chair: Well, thank you very much for your presentation.
Our next presenter is Chet Neyhart, please. No?
Okay, we'll move to the next, Stan Mustel.

Stan Mustel

Mr. Mustel: Good evening.

The Chair: Good evening.

Mr. Mustel: I'm kind of an add-on, here. Thank you. I am Stan Mustel. I am president of our CUPE union here in town, representing the custodians of Lethbridge and district.

First thing I guess I should do is answer your questions. First, it's no, the government didn't tell me anything. No, LAPP didn't tell me nothing. The union told me everything, so we got that right off the bat. We did it. Okay.

I was thinking about it back there. The sad part about that is that I'm glad the union did, but I'm sad that the government tried to force this stuff through without us knowing about it, and that's the sad part. That's why we don't trust you guys, you know? Somebody up there got it together and got you guys to come down and listen to us around this province, so thank you for that.

My thing is a point of interest. A couple of weeks ago I was listening to the television there, *The National*, where they talk about the economy all the time. The one fellow on there brought up a very important point. I think it's for the people here and you guys. He was talking about the great debt that this country has for subsidies. We subsidize way too much. We're subsidizing in the tune of \$30-plus billion, and it'll grow to probably \$90 billion, he figured, by 2030. Why? It's because of the generation, people ahead like my parents, who haven't got pension plans, so we gotta subsidize them. They've got no money.

The point here is that we need good pension plans. Everybody in this country should be on a pension plan, not just 30 per cent. Thirty per cent isn't enough. Even the CPP has been talked about lots of times. Let's get this thing rolling, you know? Let's help the people. I don't want to be on subsidies. I want to take care of myself, and I don't need any of your extra money. I probably will be able to take care of myself if you leave my pension alone. It's just like you guys going into my RSP account. You don't have no right in there. I've worked damn hard to get my pension plan where it's at. We've negotiated this. We've negotiated this, and

we've put this aside. Everybody here, we've counted on this money, that we can retire.

I'm not gonna make a great living because I started late in the education world, so I might make 12,000 bucks or something when I retire, you know? Big deal. If I didn't have my own extra subsidy money, I wouldn't be able to make a heckuva good living. I'd be like my folks, who really struggle to make a living because they didn't have any pensions. That's the point.

When this guy was talking about this, I thought: why wouldn't governments want to spend \$90 billion on subsidies when we could somehow make pensions better and let people do it? It's a satisfying thing to be able to do that. So why don't we want to do this?

And stop hiding things from people. You are elected by us, every one of these people in this place. We are all Albertans. Every one of us needs to be listened to, not just the rich 10 per cent or whatever in this province. Every one of us needs to be listened to. We don't want a whole lot. We just want what we earned. That's all we want. We don't want you in our pockets all the time. Everything around us goes up. Stop that stuff from going up, then. Stop the utilities. Stop the taxes. Stop the car insurance. Stop everything from going up, and then you can take some of my pension away. If you can put a zero on that, then you can do that.

That's my point of interest. I'm glad I got called on here. I didn't know I was doing this. Get it off my chest. I feel good. I'll be able to sleep tonight.

The Chair: Well, thank you very much. What are we going to do now? You answered all the questions. Actually, I have some questions for you.

Mr. Mustel: Good.

The Chair: We'll start with Mr. Rowe.

Mr. Rowe: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've been waiting for an opening to get more a statement than a question tonight, and it didn't look like it was going to come up, so I want to make my own opening. We've heard several presenters over these meetings use the phrase that "It's our money, it's our pension; keep your hands off it," and I, to a very large degree, agree with that.

We've also heard, however, that it's also taxpayers' money, and I'm not so sure I agree with that, and here's why. When your unions negotiate a contract, it's for wages and benefits, and that's part of a negotiated wage settlement. Your pension contributions made by the provincial government are part of that wage agreement. So to put it in simplified terms – and you can correct me if I'm wrong. I'll just use arbitrary numbers. Rather than pay you \$25 an hour, you agreed to take \$20 an hour if you had these pensions. So in effect it's your money, and I think that needs to be made clear, and it hasn't been made in any of the presentations that have come up.

Mr. Mustel: Write that down. That's exactly what we're talking about. Exactly. We've negotiated this. It is our money. It's not taxpayers' money. It's your wage. We get paid by taxpayers, obviously, in schools or hospitals or whatever, but it's our money. When we negotiated 30, 40 years ago on this, instead of taking a dollar-an-hour raise, you put a dollar an hour into the pension, and we matched it at a dollar an hour or whatever. That's still our money. It's like you going into my RSP account and telling me how much I can take out.

Mr. Rowe: Exactly.

Mr. Mustel: It's the same thing.

Mr. Rowe: Thank you.

Mr. Mustel: You bet. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Rowe.
Ms Kennedy-Glans.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you. Thanks very much for your comments. I had to chuckle about your perception of the power of government, though. Thank you for sharing those ideas.

I wanted to ask you about new people, especially younger people, who are coming into your trade and to your workplace, and people you know, younger people that you know who are looking for work. Do you encourage them to go into a pension plan environment? What's the trade-off? Because I personally think that we have got a lot of work to do to convince younger people that this pension idea is a good one for them as well, and I'm concerned about it. I'm deeply concerned about it because our population is stacked the other way. And I'm not paranoid about it. I think we can manage it. But how do you talk to younger people who you want to work alongside you?

Mr. Mustel: I think that's very easy. I think you definitely tell them to go into the pension because they can't save a dime. People don't save any money, right? This saves them money. This is guaranteed, a pension. They've got something when they leave. Like I was saying, they don't need subsidies. They'll have a pension when they retire if they've worked for 40 years. They'll have something. If you don't have, like, 70 per cent – and statistics will show that out of that 70, 50 per cent of them don't have any money. If they had a pension, they'd have something. You wouldn't have to be spending \$30 billion or \$90 billion. They'd have their own money. People can't save because things are expensive, and we do have a lot of low-paying jobs. Not everybody can make \$100,000. We aren't all teachers or professors, you know? We need guys fixing cars and building homes. If we didn't have that, we'd all be living in tents, so we've got to have that in society. So, yes, I would encourage. It's a must.

It's like my parents. I wish they had a pension. It would have been wonderful for them to have a pension. They would have had something. But growing up farmers and stuff, they didn't have that. They were poor, so they couldn't get ahead. If they would have had that pension, it would have been something, and I encourage young people, absolutely, to jump in with both feet with our pension that we have right now, not one that keeps being depleted. You need to keep the one we've got now so that they want to have it.

8:00

Ms Kennedy-Glans: I understand your point, and I appreciate it. The statistics, though, the statistics of, you know, a population that – collectively, we're all aging and getting wiser, hopefully. We're all aging. I'm concerned about how we make sure, the mechanics of that, that young people see pensions as being attractive because they are more interested in iPhones than 40 years down the road. [A timer sounded]

Mr. Mustel: Well, it's an education thing, I think. Again, there was somebody else who spoke earlier about educating our young people. We have to educate them on how to spend money. If you're spending more than you're making, there's a problem. You know, we need to educate them that there has to be a certain amount of money put aside so that you can have a life after 60.

We need to. Everything in life is education. You've got to educate people on how to use our phones and everything, right? It's an education. I work in the education world, so I see it as so much value to our kids. They need to be taught everything nowadays, it seems. I don't know. It just is.

Ms Kennedy-Glans: Thank you.

Mr. Mustel: Yeah.

The Chair: Even though I heard the bell going off here, we're having such a good time with you, Stan.

Mr. Mustel: No. It's good. It's wonderful. I've got nothing else to do.

The Chair: I'm going to ask Mr. Eggen to ask a question.

Mr. Eggen: It's just a brief question. Last night in Calgary we had a financial adviser and an accountant come in, and he said: put as much money as you can into a pension, for sure; save for the future, and encourage young people to do so; put it into a defined benefit pension. That's what he said. He said: don't put it in an RRSP. The benefit, the monies that accrue over time, and the stability of it only get better. So the more we can actually strengthen these pensions – and this guy gave us a very good sheet. He said: yeah, young people will see it if we help to educate them to do that. Thanks a lot for your comments.

Mr. Mustel: Yeah. Absolutely.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Stan.

Mr. Mustel: Thank you. Thank you for listening.

The Chair: Actually, Stan is our final presenter here, but we still have some time. If anybody has a burning desire to make a presentation, we'll be happy to recognize him or her.

Yes. Please state your name for the record.

And we will take one more if anybody would – Yes. Okay. Great.

Kurt Parks

Mr. Parks: Kurt Parks. I currently work for Alberta Transportation. I'm an AUPE member. To answer your question, when I found out about the proposed changes, I was away on a course, and I happened to read the *Globe and Mail* that day. That's how I heard about the pension changes. It was legislated, and it wasn't negotiated or discussed.

I currently have 15 years of service, and with these changes – looking back, I feel that it's unfair. You know, it's not a contract, but 15 years ago I signed up for the government knowing that I would take less in wages in my field particularly but that I'd have the security and the pension. My plan was to retire with 30 years, not draw on my pension, and work for myself in a free environment. These proposed changes have me questioning my decision 15 years ago.

That's all I've got.

The Chair: Any questions?

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Parks: Thank you.

The Chair: The lady over there. Yeah. Please state your name for the record.

Susan Clarke

Mrs. Clarke: Hello. My name is Susan Clarke. I am a registered nurse, and I work – sorry. It doesn't matter where I work. I am a member of UNA.

I am fairly new to nursing. I was a registered dental hygienist previously – that was my first life – and was unsatisfied with my job and my benefits because in the private sector there are no benefits, really. I had a little bit of a dental benefit, of course, working for dentists. After 23 years as a hygienist I decided to go back to school.

In my last few years in hygiene I did work in public health as a public health hygienist. I was in the Health Sciences Association union, and I was aware of the LAPP pension, and I was aware of the 85 factor. As I was contemplating, when I decided that I was going to go back to school, what I would be interested in doing, I considered very seriously nursing because of that 85 factor. That was a huge benefit to me.

Now I am a nurse. I have age on my side, right? I started late, so I figured: okay; if I start nursing and start paying into my pension when I'm 45, which I did, by the time I'm 65 I'll have that 85 factor and will qualify for a full pension. That was a huge benefit to me and my family. That weighed heavy on my decision to go into nursing versus going into teaching or some other career. Now I'm four years in, and they want to change the rules. Yeah, that ticks me off. I am angry about this, and I am fighting for my pension, every penny of it. I disagree with altering the rules, as has been brought up here many times. This was a contract that was entered into in faith.

I know that as a hygienist I made way more money than I do as a nurse. It was a bad decision, maybe, to go into something where I would make less, but those benefits are what drew me in. Are we going to draw in young people? I fear for that if our pension is taken away. I really do. If this was not an option when I started, yeah, I probably would have chosen teaching. They get great summers, you know.

That's really all I have to say. I think it needs to stand as it is.

The Chair: Thank you.

Any questions?

Ms Pastoor: It isn't really a question, but I would like to make a comment just before our chair closes up here. Last night we were in Calgary, and the crowd was exceptionally boisterous and heckled and jeered and did a whole bunch of stuff, so what happened in the end was that we didn't have a chance to do the question part of it. We didn't get that personal feel that we have received from all of you tonight. I just want to say: thank you very much, Lethbridge. I am so proud that my crowd behaved so beautifully. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, and thank you, all, ladies and gentlemen. It has been a great meeting: great audience, great ideas, and great presentations.

I would like to thank all committee members, who came all the way from Edmonton today; the committee clerk, the backbone of this committee; the support staff, the security personnel; my assistant, Zack Ziolkowski; and the *Hansard* staff, sitting over there so quietly. Let's give them a big hand, please. They came today from Edmonton. It has been a long day for all of them.

And to you, ladies and gentlemen, thank you all very much for being here tonight. You have been sitting here for almost two and a half hours, and you have been sitting here for a good reason. The reason is your pensions. The pension issue is an important issue. It

is an emotional issue. It is an issue that we all should be concerned about. The purpose of this committee . . . [A timer sounded]

Mr. Fox: You're out of time, Chair.

The Chair: I'm done. I'm done.
Mrs. Sarich.

Mrs. Sarich: You can have my time. Please continue.

8:10

The Chair: Okay. Good.

The purpose of this committee is to listen to you. As the chair of this committee I'll tell you that we've heard you. This is an all-

party committee. As I said earlier, we did not come here with any predetermined ideas or outcome. I can tell you that our report will reflect exactly what we've heard during the three full days of hearings with experts and stakeholders and also during the seven public hearings right across the province.

Thank you very much. It has been a great evening in Lethbridge, and we hope to see you soon. Thank you.

Again, I'd really like to thank Minister Weadick for being here, sitting here so quietly, listening. I know you're very busy with the flood and draining your basement, but thank you very much for being here tonight.

[The committee adjourned at 8:11 p.m.]

