



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Fourth Session

# Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, April 12, 2018

Day 16

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 29th Legislature**

Fourth Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (NDP), Speaker  
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (NDP), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (NDP), Deputy Chair of Committees

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (UCP),  
Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition  
Anderson, Hon. Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (NDP)  
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (UCP)  
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (NDP)  
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)  
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (NDP)  
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (NDP)  
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)  
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (NDP)  
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP),  
Alberta Party Opposition House Leader  
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwod (NDP)  
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (NDP)  
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP)  
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (NDP),  
Government Whip  
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (UCP)  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP)  
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (NDP)  
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (NDP)  
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (UCP)  
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (NDP)  
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP)  
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (NDP),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (Ind)  
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (NDP)  
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (AP)  
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (NDP),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (UCP),  
Official Opposition Deputy Whip  
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)  
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)  
Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)  
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (UCP)  
Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (NDP)  
Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)  
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (NDP)  
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (UCP)  
Jansen, Hon. Sandra, Calgary-North West (NDP)  
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (NDP)  
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Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (UCP)  
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)  
Vacant, Fort McMurray-Conklin  
Vacant, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake

**Party standings:**

New Democratic: 54 United Conservative: 25 Alberta Party: 3 Alberta Liberal: 1 Progressive Conservative: 1 Independent: 1 Vacant: 2

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 12, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon.

I wonder if we might pray or contemplate, each in our own way. Hon. members, I look in this Chamber today and see unity in support of our eastern neighbours in Saskatchewan. As a nation we call Canada we continue to mourn the loss of the woman and men of the Humboldt Broncos and have found ourselves holding loved ones closer this past week. As stories emerge of individual acts of heroism, I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage all of you to speak with your families and consider signing the universal donor card on the back of the Alberta personal health card. This action can lead to the utmost gift, the opportunity to live.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly three grade 6 classes from the great town of Rimbey, up in Ponoka county. I had the pleasure of visiting with all these grade 6 classes a couple of months back. I can tell you that they sure know their stuff. They even taught me a few lessons on parliamentary democracy, which I think is great. I would ask them all and their chaperones and their teachers to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Cooper:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an absolute honour, pleasure, and joy today to rise and introduce some very bright, young up-and-comers. It won't be very long before one of them has my job, I'm sure. They are members of the Kneehill Christian School. There are 34 of the fine young constituents. They are accompanied by Miss Terri Miller. I invite them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Are there any other school groups today, hon. members?

Seeing and hearing none, the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you. I rise today on Yom ha-Shoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, to introduce three leaders in the Edmonton-McClung community who have worked to ensure that we never forget the enduring lessons of the Holocaust. I would like to extend my thoughts and prayers to everyone observing Yom ha-Shoah. Here today is Gillian Horowitz, whose diligence on the Edmonton Holocaust committee led to the memorial to the Holocaust which stands on the Legislature Grounds today. Rabbi Daniel Friedman and his wife, Rabbanit Batya Friedman, of the Beth Israel synagogue, who I will speak more about later today, are also in attendance in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Accompanying them is my beloved chief of staff, Ashley MacInnis, without whom I would not be able to operate, who makes me look good every day. I'd ask them

all to please now rise and receive the warmest reception of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Transportation.

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of this Assembly some of my long-term friends and supporters who are visiting the Assembly today. Harry and Jan Kuperus have lived in the Highlands area since 1992. I first met them when they came out to help the campaign in the by-election that first elected me, in 2000. We've been friends ever since. They've served on my constituency executive. They're both extremely active in the community, and they have five children and 11 grandchildren. Two of those grandchildren, Harrison and Jonathan Peebles, are with them today. I understand that Harrison will be attending Eastglen composite high school next year, and Jonathan will be attending Highlands junior high. In this way, the family's history in the area is going to continue. I'd now ask Harry and Jan and their grandsons Harrison and Jonathan to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

**Mrs. Schreiner:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly my daughter-in-law Jessica Schreiner. Like all members here, I could not do this job without the support of my family. Family is not just our personal cornerstone; it is that of our great province and our communities. It is my pleasure to acknowledge the tremendous joy that Jessica brings to our family each and every day. I ask that Jessica now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View, you had an invitation today?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yes. Thank you. Sorry. Could you move on to the next one, Mr. Speaker? I'll just get myself organized.

**The Speaker:** Are you asking for unanimous consent?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Just give me two seconds.

**The Speaker:** I'm giving you two seconds.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you. I'm good. I can do this.

I would like to take a moment to introduce a very, very good friend of mine. He is a huge support for special needs, works with the hub and the Sinneave foundation. John Seigner, if you could please stand and receive the warm welcome of this House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

### Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

#### Bill 9

**Cortes-Vargas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that as legislators it is our privilege to represent our constituents and their concerns in this Legislature, which is why I've been fairly disappointed that my colleagues across the aisle have been hiding from an issue.

Let me start from the beginning. Earlier this week the Leader of the Official Opposition was very clear that he would be abstaining from a vote on the bubble-zone legislation, which should not come

as a surprise. In the past he has certainly been very vocal about what he thinks about women's right to choose. But he took it a step further. He said that the only reason that we would move forward on bubble-zone legislation that protects women is for political gain. It's cynical, it's shameful, but, worst of all, it demonstrates that the Leader of the Official Opposition and his caucus don't want to hear the concerns that Alberta women have raised. He's been very clear about how he feels about women's right to choose, so why wouldn't his caucus follow his lead? It's disappointing that the Official Opposition leader and his caucus refuse to listen to those concerns, that they are absent on this issue. Honestly, I'm embarrassed for them.

Let me tell you why we're introducing this legislation. The answer is simple. We need to stand up for Alberta women when they ask for help. Across the country and in other jurisdictions they're introducing bubble zones. We heard from clinics here in Alberta that protesting has nearly doubled this year, and so have threats of violence. We cannot wait for something terrible to happen to make this change. This is serious. That's why we're doing this now. So while they sit with their leader and ignore social issues, we'll be standing here with Alberta women.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, let's think about the future.  
The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

### Holocaust Remembrance Day

**Mr. Kenney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Elie Wiesel, the great chronicler of the Holocaust, said:

Remembering is a noble and necessary act. The call of memory, the call to memory, reaches us from the very dawn of history. No commandment figures so frequently, so insistently, in the Bible. It is incumbent upon us to remember the good we have received, and the evil we have suffered.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the world remembers. We remember the evil suffered by the Jewish people in the Shoah, the effort by the Nazi regime to exterminate from the face of the Earth the European Jewish people in which some 6 million were brutally murdered, murdered in the Holocaust by bullets in eastern Europe at places like Babi Yar, leaving behind hundreds of unmarked graves with thousands, tens of thousands of victims of history's most pernicious and durable form of hatred, anti-Semitism; in industrial killing at places like Auschwitz and Birkenau, at Majdanek and Treblinka, at places like Theresienstadt, all through central Europe.

1:40

Mr. Speaker, the anti-Semitism that inspired the Holocaust developed over centuries of European history but reached a frenzy in the 1930s and '40s. Sadly, today we see the phenomenon of the new anti-Semitism even recently in Paris. A Holocaust survivor, one of the few who had been given refuge in Canada during the war, returned to France to live out her elder years in peace and was recently killed in a spasm of anti-Semitic violence.

So today we join with members of our Jewish community in remembering. As Wiesel said, "I belong to a generation that has often felt abandoned by God . . . yet, I believe that we must not give up."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill

### Rural High-speed Internet

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is facing a digital divide, and the ability of people in rural areas to participate in the economy is becoming increasingly compromised by issues like

slow Internet or no connectivity. More and more services are only or primarily available online, more educational tools are available through the Internet, and more commerce occurs online every year. We're facing a real economic risk if we continue to allow Alberta to fall behind digitally. While rural communities know the importance of high-speed Internet connectivity, many are not well served, and some communities like Olds have established their own Internet services.

We don't succeed as a province until we all succeed, and for that reason I'm very excited to participate in the Digital Futures symposium on April 27 in Pincher Creek, where I'm looking forward to hearing more about the barriers and opportunities rural communities are facing and to talking about upcoming technologies like 5G, which will support applications like artificial intelligence and autonomous vehicles.

All areas of the province must be future ready, with the infrastructure required for these new technologies. We've seen connectivity propel the success of companies like Benevity, in Calgary, and BioWare, in Edmonton, and the positive economic benefits they bring to their communities.

Kids in cities and larger towns are able to do their homework online at home while many of their rural peers are limited to the times they are at school and equipment that's available. Many people in indigenous communities must drive far from home just to get a data signal.

I'm committed to every Albertan having equal access to opportunities that are enabled by having high-speed Internet access, and I look forward to tabling a private member's bill in support of this in the fall.

I invite all of my colleagues in the House to attend Digital Futures later this month.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

### Vaisakhi

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A highlight of the year in Edmonton-Mill Creek and the rest of southeast Edmonton is Vaisakhi, a historical and religious festival in Sikhism and Hinduism. It's celebrated on April 14 in most places, but in Alberta it's celebrated on the May long weekend due to the fact that April weather in Alberta is very uncertain.

Vaisakhi marks the birth of the Khalsa way of living in the Sikh religion and commemorates the formation of the Khalsa panth of warriors under Guru Gobind Singh, in 1699. The previous guru was persecuted and executed for refusing to convert to Islam under the orders of the Mughal emperor. This triggered the coronation of the 10th guru of Sikhism and the historic formation of the Khalsa, both on Vaisakhi day.

It is also a spring festival, a spring harvest festival for the Sikhs, and an ancient festival of the Punjabis, marking the solar new year and celebrating the spring harvest. On Vaisakhi Sikh temples, or gurdwaras, are decorated, and Sikhs visit and bathe in lakes or rivers before visiting the local gurdwaras and community fairs.

A very important part of Vaisakhi is the Nagar Kirtan, or procession, with the southeast Edmonton procession being a fantastic and colourful event attended by so many people. They estimated it was 10,000 people last year in the procession.

Living in a city with so many diverse cultural and religious traditions and celebrations enriches us all. Taking part in or observing a Vaisakhi celebration is a joyous way to celebrate diversity and the freedom we all enjoy to worship in our own ways and to speak our own languages.

Happy Vaisakhi.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

### Jewish Community Leaders in Edmonton

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take the time today on Yom ha-Shoah Ve Hagevurah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, to honour a couple who have dedicated their lives to making their communities a better place. Rabbi Daniel Friedman and Rabbanit Batya Friedman have not only been spiritual leaders but community leaders for the last 16 years in Edmonton-McClung. Rabbanit Batya is the director of the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative, an organization that strives to bring an end to homelessness in our city. She has served as the vice-president of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. She has also run the Matan program for bat mitzvah girls and led women's educational programs. Rabbi Friedman, a recipient of the Alberta centennial medal for service to the community in 2006, is the past president of Edmonton Jewish Family Services and has served on the boards of two Hebrew schools in Edmonton. He is currently on the executive board of the Rabbinical Council of America.

It is of particular relevance as we observe Yom ha-Shoah that Rabbi Friedman was appointed by the government of Canada to chair the national holocaust development council. Its mandate was to have a monument in remembrance of the Holocaust erected on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. That goal was achieved last year, when the monument was erected.

The Friedmans will soon be leaving Beth Israel synagogue to take a post in London, England. Going with them on this next adventure are their five daughters, four of whom were born here in Edmonton. The entire family will be sorely missed.

Rabbi Friedman always knew he wanted to be a rabbi. During a family interview about his father's position with a synagogue in Sydney an eight-year-old Daniel proudly announced that he wanted to be the first rabbi on the moon when he grew up. While he may not be the first rabbi on the moon yet, he has left a lasting impression in our little corner of the world, in Edmonton-McClung, Edmonton, and the whole province.

Thank you very much for your service, and bon voyage.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

### Alberta Party Policies

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Legislature and I think politics as a whole is far too often all about either/or. Either you believe in building schools, or you believe in strong fiscal management. Either you want a strong health care system, or you want to eliminate the debt. You're either with us, or you're against us. Well, I don't like that word "or." In the Alberta Party we like to talk about "and": environmental protection and responsible energy development, innovation for the new economy and strong traditional industries, quality of life in rural communities and in big cities, opportunity for indigenous people and all Albertans in equal measure, addressing poverty and building a prosperous society, promoting Alberta's interests and building a strong nation.

But Albertans are being told they have to choose. That is not how we built this province. We didn't make Alberta the best place in the world to live by having to choose one over the other or by leaving people behind. We did it by building the most compassionate, innovative, entrepreneurial community in the world based on "and," and we can keep it that way. Albertans do not need to choose between left or right. We can have a strong economy, and we can

have a strong society. That is who Albertans are, and that is what the Alberta Party stands for.

Thank you.

### Oral Question Period

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

### Provincial Response to Pipeline Opposition

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, 49 days ago the Premier of British Columbia announced another delay tactic in his fight against the Trans Mountain pipeline, referring the matter yet again to court. Then our Premier declared victory, saying: today's decision by B.C. is an important step forward, a victory. With 49 days to go before the deadline for Kinder Morgan potentially to cancel the entire project, I have this question. Why did Alberta's NDP government declare victory in the face of yet another delay tactic by the B.C. government?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier.

1:50

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member is being a little creative in his timeline, but what I will tell you is that our government has been very clear, since the very beginning of our time in office, that we need to get a pipeline to tidewater. That's why we were so proud when we got those approvals from the federal government very shortly after we did form government. I have to say that we thought they were worth more than the paper they were written on. That's why our Premier is not relenting. That's why she won't back down, because we need the federal government and the entire nation to put their money where their mouth is and make sure we get our product to tidewater and act like owners.

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, I'm really confused by the government's position on this. Last summer the New Democrats and the Green Party in B.C. signed an agreement saying that they would use every tool available to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline. Didn't this government follow that development? Didn't they understand that that was the policy of the B.C. New Democrats as of last summer? If so, why did the Premier go to British Columbia and, according to John Horgan, not even try to persuade him to support the pipeline? Those are his words. Is he telling a lie? Why didn't the NDP here take the . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

**Ms Hoffman:** Again, the member is being very creative with his recollection of history and the timelines that he's putting forward. We've been incredibly clear and steadfast in our commitment to get this pipeline built. We have three tools at our disposal that are certainly more effective than the delay tactics that people used in Ottawa once upon a time, that the member is very familiar with. We are putting economic pressure on the B.C. government by bringing forward legislation that will allow us to restrict the flow of our resources. We are fighting in court and have a perfect record on winning those fights. If necessary, we will invest in this project to ensure it moves ahead. Does the member support us in any of those actions? That's what's going to cause real pipeline development in this province.

**Mr. Kenney:** The government that has presided over the suspension of the Kinder Morgan pipeline, the cancellation of the Northern

Gateway pipeline, the killing of the Energy East pipeline, an American President trying to block the Keystone XL pipeline is going to give Albertans lessons on how to fight for pipelines? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. The question is . . .

**Mr. Mason:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** Point of order noted.

**Mr. Kenney:** They surrendered on their symbolic wine boycott 49 days ago. In light of these recent developments will they reinstitute at least that symbolic wine boycott? Will they bring it back?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, we did temporarily lift the wine ban because we did get the terms met around not restricting the product that we had in our pipelines, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that I appreciate that the member opposite likes symbolism, but on this side we like action. We are putting economic pressures on the government of B.C. by bringing forward legislation that will allow us to restrict resources. If I were a person in the Lower Mainland filling up today at prices about \$1.50 at the pump, I'd be really nervous about what might happen if the B.C. government doesn't get out of the way and move forward on this national project in the national interest. We are fighting in court, we have a perfect record, and if necessary, as I've said, we'll take a public stake in this pipeline because we're not afraid, and we're not going to back down.

**The Speaker:** Second main question.

#### Federal Response to Pipeline Opposition

**Mr. Kenney:** The federal government, Mr. Speaker, has said that all options are on the table to ensure the construction of this pipeline, but then they subsequently took off the table the invocation of the declaratory power of the Constitution. They took off the table even the federal NDP's recommended court reference to the Supreme Court of Canada. They've taken off the table withholding any transfers, as we've recommended, from B.C. I don't know what's left on the table. Does this Alberta government agree with the positions taken by the Trudeau government to remove any leverage from the government of British Columbia in trying to get that pipeline built?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we are moving forward with strategies that will get results, and that's what we've gotten to date. We have never been as close to tidewater in our approval process and our court proceedings and in investment than we are today. But that's not good enough. I know the member spent 20 years in Ottawa and didn't get a pipeline to tidewater, but on this side of the House we're committed to this. We're going to make sure it happens. Feel free to talk about symbolic gestures, but on this side we're committed to action, and that pipeline will get built.

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, withholding billions of dollars of discretionary federal transfers to Victoria is hardly symbolic. I can't imagine a stronger point of leverage.

Yesterday the NDP here defeated a motion brought forward by the Official Opposition calling on the federal government to withhold \$4.3 billion in infrastructure funds from Victoria until the pipeline is built. Today we'll be tabling a different motion, calling for the federal government to withhold \$1.3 billion of job-training funding from the Horgan government until the pipeline is built. Will this NDP government join with us in calling for the withholding of those job-training dollars?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, maybe the member didn't hear his question yesterday. It's kind of ironic that he's asking the flip of it today. Yesterday, when we talked about the economic impact of us potentially limiting our flow of products to the west coast and it having economic impacts on the people of British Columbia, he said: no; why would you do that? Today he's asking us to cancel money to get them jobs, Mr. Speaker. I can't tell which side of his mouth he's speaking out of, but it's a good thing it doesn't matter. Our Premier is a very straight shooter. She's fighting for us, and she's going to make sure that this pipeline gets built.

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, the point is simply this. The government keeps giving us this heated rhetoric not being backed up by anything meaningful, with no meaningful leverage. Maybe they could explain to us: why would they actually oppose the suggestion of the federal government withholding discretionary dollars from Victoria until the pipeline is built? Why should they be able to get 4 billion federal tax dollars for infrastructure when they're blocking 7 billion private-sector dollars for this private-sector infrastructure project?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, just to clarify, I didn't say that I actually opposed it. I said that you were speaking out of both sides of your mouth. You're telling us that we shouldn't restrict the flow of product because it could hurt B.C. families, but at the same time you're telling us we should cut their job money? Mr. Speaker, that doesn't make sense. What does make sense are our three plans, our three pillars that we're fighting on. The fronts are putting economic pressure on the B.C. government and the people of B.C., if it comes to that, to ensure our flow of resources; fighting in court, which we have been and have a perfect record on; and, of course, taking a public stake in this pipeline, if it comes to that, because this is in the public interest.

**The Speaker:** Third main question.

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, they are opposed to it because they voted against it yesterday. They defeated this idea, like every other idea.

#### Surgery and Emergency Procedure Wait Times

**Mr. Kenney:** Mr. Speaker, a new report today from the Canadian Institute for Health Information indicates that wait times are up significantly in Alberta for cataract and joint replacement surgery. Now, that's notwithstanding the fact that Alberta has by far the highest per capita health expenditures in the country and that health spending has increased by 15 per cent in the past three years. Can the government explain, then, why wait times are up for these critical surgeries?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. I, too, am very concerned that not in all areas are we leading the country. We are in a number of them, including if you have a hip fracture, if you need radiation. These are good measures, and we're proud of the areas where we've made significant progress. We know that there are other areas where we lag and where we need to have increased investment. That's why we're putting \$40 million in increased funding specifically targeted at these types of wait times. I look forward to seeing if the members opposite will vote for that budget or if they'll call for deep cuts. I have a good idea which one it'll be, but time will tell.

**Mr. Kenney:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister seems to miss the point. The government of Alberta has increased the Health budget

by \$3 billion in the past three years, by 15 per cent. We have the highest per capita expenditures in the country, and Canada has one of the most expensive public systems in the world, yet wait times are increasing for joint surgery, for cataract surgery, and other procedures. My question is simply this. Why are we spending more but getting less?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much. I certainly welcome you to talk to your colleagues who were in power for 44 years while these trends took place. Maybe you were part of that government; it's hard to tell. But I can tell you that what we've done is different. What we've done is that we have reached really common-sense negotiations with nurses and allied health professionals that are giving stability to the people of this province. It does cost increased investment, investment in things like the Calgary cancer centre, the new Edmonton hospital, to ensure that we have the proper OR time and space to be able to do this. It costs front-line investment. We invest in the people of this province instead of proposing cuts. What do you think 20 per cent cuts would do to wait times?

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

**Mr. Kenney:** This is the problem with the NDP, Mr. Speaker. They think that health care should be measured by how much is spent rather than the outcomes and the wait times. The wait times are going up while they're spending more. It doesn't make much sense. Even in emergency departments wait times have continued to rise over the past few years according to the CIHI, with the length of stay increasing by 17 per cent from five years ago. Why are Albertans waiting longer in emergency wards when we're spending 15 per cent more on health care? Why?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question. Again, the member continues to allude to these cuts that he's said very clearly in the past that he would be pushing for. Conservatives don't have a plan to improve wait times. The only thing they've publicly cared about is that they want to privatize and cut costs for everyday families. Well, it would actually increase costs significantly. I don't want to wait any longer than anyone else does in this province, but I certainly don't want your top 1 per cent to be able to jump to the front of the queue and for the rest of us to have to sit behind and wait. That's not public health care, that's not good for the people of this province, and we won't let that happen.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

### Infertility Treatment

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fertility treatments are a necessary medical service that some Albertans rely on to grow their families. Alberta's only publicly operated fertility clinic, at the Royal Alexandra hospital, stopped offering non-insured services in February 2018, with patients sent to private clinics, but private clinics in Alberta have sent patients away for their race, their body type, and other backgrounds, often requiring public pressure to reverse their insensitive policies. To the Minister of Health: what assurances can you provide to patients of private clinics that they will not be refused for treatment for nonmedical reasons?

2:00

**Ms Hoffman:** Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for the question and the opportunity to respond. Certainly, our heart goes

out to anyone who's struggling with infertility. We all know somebody who's been down that road. Like everyone who wants to have a family, we certainly send them our thoughts and our prayers. We are also covering the cost differential between the AHS clinic and the private during the transition of their choosing. There are two hours of access to mental health counsellors that we're providing as well, again, because of the mental anguish. If there are specifics about discrimination and racism, please raise them with me or with the College of Physicians & Surgeons. Certainly, that would be the most appropriate place.

**Ms McPherson:** With the range of private fertility clinics available in Alberta and the uneven distribution of insured and noninsured services throughout the province and the inconsistent and potentially confusing array of fertility-related treatments and services, with confusing fees that may or may not be covered by public and private insurance, again to the Minister of Health: what will you do to help patients navigate Alberta's increasingly complicated reproductive and fertility treatment landscape?

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much to the member for the question. We certainly have been working with all of the families who've been impacted by the noninsured services moving from a hospital to a community-based setting, and we are looking into some specific concerns that they've raised with us. Our office is available. There are also navigators with AHS that are helping individuals through these challenges. We certainly do share our sympathies with them as they struggle with this very difficult, very personal situation, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms McPherson:** The lack of accessible and affordable fertility treatments in Alberta has driven some families to seek sometimes poorly regulated services abroad, which can generate complications that have to be treated at a greater cost in Alberta. A 2014 report by the U of A estimated that funding well-regulated assisted reproductive technology in the province would result in net savings of up to \$179 million in health care costs over 18 years. Can you commit, Minister, to updating the 2014 report with respect to the potential cost savings from funding well-regulated treatments?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. While we currently don't provide IVF treatments, this is something that I know some jurisdictions have been looking at changing. I've been watching with great interest what's happening across our country. While I've seen some jurisdictions increase funding substantially and then claw it back, that to me would be the worst-case scenario. We want to work to develop a sustainable system, support those who are accessing the publicly insured services while working to reduce wait times. I'm happy to continue working on this issue with all women who aspire to be biological mothers in the province of Alberta.

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

### Agricultural Programs

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was surprised to read in the draft foundational policy of the UCP that they want to end government subsidies to small businesses, including farms, and end government involvement in Crown corporations. To the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry: how do government subsidies to farms and Alberta Crown corporations in a competitive business market actually support Alberta's farmers and ranchers?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. AFSC is a tremendously useful institution for the province to support livestock and crop producers as well as food processors. Many agriculture businesses operate as for-profit corporations. Simply put, these two policies combined would mean the end of AFSC and the end of direct government support for incorporated producers, which represent over 7,000 farms in Alberta. Most of these are family-owned corporate farms.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the critical partnership that the government of Alberta has with farmers and producers, what would losing AFSC mean for Alberta's agriculture sector?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. When crops were unharvested due to heavy snow in late 2016, I was able to direct AFSC to streamline their inspection processes. That flexibility would be gone. I was also able to work with AFSC on interest-free loans to producers in the wake of the devastating grass fires in 2017, and AFSC was able to step up with loans to help small businesses in the wake of the Fort McMurray and Slave Lake fires. In short, getting rid of AFSC would hinder government's ability to make life better for Albertans.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta has long-established farms and producers that grow the food that we are thankful to put on our plates, if government were to adopt a policy that ended grants to incorporated farms, what impacts would that have on our farmers?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of Alberta's producers are incorporated. This short-sighted policy would mean no grants to those farmers and ranchers, no grants to make their operations energy efficient, no grants to food processors to increase their competitiveness, no grants to help producers access international markets, no grants to small brewers to help diversify the economy, no grants to offset BSE surveillance costs, no grants to farmers with irrigation to help with efficiencies. Once again, these sorts of suggestions from the opposition reveal how out of touch they are with the needs of the economy and rural Alberta.

### Federal Response to Pipeline Opposition

*(continued)*

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP government voted against a motion that would call on the federal government to stop sending billions of dollars in transfer payments for construction projects to B.C., some of those dollars from Albertans, until B.C. stops obstructing the Trans Mountain project. The government voted against it. The NDP continually say in this House that they agree that we have to get the federal government to take serious action on this file, but then when given a chance, they stand up and vote with Justin Trudeau every time. So which is it? Actually, on behalf of Albertans: why are you standing with Justin Trudeau and not the people of Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know what? There is not a stronger champion for this pipeline than our Premier. She's been very, very vocal that this pipeline will get built. Now, we have been calling on the federal government for real action. We've been calling on the Prime Minister to stand up, to follow our Premier's lead, take action, and ensure that the Trans Mountain goes through. But I'll tell you this much. There is nothing that we will stop at in order to get this project built. It means tens of thousands of jobs, billions of dollars to the Canadian economy. This is in the national interest. This pipeline will be built.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, they're calling on the government, but they're not taking any action. When given a chance, they're voting with Justin Trudeau. Two days ago I moved a motion in this Assembly calling on this government not to raise the carbon tax by 67 per cent until Trudeau took action to make sure Trans Mountain would be built. The government stood and voted with Justin Trudeau again. Over and over the government says in this Assembly that they want the federal government to take action and that they're standing up for Albertans, but when given a chance by this side of the House, they vote with Justin Trudeau every time. Again, why are you standing with Justin Trudeau and not the people of Alberta?

**Ms Hoffman:** Last time I checked, we were in Alberta, not in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. I know that the members opposite have a hard time with that. My question is: during the two decades that your leader was in Ottawa with those ideas that he's batting around now, did he sit on his hands, or did he try and fail at them? Which was it? I have to say that we're happy that today he seems to be standing with us in support of this pipeline. When he was in Ottawa for 20 years, did he fight and fail, or did he sit on his hands and do nothing?

**The Speaker:** Members, remember about the preambles. We're on question 6.

Please proceed.

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, this government has done nothing at all. They've done nothing. They continue to stand up here and, in fact, deflect now, Mr. Speaker, given that what the minister just did was deflect from the question I asked. Again, you voted with Justin Trudeau in this House twice. Why did you vote with Justin Trudeau and not stand up for the people of Alberta? Are you going to ask the federal government to take serious action to make sure that this pipeline gets built, or are you going to keep backing up your ally Justin Trudeau, with consequences for the people of Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll remind the member that we are in Edmonton, Alberta, not in Ottawa, so the Prime Minister doesn't actually sit in this House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of concrete actions that our Premier and our government have taken to ensure that the Trans Mountain pipeline will be built. We will be bringing in legislation that'll allow us to restrict oil and gas that flows to British Columbia. We're fighting and winning in court. We're 14 out of 14. And our Premier has been clear that, if need be, we will invest in this pipeline in some form or another.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Airdrie.

### Carbon Levy and Pipeline Approvals

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are having a hard time believing that this government has their back. There have been multiple motions that the Official Opposition has moved in this House that will support pipelines, yet the government continues to stand with their bestie Justin Trudeau. Will any of the ministers stand up and please explain to Albertans why they don't have their backs?

2:10

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what? As I travel the province and talk to Albertans, ordinary Albertans, workers, whether they're in the energy sector or any other sector, what they say is that they are proud that our Premier is standing up for Albertans. We're standing up for workers, and we're standing up for Canadians. I can tell you that we will not relent until this project goes through. The Premier has been very, very clear. We will see this pipeline get built.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Mr. Speaker, given that this government increased the carbon tax by 67 per cent on all Albertans, Albertans aren't feeling like this government has their backs. Why won't this government stand up, take some real action, and scrap their 67 per cent hike in the carbon tax?

**Mr. Bilous:** Mr. Speaker, what the opposition is calling for would jeopardize the Trans Mountain pipeline. I thought they stood in favour of it. Now I'm confused. It sounds like they're opposed to it. The Prime Minister was very clear that part of the reason that it was approved – it needs to be approved federally – was because of our climate leadership plan. The two are linked. Because we've taken aggressive action to reduce our emissions, a plan that we came together with industry on, including indigenous leaders, it has led to the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline. Our government will continue to have the backs of Albertans, and frankly we have the backs of Canadians by ensuring that this pipeline gets built.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Hey, Mr. Speaker, breaking news: Kinder Morgan is backing out of the pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, will anybody please explain to me how the carbon tax got us any social licence and any pipelines approved?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'll explain it again. How the process worked is that our government came up with a very robust climate leadership plan in consultation and working in lockstep with industry as well as indigenous leaders and environmental NGOs to ensure that our plan would take meaningful action but also demonstrate that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. We are the most responsible oil and gas energy producers in the world. We're very proud of that. We're proud of our sector. That climate leadership plan has led to the approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline, to where now we are fighting and will ensure that that pipeline gets built and will protect workers and jobs in this country.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.  
The Member for Calgary-Greenway.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More than a thousand citizens gathered in Calgary on Tuesday to rally in support of the pipeline, and today Albertans will converge again on the Legislature Grounds. The Premier's teammates Tzepporah Berman, Karen Mahon, Jagmeet Singh, and their best friend, Justin Trudeau, are all on record to phase out our oil and gas industry here in Alberta. Why hasn't the Premier denounced her teammates who want to destroy our vital industry, and when will she admit that the appointment of Karen Mahon and Tzepporah Berman was a brutal and ideological mistake?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what? With all due respect to the people that the hon. member just mentioned, their positions and their opinions are quite irrelevant. We are continuing to move forward with the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline, supporting this industry, supporting our oil and gas sector, and supporting the tens of thousands of men and women that will work on the construction of this pipeline. That's who we're listening to. Albertans said to us: get the job done; get this pipeline built. Our Premier is showing real leadership, taking action, and we will get it built.

**Mr. Gill:** Given that this government put these people on the board and given that Albertans were assured that the carbon tax would buy Albertans social licence to build a pipeline but that it's clear that so-called social licence is an empty term and that we all know that this was just a disguised sales tax, when the Premier met the Finance minister yesterday to discuss the Trans Mountain expansion, did she tell him that the \$50 increase in the carbon tax hike is off the table given the news on the pipeline on Sunday, or is this NDP government still going to impose a 67 per cent hike in the carbon tax?

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I've mentioned it twice now today. Please, in your next supplemental – and it'll apply to everybody else today – remember that after question 5 there are no preambles.

The hon. minister.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know what? We've been very clear. We've laid out our financial projections for our climate leadership plan for the next six years, and there is no consideration of a carbon price anywhere over \$50. The plan, I'll remind the hon. member, got us approval of two pipelines. Now, the opposition leader wants to go back to the model of the past, one where we didn't even come close to getting any new pipelines to tidewater. Then he went on national television this past weekend and said that it's fine to have an aspirational target and that you do your best. Well, doing your best isn't how you lead. I can tell you that leadership is what we're seeing in our Premier. We're very proud of her. Albertans are proud of her. Albertans stand behind her, and so do Canadians.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Second supplemental.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Premier has admitted that she will hike the carbon tax according to the dictates of her best friend in Ottawa and given that a memo from Justin Trudeau's federal department of agriculture indicates that a \$50-per-tonne carbon tax will on average cost farmers \$3,700 a year, an amount which they say that they cannot absorb, Premier, with no social licence, no pipeline, and no good reason for this tax, how much more damage does it have to do to Albertans before your

government scraps this tax? [interjection] This is not a laughing matter, sir.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members. [interjections] Just calm it down, folks. Just calm it down.

The hon. minister.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, our government worked very collectively with industry, environmental NGOs, and indigenous leaders to come up with our climate leadership plan, one that really is a model for the rest of the world, quite frankly. We're showing that industry and development and the economy go hand in hand with protecting the environment. These are two sides of the same coin. From that climate leadership plan, the Prime Minister and the federal government have approved the Trans Mountain pipeline. In fact, they approved two different pipelines. We're very proud of that fact. We are calling on the federal government to follow our Premier's lead, to take meaningful action and make sure this gets . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
The Member for Calgary-West.

#### Police Release of Information on Serious Incidents

**Mr. Ellis:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. A Calgary police officer was shot last week by a person the police confronted after a spree of violent crimes. The man was found dead in a garage where he was hiding. Fortunately, the constable is recovering from his injuries, but curiously the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, or ASIRT, has refused to release the name of the deceased man who shot him. Minister, these cases often involve repeat offenders. Do you believe Calgarians have a right to know if the deceased man was out on bail at the time of the shooting?

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe that every Albertan deserves to be safe in their communities, and that's why we have worked with our partners, with the RCMP and have launched our strategy to tackle crime in our communities. We have put more boots on the ground, we have added resources, and we will continue to work with our partners to make sure that every Albertan is safe in their community.

**Mr. Ellis:** Mr. Speaker, this occurrence was in Calgary.

Given that ASIRT has refused to release the name of the shooter and that in making this decision, it cited an interprovincial agreement not to cause trauma to the deceased's family and given that in a contradictory twist the name of the officer shot was made public, Minister, why is ASIRT keeping the name of the deceased a secret? What about the emotional trauma of the police officer who was shot? What about his feelings and his family?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We certainly will release information that we're able to, protecting, obviously, public safety and following the legislation that's in place. Our thoughts are certainly with the officer who was injured and with everyone who goes to the front lines every day and responds to the call of duty and works to protect our communities. We will continue to invest in supporting those folks and giving as much information to the people of Alberta as we can within the parameters of the legislation.

**The Speaker:** No preamble.

**Mr. Ellis:** Mr. Speaker, given not knowing if the deceased man was a violent repeat offender out on bail and given that I have warned this minister and this government that there's a broken bail hearing system and that it is sending offenders back out to continue to commit crimes, eroding public trust – Minister, at this moment you're telling Albertans that it is more important to protect the offender, who shot a police officer, than to restore public trust in the system – will you do the right thing and release the deceased man's name?

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

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our thoughts are with the family and loved ones of the deceased. That was an operational decision made by the police, and they make those decisions on a case-by-case basis. They're the experts. They're the people on the ground. We work with them and provide them the supports so that they are able to do their work, and we will keep supporting them.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

2:20

#### Alberta Child Benefit

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that child poverty advocates are calling our new Alberta child benefit a game changer and given that many parents have recently received their latest instalment of their benefit payments, to the Minister of Children's Services: how is the Alberta child benefit making a real difference in the lives of children and their families across Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta child benefit is helping families afford winter clothes or to enrol their kids in extracurricular activities for sometimes the very first time. Families earning less than \$41,746 per year in net income are eligible to receive the benefit, and those child benefit payments are mailed or direct-deposited in as many as four instalments annually. The maximum annual benefit is \$1,114 for families with one child and up to \$2,785 for families with four or more children.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that our government wants as many families as possible to be able to access this critical support, to the Minister of Children's Services: what do eligible families have to do in order to receive this critical support?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government wants all eligible families to be able to access this life-changing support. In order to receive the Alberta child benefit, parents must file their income tax returns. This will automatically enrol eligible families for the child benefit as well as other supports that will make their lives better. Throughout this tax season I've been encouraging families across Alberta to file their tax returns, and I ask all my colleagues in the Assembly to let their constituents know about the Alberta child benefit and the tax filing requirement so that no family has to miss out on these amazing opportunities.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many lower income families in my constituency of Edmonton-McClung may not have the resources to get professional help to file their taxes, to the Minister

of Children's Services once again: what can I tell my constituents who need a bit of help filing their returns in order to access financial supports?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tax filing can be challenging, and professional assistance can be costly. That's why I'm so happy that lower income families can get access to free tax preparation clinics offered year-round by community organizations. The Canada Revenue Agency website has a list of where these clinics are offered in communities, large and small, across the province, and I encourage members to find out about free clinics in their communities and to let their constituents know about this service.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

### Trade with British Columbia

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it will come as a surprise to many members of this House that Alberta oil and gas is used for a lot more than just filling up your gas tank. There are plastics, petrochemicals, and, of course, asphalt for road building. My question today is for the Minister of Energy. The Burnaby refinery supplies more than just jet fuel to Vancouver airport and gasoline for Lower Mainland drivers. If Alberta restricts the flow of bitumen through the existing Kinder Morgan pipeline, will that also impact their supply of asphalt just in time for road construction season?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. As he rightly pointed out, we use our oil and gas for a variety of different products, and often we add value, whether in this province or in other jurisdictions. So there are going to be a significant number of consequences should we pass legislation to enable us to turn off the taps. There could be consequences for other industries, outside of just filling up at the pumps.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll help the minister. In fact, the Burnaby refinery does produce asphalt, but it is the only such facility in British Columbia that does so.

Given that if they do run short of asphalt in B.C., which comes primarily from oil sands bitumen, they're going to have a tough time meeting their ambitious road-building targets and given that those plans include an expansion of the Trans-Canada highway near Vancouver and a whole lot more, again to the Minister of Energy: if we do restrict flow to the existing Kinder Morgan pipeline, will you also ensure that asphalt exports from Alberta to B.C. are restricted?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I appreciate the hon. member providing different ideas and opportunities on ways that, should we need to continue down this path, we can ensure the project goes forward and that there are real economic consequences for the people of British Columbia because of the position that their government has taken. That is a very interesting point and one which our government will consider.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that it is absolutely clear that trade benefits all provinces and given that B.C. relies on Alberta to ship products but that Alberta also relies on B.C., to the Premier: however this issue is resolved – and I genuinely and truly hope that it is resolved soon – what is your plan to reconcile with British Columbia to ensure that Canada remains a strong and united country?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Bilous:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for his point. I mean, you know, we'll recall in this House that the Premier stood up when she first introduced the wine ban and said that our task force and our government were looking for ways to impose some sanctions on British Columbia, and it was unfortunate that it was the people of British Columbia that would have to feel those sanctions. In the same way, we want, obviously, this pipeline, and we'll do everything we can to ensure that it is built. And it will get built. Moving beyond that, we are committed to building on our relationship. I'm committed to working with my counterparts to enhance trade corridors and ease the movement of goods and services.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

### Grain Rail Transportation Backlog

**Mr. Strankman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite farmers doing what farmers do best, we are at a critical moment here in western Canada. Farmers have filled grain elevators to capacity and are struggling to get their grain to export. The shortage of grain car movement to west coast ports is critical. Bill C-49 is being debated in Ottawa. Minister, should Bill C-49 not pass fast enough to help this season, does your government or the AFSC have a plan in place to help farmers out should they find themselves in a financial shortfall this planting season?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. You know, he's very right that there's been a backlog in railcars being able to get our products to market, to the port, not just grain but lumber as well, and that is concerning. We've had conversations with the federal ministers concerning agriculture and transportation, about the amendments to the Canadian Transportation Act. Looking there, those amendments will go a long way. It had been held up by the Conservative Senators, but my understanding is that it has passed the Senate now. That's just going to be one tool in our tool box to be able to get past this season. My understanding is that we're a long ways from being able to . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

**Mr. Strankman:** Given, Mr. Speaker, that over the past few years we have asked many times what Alberta is doing about the grain car shortage and given that our grain cars are nearing the end of their life cycle and given that there once was a time that the Alberta government favoured expanding railcar assets and supporting the expansion of shipping ports such as Port Moody and Prince Rupert, Minister, has your office pressured the Trudeau government to focus on all of Canada's resource industries? Have you communicated this to the Trudeau government?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the member is quite right. Aging hopper cars right across the prairies are a fact, and we need to take, you know, some measures for this. I've had conversations with Minister Garneau and Minister MacAulay, in the federal government, on this issue as well as with the CEOs at CN and CP on what they're doing with their own car fleets. So, yeah, we need all levels of government and industry, not just rail but grain buyers as well, to come together to ensure that we have the hopper cars that we need going into the future.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Strankman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this is not a new problem and given that four years ago, when the Conservatives were in power, that government ordered CN and CP to double their grain-hauling capacity or face strict fines, to the minister: has your government even bothered calling for a similar measure given the time-sensitive nature of this critical situation?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the member is correct. That was, you know, a temporary measure that was put in by the previous federal government. What this federal government is doing is implementing a lot of those changes into the Canadian Transportation Act, the amendments to that, which is commonly known as Bill C-49. That is going to go a long way, I think.

But we have to keep in mind that, you know, what was perhaps a bumper year 10 years ago is going to be an average year 10 years from now. We're going to have increased production here in Alberta, and we're going to need that increased capacity. We'll continue working with industry and government to ensure that that continues, Mr. Speaker.

#### Government Procurement Process

**Mr. Barnes:** Mr. Speaker, under existing RFP rules, provisions exist to allow government to amend an already existing RFP for unanticipated issues or because the scope of the work has changed. However, there should be policies that prevent these provisions from being used to alter an RFP to a specific proponent's submission, policies that do not appear to have been in place in Medicine Hat and other constituencies. To the Minister of Service Alberta: please explain the policies that are already in place that prevent RFP changes to promote one proponent's submission over another's.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, procurement is a complex matter within the government of Alberta. Part of the procurement policy sits within Service Alberta, and that's with respect to goods and services procurement. Procurement with respect to infrastructure projects, however, would sit under the Minister of Infrastructure. So I would certainly need more information from the member opposite in order to be able to give him specific information if he has a particular project in mind. He seems to have been alluding to something in Medicine Hat, so I would be happy to follow up with him.

2:30

**Mr. Barnes:** Thank you, Minister.

Again to you, please: have you advised these other departments to avoid using similar provisions that may advance one proponent over another, and if not, will you do so?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to procurement there are robust rules in place, and there is a liability that attaches to all of our procurement processes. Whenever we go out to an RFP and we negotiate that process with bidders, there is a government liability should the government choose to do something that the member is suggesting, so that would not be in the best interests of government. No government department would receive legal advice to do that. In fact, we would receive legal advice not to.

**Mr. Barnes:** Given that fairness and taxpayer value are paramount, specifically to the Minister of Health: does Alberta Health Services include these types of provisions in their RFP proposals, and will you advise Alberta Health Services to stop using these types of provisions in their requests for proposals?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe the member is trying to assert that there was some wrongdoing. Certainly, there are oversights around fairness, and also the courts are another area that sometimes is considered. If this is the specific incident that he's talking about where the courts are involved, certainly it would be inappropriate for us to speak to their involvement and any decision until after that time. We respect that we have a responsibility to the public interest to ensure that we get the very best returns for the people of Alberta and have safe care for them as well.

#### Access-to-information Investigations

**Mr. Cooper:** In the first three years of this government's mandate we've seen them involved in a slew of controversies, leading to several high-profile investigations. They're under investigation for deleting e-mails about PPAs, under investigation about destroying visitor logs, deleting nearly a million e-mails. For high-profile political interference, Mr. Speaker, you'll know they've been found in contempt. To the Minister of Service Alberta: how do you justify the fact that your government is averaging more than one serious investigation every single year?

**Ms McLean:** Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, we believe that government should be open and transparent, and access to information is no exception to this. It's an important issue that we take very seriously. Certainly, there's always more work to do, and we inherited a system that did not necessarily have the best processes in place in order to ensure that a government can act efficiently and always in the best interests of Albertans. So we've taken action. We've improved turnaround times for FOIP requests. We're proactively sharing more information than government has ever before. We're streamlining processes and ensuring that we comply with all of the rules.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, given that they believe one thing and their actions are showing another, because they are currently under investigation for at least four serious challenges that they have created, and given that this government is clearly refusing to accept any ownership or responsibility, to the minister: are these acts of secrecy part of your government's policy like voice mode, or is this just current government practice?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I truly wish that the member opposite would ask me a specific question about government policy so that I could accurately address any concerns he may have. However, there appears to be just an intention to engage in some sort of vague smear campaign.

However, I will say that in terms of any accusations of wrongdoing we are more than happy and eager to comply with any investigations. There will be absolute co-operation from all government departments and officials, and we will be absolutely transparent with the public for all . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, given that these investigations require a lot of time and money to conduct and therefore are only held in the most serious of cases that require attention and given that we've seen the severity of these issues in B.C. and Ontario and given that a senior Liberal staffer in Ontario will be spending time in jail for the exact same things that this government is currently being investigated for, under deleting e-mails, how many more investigations can we expect to see from this government, and does the minister expect any of them to end in criminal charges?

**Ms McLean:** Thank you for that question. Mr. Speaker, I really wish that the member opposite would do appropriate research. If he had done so, he would know, as I do, that the circumstances in Ontario are extremely different from the circumstances for which we are being investigated here. We are excited to be co-operating fully with the OIPC. I would leave it to the OIPC to conduct her investigation and not to the member opposite as he wishes to be judge, jury, and executioner. Everyone here should really accept what the OIPC's process is, undergo that process. They're one to speak as Kenney is intent . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister. [interjections]  
Order, please.

Hon. minister, there's a time slot here that we all live under. I try to enforce that.

**Ms McLean:** As if I'm the only one.

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, can I respectfully ask that you not speak back to me when I'm speaking, please? Do you agree? Is that a yes?

**Ms McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely am happy to do that. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

### Health Care Wait Times

**Mr. Coolahan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Access to timely health services is a priority for Albertans in my constituency and for Albertans across the province. A new Canadian Institute for Health Information report came out today, which indicated that for some procedures wait times are improving while for other procedures wait times have been increasing. To the Minister of Health: what are you doing to address these increasing wait times?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Albertans also tell me that they want government to reduce wait times in order to improve quality

of life. The member is right. We're among the best in the country and have the shortest waits for things like hip fracture repair, knee replacement, radiation therapy, and our stroke treatment centres are the best in Canada, among the fastest in the world. We need to make improvements in the other areas that were identified, and that's why Budget 2018 is investing \$40 million to increase opportunities and reduce wait times for hip and knee surgeries as well as cataract surgeries. We hope the opposition will vote for that budget.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Coolahan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This issue isn't just about investing more money in the health care system; it has to be about better strategies to reduce wait times. To the same minister: are you working on other strategies?

**Ms Hoffman:** I absolutely agree with the member. Our response to wait times needs to be comprehensive, and a response that includes additional investment is one pillar. Others are innovative strategies to reduce wait times, including centralized registries and allowing more to be done through primary care, with the support of education for those practitioners. As our population ages, we are seeing an increase in need for medical interventions. That's why we're making improvements to those wait-lists, reallocating OR time according to greatest need, and working with physicians around the Choosing Wisely campaign, that doctors brought forward to ensure that the resources are used responsibly.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Coolahan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some people think that adding more private medical clinics will help wait times as people who can pay more can jump the line. To the Minister of Health: would this help wait times for Albertans?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, maybe for a very select few Albertans, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House we believe that accessing health care shouldn't be based on how much money you have in the bottom of your pocket or your spending limit on your credit card. We think it should be based on medical need. We know that Conservatives want to make reckless cuts and privatize. Those would mean regular families with children and mortgages would have to wait longer for health care. We know they want to do this so they can give a tax giveaway to the top 1 per cent and put the burden on working families. That's wrong. We stand up for all Albertans and want to make sure that we reduce wait times for everyone.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

### Emergency Medical Services

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Scarily enough, since 11:17 this morning there's been a red alert for ambulances going on in Calgary. Even more scary, since 9 o'clock this morning in southern Alberta there's been a red alert call. Front-line dispatchers have told us that today they came in to work with seven serious calls on the screen and no ambulances to go. In fact, an ambulance was dispatched from Vulcan to go to Calgary to deal with a heart attack. We keep asking this minister what she's going to do to deal with the serious ambulance delays, that are costing people, sometimes, their lives. We'd like a serious answer right now on behalf of Albertans, please.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly follow up with regard to the assertions that were made to ensure that we in my office are aware of the details. Usually red alerts are very short term, but nobody wants to be on a red alert for no matter of time. That's why we're investing in increased supports for front-line paramedics. That's why we've brought in this \$23 million over last year's forecast. We know that it's important to have increased front-line resources. Our front lines are fantastic, but we need to have more of them to be able to ensure that we have the right resources. I certainly urge members opposite to vote with us on the budget when it comes that time in the days to come.

2:40

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, we've been talking to this minister about this for over three years. Given that she still has not done anything like that on this issue and given that as a father, as a spouse, as a rural Albertan each day I live in fear that one of my family members may be in danger and no ambulance could come to them, will the minister stop telling us what she imaginarily thinks has happened and what she's actually going to do to get emergency services to our communities?

**Ms Hoffman:** What we've actually done, Mr. Speaker, is to reduce the use of ambulances doing interfacility transfers. We're building new long-term care beds to make up for the fact that 88 per cent of them were closed during the Ralph Klein cuts. We are encouraging crews to consolidate patients so that fewer crews are waiting in hospital emergency departments. We're expanding the community paramedicine program throughout Alberta, including central Alberta, and we're investing this \$23 million in more front-line services. All of this is what it takes to fix, certainly, the kinds of cuts and underfunding that we saw under Conservative governments.

**Mr. Nixon:** Mr. Speaker, given that all the minister can do is to talk about 25 years ago and given that's not acceptable to the people of Alberta and given that that certainly doesn't help the people that are in danger right now that cannot get emergency services that this minister is responsible to provide them and given that firefighters, volunteer firefighters across rural Alberta are telling us that this is getting worse and worse and worse and that they're picking up most of the flak, again to the minister: not 25-years-ago policy or those types of discussions, what are you doing right now to get emergency services to the people of Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing is that we're increasing funding for EMS front-line responders. We're using ambulances more effectively to reduce interfacility transfers. We're building new long-term care spaces. And 25 years ago is relevant because the decisions you guys made 25 years ago to blow up the general hospital in Calgary, to close the Charles Camsell, in Edmonton, to cut rural services have lasting legacies. Closing those long-term care beds means that we have people sitting in hospital today that could have been in long-term care getting the appropriate care in community and we could move patients out of the emergency department. This is something that we are really proud to move forward to fix, and we are certainly fixing a number of Conservative problems that were left behind.

### Notices of Motions

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to give notice pursuant to Standing Order 42 that at the appropriate time I will move the following motion.

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Canada to delay its planned \$1.3 billion funding to the government of British Columbia through federal labour market agreements until the B.C. government ceases its efforts to obstruct the Trans Mountain expansion project.

I have the appropriate copies for the pages.

### Introduction of Bills

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

#### Bill 10

#### An Act to Enable Clean Energy Improvements

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to table for first reading Bill 10, An Act to Enable Clean Energy Improvements.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard directly from Albertans that they want to see more programs to help them make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes and their businesses. Many municipalities share government's commitment to advancing Alberta's climate leadership goals and are very keen to provide more options to Albertans to reduce emissions, save money, and help create more jobs in the green energy sector.

We've responded. Property assessed clean energy, or PACE, is a program that will enable municipalities to work with Energy Efficiency Alberta to fund clean energy upgrades to private property and then recover those costs from the property owner through property taxes. If passed, Bill 10 would enable municipalities to pass a PACE improvement tax bylaw. The intention is that Energy Efficiency Alberta will administer the program and work with lending institutions to secure agreements for financing. This program will help everyday Albertans make energy efficiency upgrades so they can save money and reduce emissions, and by making it more affordable for Albertans to make these improvements, this will help create green jobs and stimulate local economies.

This program is supported by Alberta's building industry, by our municipalities, and by Albertans. This government is committed to making life better for Albertans, and Bill 10 does that by helping them make energy efficiency upgrades so they can save money, reduce emissions, and support a diverse, clean energy economy in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to end by thanking all of the staff who are working on this game-changing legislation.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 10 read a first time]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

**Mr. Westhead:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling a document where an antichoice organization praises the UCP leader's impeccable antichoice voting record. Given that these are the friends that got him elected, it begs the question of what the opposition leader owes them. Perhaps it explains why he's avoiding the vote on Bill 9.

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

**Dr. Starke:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. Earlier today, during consideration of main estimates for the Ministry of Service Alberta, I made

reference to the Rural Economic Development Action Plan, which was prepared in 2014. I'd like to table five copies of that for the record.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of a petition put together by constituents in the Strathmore, Hussar, and Standard areas. I won't read the entire thing, but it's about the intersection of highway 840 and highway 564 in Wheatland county and is calling for improvements to infrastructure. This petition was put together before the Minister of Infrastructure – I suppose that job has changed around – before the government acted. These changes have been made, but I'm still tabling it out of respect for the constituents who put it together. This is a particularly important thing to me. My aunt almost lost her life and is still learning to walk again from a crash right in this area. Action was needed, action has been taken by the government, and I thank the government for their action on this issue.

**The Speaker:** Any other hon. members? Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two things that I want to table this afternoon. One is a letter to a constituent of mine from the Calgary Housing Company regarding their policy on cannabis and the changes in the legislation and what changes will or will not be made to their policies for residents when cannabis is legalized.

As well, five copies of the Calgary Housing Company's briefing note on their cannabis policy.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter – and I have the appropriate five copies here – from a Mrs. Lena Williamson. She says:

The Berwyn Autumn Lodge should not be closed as there is no lodge replacing it . . . We have our names in the Fairview Lodge, and there were 4 names ahead of ours, so when will we get in?

She goes on to say:

The winter of 2016 there was \$100,000 [worth of] renovations done to this lodge, so it's like a new lodge . . . I love this lodge.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** I believe we had a point of order today. The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to withdraw the point of order at this time.

### Motions under Standing Order 42

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

#### Provincial Advocacy to Federal Government on Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Suspension

Mr. Nixon:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Canada to delay its planned \$1.3 billion funding to the government of British Columbia through federal labour market

agreements until the B.C. government ceases its efforts to obstruct the Trans Mountain expansion project.

2:50

**Mr. Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move this motion forward because we had an emergency debate just a few short days ago and we still have not seen any clear action from this Assembly on this issue. This is an opportunity for this Assembly to do two things: one, send a strong message to Justin Trudeau that we expect him to take action and, second, a severe, significant consequence to B.C. if they continue to obstruct our pipeline.

If the government does not support it, again, they support Justin Trudeau and not Albertans.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

[Unanimous consent denied]

### Orders of the Day

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I have a couple of requests for unanimous consent from the Assembly that I would like to start with. The first one is to seek unanimous consent that the House adjourn today at 4 o'clock instead of 4:30. This is to enable members to attend the pipeline rally on the steps of our Legislature.

[Unanimous consent granted]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the members of the House for that support.

I'd like to also seek unanimous consent to proceed to consideration of Motion 17 on the Order Paper. This motion concerns committee memberships of the Assembly. If that's granted, I will move Motion 17.

[Unanimous consent granted]

### Government Motions

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader.

#### Committee Membership Changes

17. Mr. Mason moved:
- Be it resolved that the membership of the Assembly's committees be replaced as follows:
- A. on the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future that Mr. Horne replace Mr. Connolly, Ms Luff replace Mrs. Schreiner, and Ms McPherson replace Mr. Clark;
  - B. on the Standing Committee on Families and Communities that Ms Woollard replace Mr. Horne, Mr. Connolly replace Ms Luff, and Mr. Fraser replace Ms McPherson;
  - C. on the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship that Mrs. Schreiner replace Ms Woollard, Mr. Westhead replace Mr. Kleinstuber, Mr. Fildebrandt replace Ms

- McPherson, Mr. Clark replace Mr. Fraser, and Mr. Panda be appointed to the vacant position;
- D. on the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund that Ms Luff replace Ms McKittrick and Ms McPherson replace Mr. Clark;
  - E. on the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices that Ms McKittrick replace Drever and Mr. Sucha replace Mr. Kleinsteuber;
  - F. on the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services that Drever replace Ms Luff, Mr. Westhead replace Ms Jabbour, and Ms Babcock replace Mrs. Schreiner;
  - G. on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that Mr. Clark replace Mr. Fildebrandt.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. By way of explanation to the House I can indicate that this motion has been made due to changes in the Assembly. We have made attempts to accommodate members, and it has not always been possible. I believe the motion strikes the right balance between the needs of the various caucuses and independents, and for that reason I urge members to support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This motion is debatable.

Any other members wishing to speak? I'll recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

**Mr. Clark:** Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think that most of what the hon. Government House Leader has said is correct. I will differ with him, though, on one point. Although the conversations around these committees did take place – and we in the Alberta Party caucus certainly have agreed with the vast majority of the committee changes and reshuffling – the Alberta Party caucus is a recognized third party in this Assembly, and as such we feel very strongly that we should be included on the Members' Services Committee. I would like to remind the Government House Leader of the time not so long ago when he and the now Premier sat in those two spots right there as a two-member caucus and had a seat on Members' Services.

It is very clear that the Members' Services Committee is a very important committee of this Assembly. Now, while nowhere is there any sort of ranking order of committee priority that I'm aware of, let's just have a clear understanding of what Members' Services is. It is not the no-meet committee. It is something that meets on a regular basis, chaired by the Speaker, that deals with the rules that govern our offices, our caucus offices, our constituency offices, budgets, and the like. It is an important committee that deals with those issues, standing order changes, those sorts of things, very important work. As a party with standing in this Assembly, it feels very odd to me that we've not been included.

I also should say that committee membership is not something that is granted out of the benevolence of government as a favour. It should follow some rules and some history and some precedent. So I would very much encourage the government to remember the time when they were a two-member caucus and were in fact included. I can't help but wonder. The fact that we have not been included perhaps has something to do with – even though I have not been a member of the Members' Services Committee, I have as a member of the Assembly had the opportunity to speak and present to that committee and on several occasions have used that committee and encouraged the members of that committee to bring motions and actually make some changes.

I can think of one of the very first things that I did as a member of this Assembly, pushed for changes to the way MLA living allowance reimbursements worked, to add those two important words, "up to," to allow us to claim less than the full amount of our living allowance should we, in fact, actually have charged less than that.

You'll recall that it's the Members' Services Committee that made the changes that prevent members from claiming their living allowance and then charging that back on Airbnb. That was the Members' Services Committee.

Most recently the Members' Services Committee tried, between the Official Opposition and government, to change what we are allowed to communicate out of our constituencies to make it far more partisan. Now, it was the Alberta Party caucus who noticed that little change in a committee report and raised that and encouraged members of the committee to make that change.

These are the sorts of things the Members' Services Committee does, and to have a member from the third-party opposition not on that committee and unable to move motions, unable to participate, frankly, Madam Speaker, is not, I think, in keeping with good parliamentary practice.

To that end, then, I have an amendment to move, Madam Speaker. I'll wait till you receive that at the table, and then I'll proceed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This will be amendment A1.

Go ahead, hon. member.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will read it, then. I move that Government Motion 17 be amended in part F by adding "Mr. Clark replace Mr. McIver," after "Mr. Westhead replace Ms Jabbour."

Very simply – and I'll just be brief – I've outlined the rationale for why I believe the Alberta Party caucus ought to be included on Members' Services. My rationale for the replacement that we have chosen is that it maintains the balance between the government and opposition members on this important committee.

I would very much encourage all members of the Assembly to support this amendment to Government Motion 17. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Government House Leader.

3:00

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Well, with regret, I can't support the amendment proposed by the hon. member. I will note that we have worked very hard to strike the right balance in terms of the members of the opposition. One of the things, of course, that's changed is the composition and the size of the opposition parties. It's not comparable to the situation to which the hon. member is referring.

I will say that we have proposed adding that hon. member to the Public Accounts Committee, which is a very important committee that deals with the financial accounts of the government as a whole. I'm sure that he's going to bring very valuable insight and make a great contribution to that committee, Madam Speaker.

But, on balance, I think that we've got to the point where we have it right, so I'd urge all hon. members not to support this amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be brief. I also will not be supporting this amendment. While I do appreciate some

of the comments that the hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow made, the reality, first of all, is as the Government House Leader pointed out, I think rightly, in comparing now to when he and the Premier were in a two-person caucus. There is a significantly different-sized opposition in the Assembly at this point. It's one of the largest, if not the largest, oppositions in the history of this province, which changes the equation.

Second, as the Government House Leader said, not everybody can get everything that they want every time. There are only so many committee spots that we can give out. You know, we would probably like some different things ourselves in the motion, but the reality is that we have to come up with some sort of a compromise that works for the Assembly. This is a compromise. The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow, that party, will have a member on PAC now, which is a big change.

As such, I would ask all of my colleagues to vote against this amendment, and hopefully we can get on with work today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** You got it, Madam Speaker. I'm rising to speak in favour of this amendment. While it is difficult to try to replicate the entire composition of the Legislature on a committee basis, it is, in fact, impossible unless we have a pretty even number and a strict two-party system. We have two official parties here, one party that nearly achieves official party status, two independent members who sit as members of a party, and one independent member who is just that. It is impossible to replicate the composition of the Legislature entirely on committees, but we should do our very best. While the Alberta Party does not have official party status – normally we set that at four MLAs – I think they have achieved at least a critical mass enough that they probably deserve to have a voice on each of the committees, including an important one like the Members' Services Committee.

Let's remember that the role of committees is not simply to rubber-stamp everything that's happening in the Legislature. It is to actually get down to business and do work in a more informal setting – at least, we like to have it as a more informal setting – than this place. It's supposed to do the work and then bring what it does, its findings and its decisions, to the Legislature. So if you're going to cut out a significant portion, even just three MLAs from a committee, I think we diminish the ability of a committee to actually get down to the work it's supposed to do and the nitty-gritty.

I would echo that, you know, when the Government House Leader was a member of a caucus of two, he would certainly have taken issue with the idea of being excluded from any of the committees. I know that it was, until pretty recently, the tradition of the Official Opposition to stand up for the minority rights of members in the House and to make sure everybody had a voice.

I have other problems with the overall motion, not the amendment to this motion but the overall motion. I'll speak to the motion itself when we get back to the main motion, but I want to encourage members to support this amendment as it stands.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll keep my comments brief. I think this is a really important committee. It is in charge of a lot of decisions about how things work for MLAs. And I would like to remark that size really doesn't matter. It's what you do with what you have on these committees. It's important to have representation on the committees.

For that reason, I would like to urge everyone in the House to vote in favour of this amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I did neglect to offer Standing Order 29(2)(a) subsequent to the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, so I apologize.

Did anyone want to take advantage of 29(2)(a) for the Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will take this opportunity to just offer a brief comment. Thank you to my colleague for making that comment. It does give me an opportunity just in terms of the principle of what we're dealing with here, in response to the Government House Leader, as a comment here under 29(2)(a), that while, yes, Public Accounts is an important committee, it's chalk and cheese. It's completely unrelated to the work of Members' Services. Members' Services is something that I think all recognized parties, of which the Alberta Party – I will correct my hon. colleague for Strathmore-Brooks but also thank him for his comments. We are a recognized party within this Assembly and should in fact be put on Members' Services. I think it's, obviously, an important thing. It's not mutually exclusive with membership on other committees.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, do you wish to respond?

**Ms McPherson:** No, thanks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any others wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the amendment?

Seeing none, I'll call the vote.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:06 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Clark	McPherson	Starke
Fildebrandt		

Against the motion:

Aheer	Gray	Panda
Anderson, S.	Hinkley	Payne
Anderson, W.	Hoffman	Renaud
Carlier	Horne	Rosendahl
Carson	Hunter	Sabir
Connolly	Kazim	Schmidt
Coolahan	Larivee	Schneider
Cortes-Vargas	Littlewood	Schreiner
Dach	Loyola	Shepherd
Dang	Luff	Sigurdson
Drever	Malkinson	Stier
Drysdale	Mason	Strankman
Eggen	McKitrick	Turner
Feehan	McLean	Westhead
Fitzpatrick	Nielsen	Woollard
Goehring	Nixon	

Totals:	For – 4	Against – 47
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[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are back on the main motion. Any members wishing to speak? Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Nixon:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would move that we adjourn debate on the motion for the time being and move on with the rest of our afternoon.

Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### Provincial Fiscal Policies

13. Mr. Ceci moved:

Be it resolved that the Assembly approve in general the business plans and fiscal policies of the government.

[Adjourned debate April 10: Ms McPherson]

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill, do you wish to continue speaking? No.

Any other members wishing to speak to Motion 13? The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me, and to members for their time. It's my annual privilege to speak to the government's Budget Address. It won't come as a great surprise to members that I won't be voting in favour of the budget. [interjections] They may be surprised and greatly disappointed, but I'd like to address why they're surprised and help them to understand why I've had this change of heart to not vote for the NDP's budget.

Now, in the 2015 election all the parties put forward what was supposed to be a costed plan for their platforms. I remember I was involved in the Wildrose budget process. I had taken quite a bit of pleasure in doing so. I had regularly put together alternative budgets when I was with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, and it was not a terribly difficult task. You have to manage expectations and try to find a balance of things. The Wildrose put forward a plan. The Progressive Conservatives put forward a plan. The Liberals, I think, put forward a plan. The NDP put forward a plan, but we all recall that there was a billion-dollar rounding error in it. Now, these things can happen. A billion dollars is quite a bit – it's more than a coffee – but I suppose it can happen. They moved back, in the middle of the election, their balanced budget promise date from, I think, 2018 to 2019. They can confirm with me what their actual original promise was, but they ended up moving it back because they got something wrong.

Then immediately upon coming to power, they moved it back another year and then, a few months later, another year. Now they're finally stating that it's going to be some point in fiscal year '23-24 that they'll get back to balance. By that time, Alberta will have taken on, in a best-case scenario, \$96 billion of debt, in a very best-case scenario. That is based on oil prices going up from where they are. Perhaps we'll meet that target; perhaps we won't. But it requires oil prices to go up, gas prices to go up, other tax revenue to go up very significantly. It budgets in that the Trans Mountain pipeline will not just be built but be built on time. I'm sure all members in this House agree that that is something that is a very desirable goal, but it is not necessarily something that we can take to the bank right now. So they've built this on a lot of predications that in a best-case scenario we will have an accumulated debt of \$96 billion, and I think that is grossly irresponsible.

Now, the government has choices here. They can continue on the current path, or they can change a bit. Every government, every party has at least in theory a governing philosophy or an ideology

behind it, at least in some sense. You know, I think ideologies should be like sailing by the stars. They should be a guiding light to guide you, your set of principles, but if there is an island in the way, you might need to change course a bit. I'm a conservative. I'm a libertarian conservative. I have a set of principles. They are a constellation or a star I can steer my ship by, but if there is an island in the way or a bigger ship coming straight into me, I might be inclined to change course from time to time. Now, that's not unprincipled; that's just being pragmatic and reasonable. The other side, being blindly ideological, is steering your ship into the island because you don't think it should be there. Well, we are beached. We are beached, and we see no sign yet of any attempt to get off the reef.

Now, a day or two before the budget I released my 2018-2019 alternative budget plan. In large measure, you know, I sailed by my stars. I built on the alternative budgets that I did when I was with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation in the way I did it, in the approach. The basic principles behind it were that I don't want taxes to go up and I want spending to be controlled and to limit the size, scope, and role of the government. But there were changes in it. I made changes from the times when I was at the CTF, and I made changes from the times when I was in the Wildrose and UCP because circumstances change. If things get worse, sometimes harder measures are required. If things get better, sometimes you could account for that, too.

The plan that I've proposed took the government's own revenue projection numbers from their previous budget and adapted quarterly updates for it to give us a best estimate on the revenue side, but what I have proposed is that we balance the budget as defined by the NDP by 2019 and balance the full, consolidated deficit by 2020. You know, it's difficult how you account for deficits in this province. We've been debating that for a long time. There is more than one right way depending on what you're trying to measure, but at the end of the day, if we are spending more money than we're taking in, you're running a deficit.

3:30

The best general way to account for that is the change in net financial assets, how much money the government is worth on one side and how much debt and liability they have on the other. What to account in the assets and the liabilities is a subject of debate. Pension liabilities or heritage fund assets: these things are subject to debate. But the way it's done in the government's own accounting shows that we will continue to run a decline in our net financial assets. That is our net worth. We will continue to run a decline in our net financial assets infinitely, never ever getting to a balance.

I'll say, though, that even on the operational side, that the NDP has said will be balanced by 2023-24, they still haven't even shown how they're going to get there. They've given only a three-year plan. We used to have five years. We've seen our fiscal accountability legislation watered down repeatedly, beginning in the Stelmach and Redford eras, and now it's to the point where the government doesn't even have to show us how they will balance the budget. They gave a three-year plan, and then they said: another two years after that we'll get to a theoretical balance. They gave no numbers whatsoever.

Now, an economist from the University of Calgary, Trevor Tombe, said in his write-up on the NDP's budget that the alternative budget that I proposed had more detail on getting to a balanced budget "than the government's own numbers." That's outrageous. This thing is, with the cover, about – well, it's not numbered well, but it's not a big . . . [interjection] Well, at least I didn't miscount a billion dollars. It's 25 pages plus the cover, but in it there is more

substantial detail on proposed spending plans than in the government's own budget.

The government's budget is filled with lots of fluff and words and promises and platitudes but not a lot of actual detail on their plans to achieve what they say that they are trying to do. When an economist says that a mere lonely independent member sitting in Siberia can produce a more detailed financial plan than the government, with a majority caucus, a cabinet, and a Finance department with hundreds of people working in it, then something is clearly wrong. Something is very clearly wrong. You're not showing anybody any plan about how you're trying to do this. You've moved back your balanced budget plan at least four to five times now.

Let's remember that you inherited a long-standing deficit. We've been running deficits since 2008-09. The initial deficit was perhaps understandable. There was a collapse in oil prices. We shouldn't have been in a deficit to begin with because spending had gone up unsustainably before that crash in oil prices, but a small temporary deficit was perhaps necessary. But governments repeatedly refused to take action, and they continued to kick the can down the road year after year after year, saying that it's something else's fault and that, you know, in just one more year we're going to get to balance. The Getty government did the same thing until someone finally took the issue seriously.

Now, I know that the NDP today are blaming health care problems on Ralph Klein. What Ralph Klein did in 1993 is about as relevant to Alberta today as Nero to Italy. You can't keep blaming someone from decades ago for any problems that are today's. Eventually you have to take responsibility and be the government. Perhaps you look forward to being opposition again. I don't know. But you are the government, and you have to take ownership of what you are doing. You are responsible for the finances of this province, and if you're not taking that seriously, you're not doing your most fundamental job.

This is going to have real consequences for people. We are going to be paying \$3 billion a year in interest payments, just interest payments. The fastest growing department of the government is debt, paying mere interest on the debt. And paying interest doesn't do anything; it doesn't accomplish anything. Paying interest on the debt will outweigh the vast majority of government departments. It's virtually impossible unless you – it's still outweighed by health care since health care is approaching 50 per cent of the budget. But short of health care and K to 12 education, paying interest on the debt will soon become the single largest department in the government. In Ontario it's already larger than the entire cost of the postsecondary education system.

We've seen what happens when governments don't take this seriously, and there's a reason for it. It's easy and politically rewarding to borrow money today from tomorrow to pay voters today. Money for nothing; votes for free. You can borrow from a future electorate . . .

**Mr. Mason:** And you end up in dire straits.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** The government is in dire straits indeed.

You know, it is politically easy and convenient to borrow money from the future to give nice gifts to the voters of today because there's no pain today for borrowing. The pain comes tomorrow, and our children don't get to vote. There is a role for government borrowing at times for certain projects if they have a measurable earned financial return. In times of emergency, of major natural disasters or war, there is a role for government borrowing, but there is not a role for borrowing on a regular basis, year in, year out, without any plan to stop it.

Now, if members are looking to catch some sleep on the plane or Red Arrow on the way home, I'd encourage you to read a copy of

my alternative budget. It should put you down pretty quickly. Or maybe it'll wake you up. Maybe it'll let you know that it is possible.

I think that it is a positive exercise for oppositions to put forward alternative budgets. It's a debate I regularly had and lost when I was a part of the Official Opposition. There are reasons for not doing it. You don't get much attention. You just get criticized for it. Frankly, you have to change it every year because it's not a platform; it's something on an interim basis. So there are valid reasons for not doing it, and I can respect the Official Opposition for not doing it. But I think, on balance, it is still a positive exercise.

I think, most importantly, it's not just showing Albertans that we can do it; we are showing other members in this House that getting the budget balanced is not the end of the world. We've got the numbers right here to show it. We can get government expenditures under control. We can balance the operational budget in two years and the consolidated budget in three years without apocalypse befalling Alberta, and we've got the numbers right here to prove it.

I want to thank members for their time and for participating in this debate on all sides of the House. I'm sure I've converted you all, and you'll be voting against the budget now or accepting amendments to it. If you need a Finance minister, let me know.

I want to thank members for their time and for participating in the debates, and I look forward to debating this in more detail at the next stages. I move to adjourn.

Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

### Bill 6

#### Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

**Ms Goehring:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 6, the Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.

Madam Speaker, in April 2017 the federal government announced that cannabis would become legal across the country in the summer of 2018. That announcement spurred our government to begin developing a system for legal cannabis. We began by asking Albertans what our province's legal cannabis system should look like. We heard from over 60,000 Albertans. Albertans told us that they have four priorities for cannabis legislation. Those priorities are: keeping cannabis out of the hands of children and youth; protecting public health; promoting safety on roads, in workplaces, and in public spaces; and limiting the illegal cannabis market.

**3:40**

Madam Speaker, last November Members of the Legislative Assembly passed legislation that allowed us to begin putting elements of our legal cannabis system in place. That legislation granted authority to the AGLC to oversee our system, and it paved the way for us to begin preparing for the private, licensed retail sale of cannabis. Over the winter we worked with the AGLC and stakeholders to develop regulations for potential cannabis retailers. Those regulations were announced in February, and they provide clarity for potential cannabis retailers while ensuring our system is safe, secure, and effective.

Today I am seeking hon. members' support for Bill 6, amendments to the Gaming and Liquor Act, which continues to build on the work

that we've done to date. This legislation would bring further clarity to retailers and to the public about the use and sale of cannabis in Alberta. The proposed amendments would modernize the act as well as the AGLC to keep pace with a growing marketplace that includes legalized cannabis and an evolving liquor industry.

Madam Speaker, Bill 6 includes amendments that, if passed, would provide the AGLC board with the tools it requires to better regulate and enforce rules around cannabis. This includes prohibiting retailers from using names such as "pharmacy" or "medi" or any symbol that has a medical connotation. We want to avoid any linkage between the recreational cannabis market and the potential therapeutic effects of cannabis.

Bill 6 also brings better clarity to the rules around cannabis smoking and vaping. It would explicitly prohibit anyone from smoking or vaping cannabis inside any business or place, not just in cannabis retail outlets.

Madam Speaker, Bill 6 also proposes to strengthen the effectiveness of administrative fines for those who violate the Gaming and Liquor Act or the gaming and liquor regulation. Fines are an important tool in deterring contraventions, and we propose increasing the maximum fine from \$200,000 to \$1 million. This amount would give the AGLC the room that it needs to properly address serious infractions when necessary.

Bill 6 would also amend the act so that for minor ticketable provincial offences, the court could rely on evidence that a product is cannabis based on its packaging, labelling, or smell. This mirrors our current practice for alcohol and tobacco. This would apply to public consumption, youth possession, consumption in a vehicle, improper transport in a vehicle, and sales to a minor. This would eliminate the requirement to send the substance to a lab for testing. All other elements of an offence would still need to be proven if the ticket is challenged.

Madam Speaker, as I said, the legislation last fall gave the AGLC the authority to oversee the distribution and retail sale of cannabis in Alberta. This is no small undertaking. The inclusion of legal cannabis in the AGLC's mandate requires necessary resources and supports so its board can provide effective oversight and meet the high expectations of Albertans. Bill 6 reinforces support provided through past legislation, and it would create more capacity for the AGLC board to carry out its expanded mandate. This includes increasing the board's membership from seven to nine members and extending the maximum term for board members from nine years to 10 years. In addition, the bill would allow for temporary extensions of board appointments until a member can be reappointed or replaced, ensuring that there is no gap in capacity during transition periods.

Madam Speaker, while the legalization of cannabis was the impetus for developing this legislation, we also saw the opportunity to amend the Gaming and Liquor Act so that it will better reflect an evolving liquor industry. Two final amendments would bring the potential for new opportunities to Alberta's liquor retailers. The first would allow ferment on premises. This means the facility's licence for this purpose could provide consumers with ingredients, equipment, and guidance to make their own beer, wine, ciders, and coolers on-site and then take the finished products home to consume privately. The bill would also allow retailers to blend and infuse liquor products. This is a growing trend that involves infusing liquor with flavouring agents to create specialty drinks, infusing food with liquor, and creating house-aged liquor.

Madam Speaker, the legalization of cannabis represents a major shift for our province and our country. What's not changing are the priorities that were conveyed to us by Albertans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hope that members on both sides of this House will support this legislation. I would like to move that debate be adjourned.

Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### Bill 7

#### Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act

[Debate adjourned April 10: Mr. van Dijken speaking]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Little Bow.

**Mr. Schneider:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise and debate the merits of these important bills such as Bill 7, Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act. You know, when our caucus first saw this bill, they were reminded of the failed Bill 202, the Alberta Local Food Act. Now, as far as the purposes of both acts go, indeed the wording and phrasing are a little different, but the bottom line of both bills was and is to encourage the development and success of a local food sector or to ensure a resilient, sustainable, and strong local food economy and agricultural land base in Alberta. The fact that Bill 202, the Alberta Local Food Act, a couple of years ago died on the Order Paper now means that, of course, we pore over all the words inside Bill 7, Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act. We do that because it really appears to myself and others that there are definitely similarities. That being said, we're dealing with a new bill, and that is what my comments will refer to.

Let's be honest. Local food is something farmers and rural Albertans understand. We understand it as it's part of our lifestyle and was long before it became trendy and niche. Farmers' markets and buying at the gate was a way of life long before it was urban trendy. It was just what it was.

Now, I've listened to what has been said in the House, to the speakers that have spoken to this bill, and I have to share some of those concerns with my colleagues. We've reached out to peers and producers, asking for their input on a bill dropped here on a Thursday and now debated just a few days later. I can only assume that the government has consulted broadly throughout the agricultural industry, with producers, commissions, manufacturers, and sector groups. I mean, I hope they have, because, of course, we have no way of determining that other than by doing some of that ourselves in the time we've been allotted. We hope to hear back yet on some more opinions as I'm sure the members across the aisle will understand if we do our own consultation. After all, as the late, great President Reagan was fond of saying, "Trust, but verify," and we are going to try to verify.

The trouble is that trust is earned, and it has been mentioned before by others that this government's record on consultation is a tad spotty when it comes to rural issues, not that local food is simply a rural issue. I mean that in this broad growing of crops and livestock kind of rural.

My colleague from Drumheller-Stettler has pointed out a few bothersome areas of this legislation that have been brought to our attention, and I think I'm going to continue in that vein as other issues are cropping up with me as well. I start with definitions of this act. For the purposes of this act

"agricultural product" means

(i) an animal, a plant or an animal and plant product.

As well, an agricultural product as far as this act is concerned is also

(ii) a product, including any food or drink, wholly or partly derived from an animal or a plant, [and]

- (iii) a product prescribed for the purpose of this Act as an agricultural product.

Now, the mumbo-jumbo that appears not just in this act but pretty much every act that crosses our desks leaves a lot of room for interpretation, which is why many portions of this act invite several questions and, in fairness, provide some answers as well. There's no question.

My first question arises with some of the definitions. I mean, I get that the agricultural product definition is going to be broad, but I wonder what the definition of "a product, including any food or drink, wholly or partly derived from an animal or a plant" actually means. Does this act include products that contain honey that are sold, organic or not? Will bees be subject to this act or just the food derived from bees? Does that include mead, which is actually a fermented product subject to AGLC standards?

I guess this would include milk, juice, eggs, bread, bacon, and fruit. Basically, my entire breakfast, organic or not, will fall under this act because, as we know, the minister under section 6(a) can make the certification of agricultural products other than organic ones. You know, certification would seem to most, I would surmise, that we will have local foods certified as per the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, those being foods that are sold within the province at markets or at farm gate, and that the local producer would have to become certified at his own expense. Now, I'm assuming that because it says nowhere in the act who pays for the certification of the producer.

3:50

All that seems to make some sense to me, but as I read on in this bill, under section 6 we see:

The Minister may make regulations

- (a) establishing a certification program for agricultural products other than those certified as organic products under Part 2 [of this act].

Yikes. That sentence alone tends to scare the devil out of me, let alone stakeholders. This portion of the bill needs a little explanation. This portion of the bill needs significant explanation, actually, which leads me down the road to the next question.

When I go through this act, I notice that under the definition of local food, it actually means "forest or freshwater food." Okay. Freshwater food makes sense, but forest, I'm afraid, doesn't. I'm guessing that there's not a huge market for organic wood shingles or organic Christmas trees, perhaps, but I digress.

People are actually contacting our offices and have concerns, and it's our job to see that these questions are answered and that we hold the government to account for their actions or inactions. That's our job over here, and we're going to continue to do it.

The stated purposes of this act are:

- (a) to encourage the development and success of a local food sector throughout the Province, and  
(b) to regulate agricultural products that are produced or processed in the Province and marketed and sold as organic products within the Province.

To reiterate what others have said about this bill before, why is the wording in certain clauses in this act so vague that it makes them open to such broad interpretation? Why, when (b) talks about organics, are all agricultural products included in this legislation? To what purpose is that?

To get the ball rolling here again, I'm going to move on to the local food councils. As per the bill:

5(1) The Minister shall, in accordance with section 7 of the Government Organization Act, establish a Local Food Council to provide a report containing advice and recommendations regarding provincial policies, programs, pilot projects or initiatives to

support the continued growth and sustainability of Alberta's local food sector.

Now, I applaud the minister for ensuring that the members which will be appointed to this council are to be representatives of Alberta's local food sector, including small producers and processors. That portion of the bill seems to make good sense, not that there aren't more portions of the bill that also make good sense. Don't get me wrong here. But that particular portion does give representation on this council to those that are actually involved in growing and taking and marketing food, whatever the definition of food may be.

Now, I guess this does ask another question. The current government has made as much hay as possible, certainly in the last year, with regard to dissolving agencies, boards, and commissions. Now, I'm not going to say either one way or another whether or not that was good or bad. It's not what this bill is about today. But it seems to me that after all of the hoopla about getting rid of ABCs, we've changed the word to "council," and that seems like it will cover off agencies, boards, and commissions with the use of a different word.

You know, a council, according to *Webster's*, is a body of persons specifically designated or selected to act in an advisory, administrative, or legislative capacity. For some of us in Alberta, changing the word from an agency, a board, for heaven's sake, or a commission to a council isn't necessarily anything different. There's really no difference here between those four words, but I guess it could conceivably be seen as a new word from what we have known for several years as three different words. But once again I do digress.

The food portion of this bill, as it relates to the newly formed council that will oversee risk management tools for local food producers and processors and attempt to provide increased access to local food, does at its best keep the public informed on local food in Alberta and provides certification opportunities for local food producers and local food processors. The part of this council is that it potentially will be dissolved, and a drop-dead date on when that will be dissolved is included. That, for me, was very good news. This so-called council won't be lounging around with not much to do for years and years as we've seen in the past, with the possibility of salaries getting out of hand.

But should I be so tickled? I wonder. Let's examine this for a minute. Section 5 of the bill, which talks about the local food council, has several subcategories, and I refer now to subcategories (4) and (5) of section 5. Section 5(4) states:

Not later than 12 months after a Council is established under subsection (1),

which refers to the Government Organization Act,

the Council must submit a final report to the Minister providing the advice and recommendations of the Council on the matters referred to in subsection (1),

which, once again, I've already talked about here. Now, that subsection is something that I laud and applaud. There is a definite end date for the council. I think we could all agree that that idea is a great move.

When I look down a little further, I see section 5(5), that reads:

The Council is dissolved on the date the Minister accepts the Council's report or such later date determined by the Minister.

Now, that's kind of where it falls off the rails for me. I understand that the minister has to keep a fairly tight rein on how long this council is able to exist in order to achieve the pieces of legislation laid out here. That makes perfect sense. But on one hand, the legislation says that the minister will dissolve the council no later than one year after it has been established; on the other hand, the

legislation gives the minister the ability to keep the council in place until said minister sees fit to dissolve the council.

I think, with all that said, Madam Speaker, I have raised enough questions here. I'd like to put forward an amendment if I may. I have the appropriate number of copies here, and I will wait for your approval before I proceed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This will be referral motion RA1.

**Mr. Schneider:** I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 7, Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following: "Bill 7, Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future in accordance with Standing Order 74.2."

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, on the amendment.

**Mr. Stier:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, this particular act that we've got now reminds me so much of the previous act that we had here a year and a half ago. I think it was Bill 202. In that bill, we saw an awful lot of ambiguity and things that we were really, really concerned about, and in this bill, too, we see a lot of wording that is almost exactly the same. I think that the Member for Little Bow has quite a large amount of information, that I don't have possession of at the moment to elaborate on. Certainly, when I read certain clauses of this bill, I saw that they were almost exactly the same in some areas as the one that we saw before. So I would . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt, hon. member, but pursuant to the unanimous decision of the House earlier this afternoon to waive Standing Order 4(2), the House stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:59 p.m.]

## **Bill Status Report for the 29th Legislature - 4th Session (2018)**

**Activity to Thursday, April 12, 2018**

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

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

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

### **Bill 1 — Energy Diversification Act (McCuaig-Boyd)**

First Reading — 6 (*Mar. 8, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 50-51 (*Mar. 13, 2018 morn.*), 184-87 (*Mar. 15, 2018 aft.*), 233-43 (*Mar. 20, 2018 morn.*), 301-08 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

### **Bill 2 — Growth and Diversification Act (\$) (Bilous)**

First Reading — 118 (*Mar. 14, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 243-46 (*Mar. 20, 2018 morn.*), 294-96 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft.*), 314-25 (*Mar. 22, 2018 morn.*), 411-12 (*Apr. 4, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

### **Bill 3 — Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2018 (\$) (Ceci)**

First Reading — 184 (*Mar. 15, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 221-26 (*Mar. 19, 2018 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 261-68 (*Mar. 20, 2018 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 296-98 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2018 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 28, 2018; SA 2018 c1 ]

### **Bill 4 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2018 (\$) (Ceci)**

First Reading — 165 (*Mar. 15, 2018 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 226-32 (*Mar. 19, 2018 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 268-75 (*Mar. 20, 2018 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 298-301 (*Mar. 21, 2018 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 28, 2018 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 28, 2018; SA 2018 c2 ]

### **Bill 5 — An Act to Strengthen Financial Security for Persons with Disabilities (Sabir)**

First Reading — 200-201 (*Mar. 19, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 360-62 (*Apr. 3, 2018 morn.*), 482-87 (*Apr. 10, 2018 aft., passed*)

### **Bill 6 — Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 (Ganley)**

First Reading — 448 (*Apr. 9, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 533-34 (*Apr. 12, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

### **Bill 7 — Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act (Carlier)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 491-97 (*Apr. 10, 2018 aft.*), 534-36 (*Apr. 12, 2018 aft., adjourned on amendment*)

**Bill 8 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2018 (S. Anderson)**

First Reading — 374 (*Apr. 3, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 9 — Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act (Hoffman)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 497-502 (*Apr. 10, 2018 aft., adjourned*)

**Bill 10 — An Act to Enable Clean Energy Improvements (S. Anderson)**

First Reading — 528 (*Apr. 12, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 11 — Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2018 (Gray)**

First Reading — 505 (*Apr. 11, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 201 — Employment Standards (Firefighter Leave) Amendment Act, 2018 (W. Anderson)**

First Reading — 118 (*Mar. 14, 2018 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 201-14 (*Mar. 19, 2018 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future*)

**Bill 202 — Alberta Taxpayer Protection (Carbon Tax Referendum) Amendment Act, 2018 (Kenney)**

First Reading — 179 (*Mar. 15, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 203 — Long Term Care Information Act (Schreiner)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

**Bill 204 — Land Statutes (Abolition of Adverse Possession) Amendment Act, 2018 (Gotfried)**

First Reading — 425 (*Apr. 5, 2018 aft., passed*)

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