



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, May 30, 2018

Day 35

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-Hawkwood (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 (IC)
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)
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Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (NDP)
Kenney, Hon. Jason, PC, Calgary-Lougheed (UCP),
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Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (UCP)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (NDP)
Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (NDP)
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (NDP)
Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP),
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McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret,
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Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (NDP)
Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (NDP)
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)
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Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)
Payne, Hon. Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (NDP)
Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (NDP)
Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (NDP)
Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (UCP),
Official Opposition Deputy House Leader
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (NDP)
Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (NDP)
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Schneider, David A., Little Bow (UCP)
Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (NDP)
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (NDP)
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (NDP)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP)
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)
Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (UCP)
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (NDP)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (UCP)
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (UCP)
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (NDP),
Deputy Government Whip
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (NDP)
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 Conservative: 1 Vacant: 2

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 30, 2018

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. It's nice to see that rain out there. Our farmers can use it.

Please be seated.

Statement by the Speaker

Page Recognition

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have an important presentation to make this afternoon before we commence our usual business. I would like to call forward – please come over here – all of the pages. If they would join me at the dais.

Now, there are some pages, hon. members, who are not with us today, but I would like, on their collective behalf, to read you a letter which they have written to the House.

Dear Mr. Speaker,

The end of Session signifies something different for everyone. For some, it marks the halfway point of the Fourth Session of the 29th Legislature, while for others it represents the end of their time on the Chamber floor. Our time as Pages has bestowed upon us everlasting memories that we will carry throughout the next page of our lives.

Some of you may want to use one of these members to write some of those speeches.

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for the extraordinary opportunity to serve the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

The support of numerous individuals has provided us the ability to grow into the Pages we are today. We would like to extend our many thanks to these individuals: the Sergeant-at-Arms for demonstrating the importance of leadership; the Table Officers for passing on their extensive comprehension of parliamentary procedure; the office staff in 315 and 325 for their patience with our never ending questions, and for reminding us of the significance of our position; the staff in 412 for their dedication in being the solid foundation of this Page Programme; and, the LASS for their companionship during long divisions and late night sittings.

Companionship. Hmm.

We would like to extend our whole-hearted thanks to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to all Members of [the] Assembly, because without all of you, it would not be possible for us to be here today.

The Page Programme has impacted each of us immensely – we have come out of this program with a new sense of identity, direction, and perception. It has been an eye-opening experience serving the Members of this House: each with their own unique speaking styles and gestures, coffee preferences, and comments under 29(2)(a).

The Government House Leader occasionally cheats and eats a cookie.

After countless hours spent under this dome, we have come to realize how much time and energy is given by the many people who work here to better our province and the lives of those who live within it. Through collecting tablings and petitions, delivering Bills and amendments, and listening to [the] Points of Order, we were able to see firsthand each Member's passion and dedication, in leading our province into a better tomorrow. Our time spent in South Members' Lounge has shown us their essential talents in forming relationships, entering negotiations, and resolving conflicts. Not only will the knowledge we gained

here enable us to be informed and responsible citizens, but it will also allow us to engage others in doing the same.

The privilege of joining the ranks of former Pages – whose footprints have forever marked this green carpet – will serve as a reminder of the importance preservation has on the democratic process. While our departure from these four chairs is bittersweet, we look forward to watching the next generation of Pages from the galleries.

Although you may be returning in the fall under Standing Order 3(4)(b), for us this is the dissolution of Session. Once again, we would like to extend our appreciation to everyone who has afforded us . . . an exceptional opportunity.

Yours Truly,

Amanda Porter (Head Page), Jordyn Reed (Speaker's Page), Chris Beasley (Page Peer Mentor), Keegan Colwell, David Draper, Suraj Gill, Savanna Gossen, Mark Jones, Manuel Kong, Maria Ovcharenko, Lara Ozdogan, Marleina Schreiner, Robyn Taylor, and Christian Wigger.
29th Legislature

My apologies again for the pronunciation of names. You've evidence that I've failed at other times.

I would ask the Deputy Speaker if she might come forward and present our head page, Amanda Porter, a small token of our appreciation. [Standing ovation] I know I speak for all of you when I say: while they say that it's a privilege to be here with us, the privilege is ours to be here with them.

Thank you. Don't deliver any more cookies, okay?

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you four members that are in your gallery, the former MLA for Edmonton-Manning Mr. Peter Sandhu and his wife, Kamal Sandhu. They have two guests with them from India, Mr. Pritam Kal Sharma and Mrs. Shard Sharma. Mr. Peter Sandhu, if you had the privilege of attending the Nagar Kirtan on the weekend – 40,000 people gathered there – was able to collect the names of 100 people that are willing to donate their organs in the future under the organ donation act. I would ask them to stand and please receive the warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The Minister of Health and Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The first is a school group. I'd like to introduce to you and through you a group of remarkable students who are in grade 6 at Aurora charter school in the constituency of Edmonton-Glenora, which I have the honour of representing. These students are always engaged. They're sharp dressers, and when I spoke to them earlier today, they shared some of their learnings, including learning about Alberta's namesake. I would not be surprised if some of these students end up on this floor as future pages. If I could ask the teachers, who are Mrs. O'Connor and Mrs. Schulz, as well as their chaperone and all the students from Aurora to please rise and receive the warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly grade 6 students from Landing Trail intermediate school – this is not the same group as yesterday; I'll have another group coming tomorrow – one of my favourite schools. I had a chance to talk to students just as brilliant as the group yesterday. If they could rise along with their teachers, Mr. Jeff Semenchuk, Ms Shauna Bredo, Mrs. Tracy Radkewich, along with their chaperone, Mr. Ross Hunter, so they can receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups here today?

The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me very great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a fourth-generation Albertan who has been farming the same piece of land in east-central Alberta for over 108 years and a former member of this Assembly, Mr. Jack Hayden. Mr. Hayden is a former councillor, a former reeve, and also a former board chair of the school board for the county of Stettler.

An Hon. Member: He doesn't look that old.

Dr. Starke: He doesn't look that old. He'll love that.

He served the county of Stettler. He served the people of Alberta in a variety of capacities, including representing Alberta on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities from 1998 to 2004. He also has served Albertans and Canadians, for that matter, representing rural interests in a variety of capacities both during his time as a reeve and county councillor and afterwards. In 2007 Mr. Hayden was elected as the MLA for Drumheller-Stettler and has served the people of Alberta as Minister of Infrastructure, minister of agriculture as well as minister of tourism, parks, and recreation. He is a dear friend. I dare say that it's good to have you back in the Assembly, Jack. Please give the warm welcome of the Assembly to Mr. Jack Hayden.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. First, it is a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the entire Assembly Mr. Max Méndez. He's the musical ambassador of El Salvador. For over 20 years Max has been the lead vocalist for the Latin rock band Frigüey. His band has gained notable success throughout Latin America and has reached various audiences around the world. In 2017 Mr. Méndez was named the musical ambassador for the country of El Salvador, and he represents the music of his nation on a global scale through tours and outreach. Currently Max is visiting Canada for the first time and has chosen Alberta to explore the music industry and learn more about the local Latino-Canadian culture.

Accompanying Mr. Mendes today is Sandra Moreno, a constituent of mine who is a divisional co-ordinator for the Edmonton Police Service with the victims' services unit. Aside from being incredibly dedicated to her job and helping Albertans, she sits on the board of directors for Sunrise of Life, an organization dedicated to development projects in Tanzania. Currently Sandra is completing a master's of human security and peacebuilding through Royal Roads University. I ask them both to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Ms Jansen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of introductions. First, as part of Paramedic Services Week it's my pleasure to introduce you to two front-line paramedics who are seated in the members' gallery, and I ask that they rise as I call their names: Justin Nunes, a primary care paramedic with Edmonton metro EMS, and Patrick Scollard, a primary care paramedic with Calgary's own clinical operations interfacility transportation and a constituent of Calgary-North West, which makes him extra special. Thank you for your service and your life-saving care. Please join me in extending the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, also seated in the Assembly are individuals from Pomerleau seated in the members' gallery – and I ask them to rise as I mention their names – Pat Blais, a construction director, and Sean Strickland, the director of business development and industry relations. Now, Pomerleau is a national construction company that maintains offices in Calgary and across Canada. They are currently building the Willow Square continuing care facility in Fort McMurray, a project the community has needed for many years, and it is a lovely facility. We are absolutely thrilled with the pictures of what it's going to look like. I ask Mr. Blais and Mr. Strickland to receive the traditional warm welcome of this House. Welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two additional introductions. The first: it's a pleasure to introduce Caroline and Andreas Schwabe, who are seated in the public gallery. I ask that they also rise as I introduce them. May is Speech and Hearing Month in Canada, and Caroline has suffered from progressive degenerative hearing loss since her childhood. In December 2017 she received a cochlear implant. Once her implant was activated, in January, she completed her rehab in just four days, which is 36,000 times faster than a typical recovery. It is phenomenal. Andreas is her husband, and he's a media and communications consultant as well. Together their blog and podcast My Beautiful Cyborg has provided a window into understanding the nature of hearing loss. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with so many and helping them navigate the system. Please join me in welcoming them.

My second introduction is also of a group of folks who are in the gallery who are very sharply dressed as well. They are paramedics, and they are here because this is part of Paramedic Services Week. It's my pleasure to introduce them. They are front-line workers as well as members of Alberta Health's emergency health services team, who provide Albertans with expert life-saving and trauma care. I ask that they rise as I say their names: Brad, Darren, and Ian, who are stationed in the Edmonton-Glenora riding, as well as Connor, Jordan, Ian, Jessica, Nicola, Alexandre, Bre, and John. Thank you so much for the work you do to take care of us in what are arguably the most traumatic instances in our lives. We really appreciate all the work you do to care for Albertans.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two members of the Calgary board of education. They were meeting with me this morning; we had a very productive meeting. If the board chair, Trina Hurdman, and Julie Hrdlicka, trustee, could please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Farmer's Day

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great personal pleasure I rise today to give recognition to the upcoming celebration of Farmer's Day. For more than seven decades this day is still recognized and celebrated in rural communities across the province and by our agricultural industry. Farmer's Day was first established at the UFA's annual convention in 1945. The co-operative passed a resolution to lobby the Alberta government to declare the second Friday of June as a provincial holiday. Although no longer a provincial holiday, the United Farmers of Alberta co-operative has chosen to continue to celebrate this day by acknowledging the hard work and contribution of Alberta's farmers. This year Farmer's Day is slated for Friday, June 8, and throughout the province there will be a daylong celebration.

The business of farming and ranching is not an easy vocation by any stretch of the imagination. Commodity prices, noncapped electrical prices, droughts, fires, and other weather-related issues are far beyond their control. What they also haven't been able to control is this government's love for ideological-based legislation. Their crippling carbon tax severely hampers their ability to compete on provincial and international levels. Farmers and ranchers are not, as many people seem to believe, exempt from the carbon tax. They are greatly impacted by this tax on everything, a tax this government didn't campaign on. Costs continue to soar. Expenses such as transportation costs go up for the trucks and trains that ship the grain, crops, and livestock to consumers around the world. Those costs will have to be absorbed by the producers or passed on to the consumer, leading to rises in food costs at grocery stores and restaurants.

The business of agriculture provides life's necessities, including food, clothing, and shelter, and we should all be grateful for what they do. Farmer's Day is a significant day to honour and celebrate those in the agricultural community, who work tirelessly throughout the year. As the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, if you ate today, you should thank a farmer. An interesting report from the farm manager of Strankman Farms . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Official Opposition and Government Fiscal Policies

Ms Luff: Much has been made of the UCP's dangerous social policy positions, and there are certainly many of those, but I think it's also important to highlight their dangerous economic policy positions. The UCP policy on taxes in Alberta is to restore personal and corporate taxes to a flat rate. This is effectively a \$700 million tax break for the richest Albertans. Why would the UCP want to do this? It's because they believe that if you give tax cuts to the wealthy, they'll create more jobs, and everyone will be better off. Sounds nice. However, this idea is called trickle-down economics, and despite being tried extensively in the last 40 years, it's been found conclusively to be a false and ineffective policy.

Economists at the IMF have found that as the income share of the top 20 per cent increases, GDP actually declines. In other words, wealth does not trickle down. With these trickle-down policies in place in Alberta under Conservative governments, real wages stagnated, the top 10 per cent of earners took an increasingly bigger share of the pie, and income inequality became the worst in Canada. And income inequality has real costs. It has costs to our health care

system and to our social services. It has costs to our children and to our families.

1:50

I'm proud to be part of a government that is working to address this inequality. We've raised the minimum wage. We've invested over a billion dollars in affordable housing. The Alberta child benefit and the Alberta family employment tax credit will help over 300,000 low-income Albertans. We froze university tuition. We lowered school fees. We provided grants to the cities of Calgary and Edmonton for low-income transit passes. And, yes, we have asked folks in Alberta who make over \$125,000 a year to pay a little bit more.

We have done these things because we know that for Alberta to succeed, all Albertans must succeed. This is in stark contrast to the UCP, who just want a \$700 million tax break for their wealthy friends and insiders.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Trans Mountain Pipeline Public Purchase

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we saw the spectacle of the NDP high-fiving each other and cheering a decision by a global company to pull out of Alberta, to sell out billions of dollars of assets in Canada. They were cheering a decision that is going to cost taxpayers billions of dollars. We've gone from a \$7 billion private-sector investment to a \$12 billion government risk. While we agree that it is necessary to ensure the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline, why does the government think that Kinder Morgan's decision to pull out is a reason to celebrate?

Ms Hoffman: Canadians have come together, Mr. Speaker. From coast to coast to coast they're providing support for TMX. The deal reached this week provides greater certainty. TMX adds 15,000 jobs and \$15 billion to the national economy. Members opposite want to throw tantrums and talk down this project of national importance. I instead want to thank those working people who spoke up and who helped us build a nation with yesterday's historic announcement.

Thank you.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. the minister seems to have missed the reality of what happened yesterday. A global company, a company that builds pipelines in third-world dictatorships and kleptocracies, said that they're unwilling to take the risk to build a pipeline in Canada. Does the minister really think that that is a reason to celebrate?

Ms Hoffman: I remember hearing a song: every party needs a pooper. Mr. Speaker, I have to say that what we need to acknowledge is that we have had significant progress. I have to say that if we would have reached Thursday without there being a deal, they'd be complaining. On Tuesday we announced a deal, a deal that adds 15,000 jobs and \$15 billion to the national economy and will stop us from losing \$40 million a day to an economy south of the border. This is an investment in Canada. You bet I'm going to party, and we welcome you to join it.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association said of yesterday's decision that it

is deeply concerned that the government needed to purchase the project . . . [and] about the implications of the government's financial intervention for future . . . pipeline projects. We do not

believe that this outcome will instill investor confidence in Canada.

Does the government believe that the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association is wrong in its assessment that yesterday's decision will not instill investor confidence in Canada?

Ms Hoffman: Well, here's the deal, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday members said that it was good news. They actually congratulated the Premier on the work she did. Today they're saying that this is a huge failure. I know that it is summer, I know that things are getting warm, but I'm sick of the flip-flops. This project is in the national interest. This project is going to put tens of thousands of families to work, paying their mortgages, and get us away from the huge differential that we're seeing. The reduction that we saw on that resource was \$17 last week. The kids in the gallery own this resource, and we deserve to get the best price for them. I'm proud that we will because of this government and our Premier's leadership.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the question was on whether the government agrees with the assessment of the pipeline association that yesterday's decision by Kinder Morgan to leave Canada undermines investor confidence. I take from the Deputy Premier's non answer that she does not agree with the Energy Pipeline Association.

GMP FirstEnergy is the largest finance business in the energy industry. They said yesterday that they view this decision as negative for entities considering large resource-focused capital investments given the inability for the rule of law and regulatory approvals to allow projects to move forward. Does the government agree with that assessment?

Ms Hoffman: You know, Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to agree with the working men and women of this province, like Gil, who wrote in yesterday. He lives in Calgary, and he said to the Premier: every day on the streets all I see is you; we are fighting against this darkness of recession; we are fighting under your wonderful leadership against all odds, and I'm sure you will bring out the best for us. We are on the side of Gil and of all working people in this province. I know that the member has a history of voting billions of dollars for the auto industry in Ontario, but – guess what? – you're in Alberta, and you work for the people of Alberta. Start doing it, start standing with us, and get this pipeline, because yesterday was an excellent day for the Canadian economy and for Alberta workers.

Mr. Kenney: Perhaps it was an excellent day for New Democrats that they got to nationalize a project that otherwise would have been built with private-sector dollars, Mr. Speaker. We had a private company willing to risk shareholders' dollars to build a pipeline, but it couldn't. It couldn't partly because this government was unwilling to lift a finger to ensure respect for the rule of law and free trade within Canada. They talked a good game, but they wouldn't bring in Bill 12. They wouldn't turn off the taps. They repealed their wine boycott, and we ended up with uncertainty that pulled billions of dollars out of our economy. Why didn't they fight back against the B.C. New Democrats' obstructionism?

Ms Hoffman: We have fought, and we have been victorious, Mr. Speaker. The opposition leader supported a \$9 billion bailout for the Ontario auto industry, but now he's unwilling to invest in Albertans, in an Alberta project that will create 15,000 jobs, \$15

billion to the economy. I won't take his ideas on how to get a pipeline to tidewater because he has none. But – you know what? – he did have a campaign slogan that seems to ring true today: he didn't come back for you, Alberta. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Kenney: It seems the Deputy Premier is using the same writer who came up with the sewer rats line, Mr. Speaker. [interjections] And the heckling continues.

Albertans expect civility. They demand seriousness. The Deputy Premier just said that they were victorious. Mr. Speaker, yesterday John Horgan tripped down on his commitment to do everything possible to stop Trans Mountain. Tzeporah Berman and her associated radicals have said that this emboldens them to do everything they can to stop Trans Mountain. Can the Deputy Premier identify a single group that has gone from no to yes on pipelines as a result of yesterday's announcement?

Ms Hoffman: Again, Mr. Speaker, say one thing; do another. I have to say that the member opposite and his ability to rehash issues from the past is phenomenal. We are investing in the TMX because our country needs this project. We received countless letters and phone calls of support; like I said, the individual named Gil. There was a gentleman in British Columbia. His name is Bill. He owns a utility company, and he's so proud of our Premier. You know what? I'm going to stand with Bill and Gil and the 15,000 Alberta workers who are going to have a job because of the good action that this Premier undertook. Feel free to be disappointed and sit in the corner, but this is good for Alberta. I wish you would join in the celebration, and we welcome you to pick up . . .

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

Provincial Response to Pipeline Opposition

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the question that the Deputy Premier did not try to answer is whether she could identify a single organization that's gone from no to yes on the Trans Mountain pipeline as a result of Kinder Morgan withdrawing their \$7 billion investment.

I asked the Premier yesterday, and I'll ask the Deputy Premier today: has the government of Alberta spoken to Premier Horgan? Has he given any assurance that he will down tools and stop his policy of killing Trans Mountain, a policy of obstruction, a policy of death by delay?

Ms Hoffman: You know, 16 out of 16 court cases Trans Mountain has been successful on, and when I sat down face to face with Mr. Horgan just last week, Mr. Speaker, we had a very clear determination of where we are moving with this. And guess what? Yesterday was another very clear sign that we are winning. We won a significant investment. I know the member opposite wants to give money to Ontario for their auto industry, but we've got an investment in a Canadian pipeline to get Canadian products to tidewater so that every single Albertan has the opportunity to benefit from that resource. This is good for working people. Put down your weapons, pick up a tool, and help us . . .

The Speaker: Thank you. Thank you.

2:00

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, nobody is using weapons. We're simply discharging our responsibility as the opposition to ask questions on

behalf of Albertans and hold the government to account. I would ask the Deputy Premier to exercise a modicum of rhetorical restraint. [interjection] More heckling.

Mr. Speaker, can the government identify a single environmental organization that has announced that it will no longer try to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline as a result of Kinder Morgan's decision to sell out of Canada as a result of this government's decision to replace that company with billions of tax dollars?

Ms Hoffman: Not only did our climate leadership plan get federal government approval; they also backed the TMX and are investing to restart construction in the coming days. Our Premier has been clear that we can balance the economy and climate action. A plan that leaves behind working people is no plan at all, Mr. Speaker. A plan that doesn't care for the environment is no plan at all. I have seen their record, zero pipelines to tidewater. I have seen our Premier's record. I know who I am rooting for. We might not be in the playoffs for the NHL, but we are certainly in the playoffs and in the final stages of getting our product to tidewater.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the government here for four months has issued empty threats about turning off the taps to respond to the B.C. New Democrats' commitment to use every tool possible to stop Trans Mountain. That commitment continues from the government in Victoria. It's part of their agreement with the Green Party that keeps them in office. My question is: will the government of Alberta use the threat implicit in Bill 12 to turn off the taps unless and until we have an assurance from Victoria that the pipeline, that we now are part owners of, will be built?

Ms Hoffman: We stood up to B.C., and we took action. We have a perfect record in court: 16 cases, 16 victories. The opposition leader went on national television to say that no particular pipeline project was a national priority. We are playing our cards carefully and strategically. Bill 12 is a tool still in our tool belt. Bottom line: this pipeline will get built. Yesterday was a very good day for Alberta. I know it wasn't a very good day for people who are cheering against the pipeline for their own political means, but it was a good day for Alberta, and we welcome you to join in the celebration.

The Speaker: Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Trans Mountain Pipeline Public Purchase (continued)

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The historic federal buyout of the Trans Mountain pipeline and expansion is definitely a benefit to Albertans now, but this hasn't addressed the systemic issues with the regulatory process. Governments shouldn't have to buy projects to get them completed. Chris Bloomer, head of the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, said, "We do not believe that this outcome will instill investor confidence in Canada," sentiments echoed by other industry stakeholders. To the Premier: what about future projects requiring regulatory approval? Will future energy products have to be bought out to move forward?

Ms Hoffman: Well, the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association also said that they're very pleased that the Trans Mountain expansion project will be constructed. Through its completion Trans Mountain will create thousands of jobs, deliver economic benefits across this entire country. Canada will continue to need major pipeline projects to deliver responsibly produced Canadian energy to markets around the world while ensuring a fair price for our resources, Mr. Speaker.

Again, yesterday was a victory. I know people keep wanting to cheer for a defeat, but this side of the House and all Albertans are

excited about the fact that we're finally going to get a fair return for our resource and the first new pipeline to tidewater since the 1950s.

Ms McPherson: I totally agree that it's a great thing that happened, but we have concerns about what's going to happen in the future. As a partner in expansion Alberta is now committed for up to \$2 billion. Warren Mabee, director of the Queen's Institute for Energy and Environmental Policy, expects strong backlash from groups we were supposed to get social licence from. Alberta's carbon tax is intended to reduce emissions, and since pipelines are far more energy efficient and environmentally safe than rail or road for transporting oil to tidewater, to the Premier: how much of Alberta's up to \$2 billion investment will come from carbon tax revenues?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the commitment is correct, up to \$2 billion, but the commitment also is that not a penny of those dollars will be expended until oil is flowing in that pipeline. The pipeline is going to get built. It could be zero; it could be \$2 billion. There's a range in there.

Ms McPherson: Former TransCanada executive Dennis McConaghy recently commented that it does raise a lot of questions about how did we ever get ourselves into this situation where federal approvals aren't sufficient for private-sector capital to want to take on the completion of the project. To the environment minister: please help us understand the disconnect between the Alberta climate leadership plan, the social licence relied on to secure regulatory approval, and the situation we find ourselves in where Alberta and Canada are at the mercy of B.C. in getting the Trans Mountain pipeline built.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. There isn't a disconnect because that pipeline and line 3 were approved precisely because of the climate leadership plan. Now we are in a position due to our oil sands emissions cap where we can say to our neighbours, to our trading partners that the oil that flows through that pipeline is subjected to a carbon price. It is also one of the only energy-producing jurisdictions in the world that has a cap on emissions. More to the point, we're also investing in innovation to reduce the carbon in the barrel, \$1.4 billion worth of investments in innovation. That's something we should all be proud of.

The Speaker: Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday saw a pivotal moment in the construction of the Trans Mountain expansion project, a project that our government has fought long and hard for. Now, I've heard a lot from members across the aisle that our plan simply wasn't enough to get a pipeline to tidewater and that we should spend our time fighting against the government in Ottawa. To the Energy minister: how has making it our government's priority to work with our federal counterparts helped us secure the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I think the Premier said it best yesterday when she said that Albertans don't elect us to put on a play for them, but they elect us to get things done. Indeed, our Premier has shown a lot of leadership in getting things done, and she's gotten things done by being tough and by being smart. She made it clear to the federal government that if they

didn't assert their jurisdiction over interprovincial pipelines, we would use Alberta's jurisdiction over our own natural resources by turning off the taps. She showed real strength in having a better case to make and to capture the hearts and minds . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
First supplemental.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the significant investment of both the federal government and ourselves, to the same minister: what does the construction of this project mean for government revenues?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the Conference Board of Canada estimates \$46.7 billion will be collected by government treasuries in the form of taxes and royalties from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project during the development and the first 20 years of operations. I think that's a pretty good return on investment. It's important to remember that right now the federal government, as they acquire the existing pipeline, that is an asset they are acquiring. It's an investment, and they're getting a revenue stream from that.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that members opposite argue that investment in the energy sector is drying up and that jobs are disappearing, to the same minister: how many good-paying jobs will the Trans Mountain project support?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we support the federal government's decision to go this way because it's important to get people to work right away. Again, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that this pipeline will create the equivalent of 15,000 jobs in construction and the equivalent of 37,000 direct and indirect and induced jobs per year of operations. You know, I live up north, and I see every day the benefit that the energy industry brings to my town when people are working, and Alberta and Canada are going to get working.

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

Multiple Sclerosis Research and Treatment

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is World MS Day. Multiple sclerosis has sadly been called Canada's disease because Canada and specifically Alberta have one of the highest rates of MS anywhere in the world. Now, this morning we were introduced to some of the world's brightest and best researchers who have come to Alberta because they acknowledge that the work done here is leading the world in MS research. To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. We also heard from your ministry's director of biopharmaceuticals and life science initiatives. On World MS Day would the minister outline what MS initiatives are being conducted by his department, their costs, and what results they have achieved.

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Certainly, this is a very tragic situation. The member is absolutely right. Alberta's numbers are higher per

capita than most other parts of the world. This is a disease that impacts women often more than men and often younger rather than older, but anyone can get MS at any age. Certainly, the impacts are devastating. I am so proud of the fact that we have some of the best research and the best opportunities to address and find a cure for MS. One of the youth I met said that MS is his generation's polio.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that once diagnosed, MS is a chronic, lifelong condition, and given that research conducted here in Alberta has shown that the drug minocycline provides very promising results for the treatment of early-stage MS patients and given that minocycline costs about \$600 per year while other MS medications typically cost between \$20,000 and \$40,000 per year, to the Health minister. Minocycline is not approved by Health Canada for the treatment of MS. What efforts are you making to change that situation to benefit the thousands of Albertans who live with this disease?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member as well as the many Albertans who are engaging in advocacy on this very issue. We do respect Health Canada's role in identifying drugs being on label or not being on label as well as the Pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance and the work they do around drug purchasing and access. We'll continue to make sure that the committees have the appropriate information, and we will continue to be advocates for a fair process so that we can get the best outcome. We appreciate the monetary opportunities here, but the biggest goal is to make sure that we improve people's lives.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, on that subject, given that advancements in Canadian MS research have increased the number of medications for treatment of this disease from one to 14 and given that different MS medications will have different clinical responses in different patients and given that one such medication, Copaxone, was approved by Health Canada in 2016 but is still not included in the Alberta drug formulary, to the minister. The Alberta Health website still lists Copaxone as requiring special authorization. What is the reason for the delay in its full approval, and when might patients who could benefit from this drug anticipate that happening?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the member for the important question. Again to the MS Society and everyone who's advocating for increased treatment opportunities – all the physicians, family members, and patients who are continuing to do work on this – we honour them and their work while we all work together to find a cure. Making sure that we have the right treatments along that journey is also important.

In terms of the Pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance piece that I mentioned previously, that's one of the pieces that's still working its way through the system to ensure that we get the best results as well as the best investment for the patients, the citizens of Alberta.

Thank you.

Provincial Debt-servicing Costs

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, borrowing, borrowing, and more borrowing. I'm sure it all sounds so inconsequential to the NDP, but there's a real cost to this misguided borrowing, \$2 billion this year and \$4 billion by 2023. Two billion dollars could have hired 25,000 nurses; instead, Bay Street bankers will pocket the money.

To the Minister of Finance: how can you explain to Albertans that due to your wall of debt, \$2 billion of interest this year will get them nothing?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to put this all in context, of course, first. Alberta has the lowest net debt to GDP ratio among the provinces, and that will still be the case when we return to balance in 2023-2024. It shows that our plan is working. We've reduced the deficit by \$1.5 billion in November at the Q3 without having to fire thousands of public servants, like that side over there would do any day of the week.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, given that every dollar we spend on servicing our debt is a dollar that cannot be spent on critical services and given that money paid towards interest will not hire front-line health care workers or front-line educators to take care of Albertans, to the minister: what is your plan – what is your plan – to get Alberta back to debt free so we can get back to funding Albertans' priorities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. First, we need to get to balance, and we're going to do that by 2023-2024. We need to put our borrowing costs in perspective. Again, just to do that, Ontario spends 8 cents of every dollar for borrowing costs; we spend only 3 cents. We're also taking a look at all the expenses and making sure that we're spending each tax dollar in the best way possible. We've cut the salaries and eliminated the bonuses of the highest paid executives. The highest paid executives were put in place by the Conservative government, and we've reduced those by \$33 million over three years.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, given that the Finance minister's benchmark is Ontario, the subjurisdiction deepest in debt in the whole world, and given that by 2023 this Finance minister will be sending \$4 billion annually to Bay Street bankers and given that \$4 billion is more than the operating expenses of the entire Community and Social Services department, to the minister: how can you justify – how can you justify – sending billions to big banks instead of to critical Alberta services?

Mr. Ceci: It's interesting. They run Ontario down some days, and other days they go down to Ontario and they talk about how it's the best place in the world, Mr. Speaker.

Our debt-servicing costs are also lower than British Columbia's, Mr. Speaker. We're doing those things we think we need to get us back to balance. We have a number of actions that we're taking to freeze salaries of management and non-union employees. We strengthened the hiring restraint, and we have cut travel and hospitality expenses, something that side didn't do. They travelled like drunken sailors. We're not doing that. We've cut those expenses significantly.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mathematics Education

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Calgary board of education has had to hire 31 math coaches to cover 61 targeted schools at a cost of over \$3 million. The other 180 schools will be

tasked with appointing math leaders, teachers, or administrators with math expertise. However, we need to ensure that there are enough teachers in Alberta who graduate with this math expertise. To the Minister of Education: what specific actions are you taking, along with Advanced Education, to increase the number of math specialists graduating from Alberta's various educational programs?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Certainly, we are focusing, as part of a new curriculum development, on strengthening the math skills of our students. I applaud the CBE for their initiative. We're looking specifically with postsecondary institutions in regard to – we have a bursary available for people to take math specialty training. We're working with the postsecondary institutions to help build the curriculum to strengthen the math area, and it's a very productive relationship, that we will continue to nurture.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that last year within the Calgary board of education more than 25 per cent of students in grades 6 and 9 failed their math PATs and given that the grade 12 diploma exam results in math are consistently lower than other core subjects and given that at least some of these poor results can be directly attributed to the heavy focus on discovery math, again to the minister: what specific changes to the way math is taught in Alberta are being introduced in the new curriculum, and how are we going to avoid the fiasco that was discovery math?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, through our work in curriculum, our work in the PATs – in the grade 6 PATs and grade 9 as well we introduced a no-calculator portion of that exam and saw some interesting results and places where we can actually focus to improve. Grade 12 exams: we're having a written portion for those exams now. You know, we're taking the bull by the metaphorical horns here in regard to improving math outcomes, and we're doing that through the curriculum and doing it through long-term, stable funding for our education system.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that parents are concerned that the math curriculum doesn't reflect a movement away from discovery math and given that one parent described this approach thusly, that it's almost as if there is an expectation of failure before students even have an opportunity to show what they are capable of, again to the minister: what specific actions has the minister taken to ensure that basic algorithms and traditional teaching practices are included as the driving force in the new curriculum?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, the no-calculator portion that I put into grade 6 and grade 9 is an indication that we're looking for fundamental skills, foundational skills in mathematics to be emphasized. Certainly, we have been working hard with teachers in building the new curriculum and so forth. You know, you have to look forward in order to build something that is appropriate, and part of that is to actually have new curriculum. For the Leader of the Opposition to suggest that he would put the

curriculum into the shredder if elected – hopefully not – is definitely not looking forward. It's looking deeply backwards.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

2:20 Premier's Former Chief of Staff's Consulting Contract

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I've repeatedly asked this government to explain why they felt it was appropriate to hire John Heaney, the former chief of staff to the Premier, as an adviser despite being the subject of an ongoing investigation. Now, twice this week the minister has assured this House that he worked closely with the Ethics Commissioner to achieve an exemption that would allow Mr. Heaney to lobby another government while working for the government of Alberta. To the minister: who authorized this exemption for Mr. Heaney?

Mr. Ceci: To correct the record, I didn't say that I worked closely with the Ethics Commissioner. I said that there was work done with the Ethics Commissioner to find out more about the exemption, that was signed off on by the chief of staff of the Premier of Alberta, who signs the contracts for the Premier's staff and for ministers' staff and their offices. That's the person who did that, Mr. Speaker. We're very happy with the results that Mr. Heaney has helped achieve with the pipeline approval and the government of Canada coming in to buy that pipeline.

Mr. Cooper: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that that is not what he said earlier in the House and that just minutes ago he told a reporter that the Ethics Commissioner had granted the exemption and that now we all know for a fact that the Ethics Commissioner never granted an exemption and that it was merely the chief of staff to the Premier or perhaps even your chief of staff, will he table the exemption in this House and actually reveal who provided the exemption?

Mr. Ceci: I think I've been clear. The Ethics Commissioner was consulted on the exemption. She provided that information. Her office did. It was signed off on by the chief of staff of the Premier of Alberta. Mr. Speaker, you know, this seems like a desperate distraction to take the air out of the room with regard to the pipeline that the federal government has bought on behalf of probably all of Canada now and which will make things ultimately way better in terms of the economy of this province and Canada.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that he implied that the Ethics Commissioner provided an exemption.

Given that the news release from the Premier's office last August claimed that Mr. Heaney would serve as chief of staff, quote, till October 6 before returning to practise law in British Columbia, end quote, and given that his new contract was posted online and claims that he actually started on October 9, to the minister: why did the government announce that Mr. Heaney was leaving on a Friday when he was actually quietly retitled on the next Monday?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, he wasn't retitled. He was hired on a contract. We did consult with the Ethics Commissioner on the exemption. We will table the exemption. This is, again, a desperate attempt to talk about anything else but the success of the pipeline approvals.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Educational Curriculum Review Participants

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I was at two different events on the issue of how representative of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and visible minority children the current K to 12 curriculum is. Questioners were concerned that the current curriculum did not address their history, culture, and contribution to Alberta. These questioners were interested in contributing to the revision of the revised curriculum. To the Minister of Education: how have First Nations, immigrant, and visible minority communities been involved in and contributed to the revision of the curriculum?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, our government is working with teachers and postsecondary institutions and with expert tables on working on the grade 6 core subject areas. With this rewrite, we are incorporating content on the history and the culture of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people into every single subject in our curriculum so it better represents our province. Our government is providing teachers with lesson plans as well to have that same First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history come to life in our classrooms.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that some, including the Leader of the Opposition, have suggested they would put this government's revised curriculum through the shredder, how important is it to all students that the curriculum is representative of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students as well as visible minorities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's extremely important that our curriculum represents our province in the broadest way, both the history and what the composition of our population is here today. Students deserve to see themselves represented in our curriculum. You know, of course, some of this curriculum that we are currently using is more than 30 years old, so it's high time to build curriculum, which is what we are doing, instead of perhaps moving back, suggesting that we simply shred that curriculum, as the opposition had suggested.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: since some members, including the Leader of the Opposition, have suggested that the curriculum revisions were done by a small group of socialists, could the minister elaborate: how were Albertan parents consulted, and how were teachers, educators chosen to participate in the work of the curriculum revisions?

Mr. Eggen: I think it's good to clear the air on that one, Mr. Speaker. We have literally, I think, more than 30,000 submissions from the Alberta public in regard to the curriculum. We have an ongoing interaction with parents. We have the K to 4 curriculum right now being looked at by parents and by postsecondary institutions and teachers and so forth and boards as well. You know, it's the most open and transparent process of building curriculum that this province has ever seen. Quite frankly, I'm very proud of the process thus far, and we will build something very strong that will help to define better learning outcomes for Alberta kids.

Trans Mountain Pipeline Public Purchase

(continued)

Mr. Loewen: The complete failure of the Alberta NDP and the Trudeau Liberals along with the obstructionist B.C. NDP and the radical environmentalists has caused Kinder Morgan to pull out and has made it necessary for the federal government to purchase the 65-year-old Kinder Morgan pipeline along with the new project, but this really changes nothing as to the question of certainty. Everyone that was opposed is still opposed. This issue was never about Kinder Morgan not having the money. How does the federal government buying out the pipeline change the fact that the federal government still has to enforce the law and Alberta's constitutional rights?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. We know that the Leader of the Official Opposition has a history of investing in the Ontario auto industry and that, you know, his caucus seems to be okay with that, but this new federal investment is in Alberta's industry, oil and gas. It's about ensuring that we get fair value from that industry as well. So, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that sometimes you need to pick up the right tools to make sure you get the job done. We have been waiting a very, very long time to get access to tidewater, nine years, when the Leader of the Official Opposition was in cabinet in Ottawa. With our Premier here in Alberta we've been able to get this pipeline, and I'm so proud of it.

Mr. Loewen: Given that that wasn't an answer to the question and given that the Premier's hand-picked OSAG co-chair Tzaporah Berman promises that, quote, all hell will break loose, end quote, with 22,000 protestors and that the Environment minister's good friend and book cowriter Mike Hudema agrees with Berman and is vowing to fight and given that the Premier's good friend John Horgan has said that the purchase changes nothing in his fight against the pipeline, how can the NDP be taking victory laps when the only change is the ownership of the pipeline and the reality is that the federal government still needs to step up and enforce the law and Constitution?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the fact of the matter is that a majority of British Columbians now support this project; a majority of Canadians support this project. You know what? A good 80, 90 per cent of Albertans, maybe more, support this project. It seems to me that the only people who don't support this project are the United Conservative Party.

Mr. Loewen: Given that, Mr. Speaker, we have supported all pipelines all the time, unlike the government members, and given that the Alberta NDP have never applied any serious pressure on the B.C. government and other pipeline opponents and given that the federal government has refused to enforce the law and their constitutional authority, then how can this government claim success when their supposed victory comes as a result of the absolute failure to enable a private company that was willing and able to use its own money to build a pipeline, which only required government to do its job and facilitate construction without unreasonable delays?

Ms Hoffman: Sorry for my laughter there. The support from Conservatives in this country was about as valid as the support for their grassroots guarantee: here one day, gone the next; lots of paper approvals, no actual pipelines to tidewater. This government under

our Premier's leadership has been able to achieve something that Canada hasn't seen since the 1950s, and that's approval and significant progress, construction that is imminent in the days and hours ahead, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we get our Canadian product to Canadian tidewater and get a fair price for our industry.

2:30

Adverse Possession of Property

Mr. Gottfried: Mr. Speaker, a few short weeks ago this government stood against property rights for Albertans. By allowing adverse possession to continue, Albertans remain at risk of property loss because you did not take the opportunity to do the right thing. My constituent Jim McIndoe, who was introduced during the debate, has since been forced to pay \$14,000 to the individual who legally seized his land thanks to this archaic law. To the Minister of Justice: why did you choose to ignore my constituent's and other impacted Albertans' rights by rejecting this opportunity to appropriately address adverse possession, known as squatters' rights?

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Again, this is an issue that was discussed at committee, in an all-party committee. The committee recommended that adverse possession be abolished. The government therefore went to the Alberta Law Reform Institute and asked them to write a report on how it should be abolished to ensure that we weren't just affecting two acts but, in fact, every act that touched on the issue of adverse possession. We've asked them to do that work. The work will be coming back, as I understand, in the fall, and at that time we will examine it.

Mr. Gottfried: Mr. Speaker, given that Mr. McIndoe has lost \$100,000 worth of land which in any other province would legally still be his and given that in addition to this egregious seizure, he has been forced to pay \$14,000 in legal fees to his neighbour, \$5,000 in surveyor's costs, and \$40,000 of his own legal costs, for a grand total of \$159,000, again to the minister: can you explain to me and all Albertans why your government continues to support the current legislation, which has left my constituent \$159,000 in the red because of an archaic law and a land-coveting neighbour?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think it's quite clear that the government is not supporting an archaic law. We are moving forward to make progress on this issue. It went to an all-party committee. The all-party committee voted entirely in favour of that. This government is moving forward on getting rid of adverse possession. Those folks over there sat here for 40 years and did nothing about it.

Mr. Gottfried: Mr. Speaker, that committee recommended you abolish it.

Given that the Department of Justice has dithered time and again in taking meaningful action to abolish adverse possession and given that this failure comes despite repeated motions by the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship, supported by strong recommendations from the Property Rights Advocate, and given that both Mr. McIndoe and I have little faith in this government's commitment to abolishing adverse possession before the next election, to the minister: can you tell Albertans specifically when you formally directed the Law Reform Institute to study this issue, and will you commit today to abolishing adverse possession before the next election?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'm not sure why we're answering this so many times in a row, but an all-party committee, supported by our members over here and the government, has recommended the abolition of adverse possession. We are awaiting a report to ensure that we get it right since this affects the fundamental property rights of a number of individuals. This government has made significantly more progress on this issue in three years than those folks did in 44.

**Premier's Former Chief of Staff's
Consulting Contract
(continued)**

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's former chief of staff resigned in October of last year. Just days later he was put on contract to receive \$135,000 from taxpayers while also being a lobbyist for the marijuana industry. The Minister of Finance said earlier today that this was approved by the Ethics Commissioner. That is not possible. The Ethics Commissioner doesn't give approval for exemptions for former senior government staff to become lobbyists. Why did the minister mislead the media on this?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, what this Finance minister is endeavouring to do is to say that there were discussions with the Ethics Commissioner with regard to the outside work of Mr. Heaney. Mr. Heaney is working as a consultant on contract to the government of Alberta with regard to other actions not involving cannabis, not involving the outside work that he's doing. He's working for us around the path to balance and the Energy file.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the minister is endeavouring to say. What I do know – I have a transcript of what he said. About an hour ago he said that an exemption was granted for his New Democrat friend Mr. Heaney to become a lobbyist, by the Ethics Commissioner, but no such approval was granted. Why did the minister mislead the media about this?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much. We followed the advice of the Ethics Commissioner with regard to the work that Mr. Heaney was doing outside of government on his own time and his own business. That outside business or undertaking approval: there was a consultation with the Ethics Commissioner around that, around how that should be structured. I have that here, Mr. Speaker, and I'll table it later.

Mr. Kenney: To be clear, Mr. Speaker, the government claimed that it got approval from the Ethics Commissioner, but it didn't.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister: is this whole affair a reflection of the NDP standard of public ethics, that they take a chief of staff in a six-figure job and put him on a sweetheart contract with a six-figure income while he's making big money from the pot industry? Is this what Albertans expected from the NDP when it comes to public ethics?

Ms Hoffman: I just want to reiterate that the minister has made it very clear that he spoke – he's clarified that several times, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing I want to make clear is that we did invest in ensuring that we had the best advice to get us approvals and to get us action on the Trans Mountain pipeline, Mr. Speaker. We got that yesterday. We got huge advancements, and construction is

imminent. I want to say thank you to the Energy minister and to the Premier for their leadership on this file and for having the staff to support them in doing that work. Yesterday was very good news for Alberta and for the Canadian economy.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the other day I asked the government if Mr. Heaney received a severance. They said no, but it now appears that he did receive a severance called a \$135,000 contract, a sweetheart golden handshake, while at the same time going out there and becoming a high-priced NDP lobbyist for the pot industry. Isn't the government ashamed of itself for allowing this to happen? Is this really the standard of public ethics to which it committed itself to Albertans in the last campaign?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I get why the member is asking about severance. Under Conservative government after Conservative government here in Alberta we saw massive severance and payouts. Our government has chosen to do things differently. We've gotten rid of the sweetheart contracts that they used to have. We've gotten rid of the massive golf memberships and other types of perks like that. Instead, we're hiring people to do specific jobs. The specific job that was referenced was helping us get Trans Mountain, get our product to tidewater. Yesterday we achieved that. We are so proud, and we welcome you to help us celebrate that work.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, Albertans can see this for what it is. It's a sweetheart golden handshake for a top, wealthy New Democrat lobbyist. I'd like to ask any minister of this government: has Mr. Heaney lobbied or spoken to any minister of this government about representing his clients in his pot industry, for which he received enormous compensation?

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, we hire real people to do real work, and we're getting real results for the people of Alberta. Yesterday we saw a huge victory for the Trans Mountain pipeline. I know it isn't a \$9 billion cheque to the auto industry of Ontario. It's an investment in a pipeline and ensuring that we get the very best product and the right jobs, 15,000 jobs, \$15 billion to our economy, because of the work of this Premier and this government. I'm very proud of that.

Mr. Kenney: Is the minister very proud of her government enriching a powerful pot lobbyist who used to be the Premier's chief of staff, and will the minister confirm that said NDP lobbyist has not spoken to a single minister of the Crown in representing his clients?

Ms Hoffman: Well, I can assure the hon. member that I haven't experienced any lobbying in that regard, and I will certainly consult with my colleagues. But, Mr. Speaker, what I can tell you is that we hired somebody on a contract to get us results on Trans Mountain pipeline. Yesterday we saw very good results for Trans Mountain pipeline. This is good for the people of Alberta, it's good for the people of Canada, and I do not need to apologize for that. It's about time that you guys stopped trying to throw shade on yesterday's good news and help us get this pipeline built. This is very, very good news for the people of Alberta.

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

2:40

Accessibility Initiatives

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This week is National AccessAbility Week. This is an important opportunity to

advocate for increased accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Alberta and across Canada. To the Minister of Community and Social Services: what is the government doing to support this important week?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the important question. Albertans of varying abilities deserve every opportunity to participate fully and meaningfully in all aspects of economic, cultural, social, and political life, and as government we are committed to working to increase accessibility and inclusion, to value and recognize the hard work of countless advocates, leaders across Alberta who champion accessibility each and every day.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the government doing to increase accessibility and reduce barriers for Albertans with disabilities? To the same minister.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have made a number of changes; for instance, by improving service dog rules to increase access for Albertans. Five new schools were added to the qualified list, and owner-trained dogs can now be tested. We are increasing access to postsecondary education by funding inclusive post-secondary education. We have increased access to employment through our internship program with government. Twenty new student interns were hired. We have also appointed a 15-member Premier's council to advocate on the issues relating . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that while these improvements mentioned by the minister have been made, many Albertans with disabilities still face barriers, what is the government doing to break down these barriers so that all Albertans can participate fully in their communities? To the same minister.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While our government has taken a number of important steps, it is clear that there is more work that needs to be done to make sure that Albertans with disabilities are fully included, and that is why we are taking further action by hiring Alberta's first disability advocate. We have introduced Bill 5 to make sure that Albertans with disabilities have greater financial stability. Instead of making reckless cuts, we have increased funding to the PDD and AISH programs, and we are also doing a review of the PDD program.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Hon. members, in 30 seconds we'll continue with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements (continued)

Off-highway Vehicle Users' Public Land Access

Mr. Stier: Mr. Speaker, once again it's evident that Albertans simply cannot trust this NDP government. One week ago an article regarding changes and restrictions regarding access to public lands

for random campers and off-road enthusiasts along the eastern slopes was published in the *Calgary Herald*. This caught the attention of a vast number of extremely concerned southern and central Alberta outdoor recreationalists. After all, in just three short years, despite assurances in a letter in December of '15 to the local Off Highway Vehicle Association and other recreational groups from the Minister of Environment and Parks that off-highway vehicle use would continue to be permitted, the policies since then have drastically reduced the access by almost 70 per cent.

As a result, recreation associations, off-highway equipment dealers, RV dealers, sporting goods distributors, retailers, recreation enthusiasts, people with families, and the general public are all greatly worried in southern Alberta that their leisure activities and recreation choices are now being eliminated, and they now have almost nowhere to go.

This entire situation seems so unfair. For years both federal and provincial governments had agreements and provided \$2.3 million in funding in recognition of value of this form of recreation and the good work accomplished by off-highway vehicle associations like the AOHVA and its member clubs. They have contributed thousands of volunteer hours and the proper use of those funds to educate users, to assist in the stewardship of trails, and even purchase and construct bridges over valuable stream beds. All of that now seems lost forever to them, so it's no small wonder that recreation associations and outdoor recreationists don't trust this NDP government. It's readily apparent that user agreements are not worth the paper they're written on and that taxpayers' money has been wasted again.

Thank you.

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

Climate Leadership Plan

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In November 2015 our government introduced the climate leadership plan, a made-in-Alberta strategy to reduce carbon emissions while diversifying our economy, creating jobs, and protecting our health and environment. When I go door to door, my constituents are always asking me about the climate leadership plan and how it will affect them. It's a good question. With all the fearmongering from the UCP, it can be hard to get to the truth. The plan is designed for Alberta's economy, and it is working.

First, the climate leadership plan was directly responsible for the federal approval of two new energy infrastructure projects, the Trans Mountain expansion and Enbridge line 3, that are critically important to Alberta's economy. Second, 60 per cent of Alberta's families will receive a full carbon levy rebate, and every penny raised will be invested back to diversify Alberta's economy and create more jobs in infrastructure, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. Finally, all Albertans, including businesses, not-for-profits, and recreational and community centres, will benefit from energy efficiency programs, which will not only help families save on their heating bills but also create hundreds of jobs right here in this province.

These benefits are possible because of the climate leadership plan, and it is made right here in Alberta, not Ottawa. It is designed by Albertans for Albertans. That means that our economy and our communities will see the most benefits from the actions we take. Mr. Speaker, unlike the United Conservative Party, we understand that climate change is a real and man-made problem. Don't believe the fearmongering. With this made-in-Alberta climate leadership plan we are moving forward, taking our place as a global energy leader with new pipelines and new jobs in a stronger, more

diversified economy. This was proven yesterday by the decision on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, a well-thought-out economic plan that works hand in hand with our climate leadership plan to ensure success for our families and communities.

Thank you very much.

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

Premier's Former Chief of Staff's Consulting Contract

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the last three years this government has made a mockery of the principles of openness, accountability, and transparency. The NDP have continually shown patterns of secrecy over the course of their mandate, whether it's the deletion of over 800,000 e-mails by incentivizing government officials to clear out their records in return for gift cards or the fact that they currently have not one, not two, not three, but four open investigations regarding their activities before the office of the Privacy Commissioner.

So you can understand my shock at the very public leaving of his post on October 6 of the Premier's former chief of staff to, quote, spend time with this family and return to British Columbia, when Mr. Heaney was immediately rehired on October 9 to serve as the executive adviser to the Minister of Finance, earning a cool \$130,000 a year to provide legal advice despite the fact that he's not able to practise law in Alberta, nor does he reside here. But perhaps most shocking is the fact that Mr. Heaney is a registered lobbyist for Nuuvera cannabis in B.C., which is in clear violation of the code of conduct for political staff. Mr. Heaney reports directly to the Minister of Finance, who is responsible for the rollout of cannabis sales in Alberta, and Nuuvera is currently lobbying that same minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've heard from both the Finance minister and the Deputy Premier several times that Mr. Heaney's contract has an addendum and that he has an exemption for his lobbying, which was approved by the Ethics Commissioner. Given the government's pattern of misinformation, I decided to follow up on that claim and now know for a fact that Mr. Heaney did not receive an exemption from the Ethics Commissioner. This government owes Albertans an apology.

2:50 Supervised Drug Consumption Site in Lethbridge

Ms Fitzpatrick: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be in this Legislature to represent my constituency, my city, and the people of Alberta. Today I'm speaking about ARCHES' safe consumption site. Last year as the scope of the opioid crisis continued to escalate, ARCHES took the steps necessary to address it. They formed a coalition incorporating 16 groups with a vested interest in dealing with this crisis, from police to Alberta Health Services. They successfully completed the stringent application process both federally and provincially.

In just over the two months since the site opened, the use and demand at ARCHES is higher than expected. Seventy-plus deaths have been prevented, over 2,000 naloxone kits have been distributed, and over 150 overdose reversals have been reported. We know that there are approximately 3,000 drug users in Lethbridge. Based on our positive results and other evidence-based research, we know that harm reduction works to move people through the spectrum from active use to treatment. This saves lives.

But there is more work to be done to help people move forward. Other services also need to be available so that people who are ready to make the change in their lives don't slip backwards. These

are real people with parents, siblings, children, and loved ones. They are not just addicts who inject poison into their bodies, as the Leader of the Opposition characterized them. I am proud that our government is moving forward with help and, we know, must do more.

I will continue to advocate for more services such as intox to help the citizens of Lethbridge and Alberta . . .

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

Notices of Motions

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

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to provide notice that at the appropriate time I will move the following motion.

Pursuant to Standing Order 30 be it resolved that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, the need to discuss what measures must be taken to ensure that construction of the Trans Mountain expansion project is completed following the withdrawal of Kinder Morgan, the recently announced deal with the government of Canada, and the declaration of continued opposition and uncertainty from the NDP government of British Columbia.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, I will be moving the following motion. You have already received copies in advance.

Pursuant to Standing Order 30 be it resolved that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, details of Alberta's support for the Trans Mountain expansion project.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of an article that I referenced today. It's an analysis by the CBC titled Oilpatch Pleased for Pipeline Progress but Concerns about Investment Climate Persist.

The Speaker: Any other hon. members? The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Yes, The tabling that I mentioned that I was going to provide: this is a tabling of an amended employment agreement with regard to Mr. Heaney, which advice in its construction was from the Ethics Commissioner's office. It is dated February 7.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Ms Gray, Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal, pursuant to the Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta annual report 2017, the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta annual report 2017; pursuant to the Agrology Profession Act the Alberta Institute of Agrologists 2017 annual report and conference handbook; responses to questions raised by Dr. Swann, Member for Calgary-Mountain View, and Mr. Hunter, Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner, during Ministry of Labour 2018-19 main estimates debate.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I think we had one point of order. Or were there two?

The Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Nonmember

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to raise a point of order. The Minister of Finance was asked questions today by the Member for Calgary-Lougheed. The content of the questions, including the preambles, in my view violate some very important rules and standards of this Assembly.

I'll start by suggesting here that the violations took place, and I have made some notes here. I don't have the Blues, but I think these are pretty accurate. He suggested that the contract that Mr. Heaney signed with the government was "a sweetheart, golden handshake." He accused the government of enriching a powerful pot lobbyist, Mr. Speaker. He actually asked members of the government if Mr. Heaney had lobbied any member of the government on behalf of their clients, being the cannabis company, and that he's been told that Mr. Heaney's role is restricted to the province of British Columbia and is not happening here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on page 622 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, under rules of order and decorum, it states:

Members are discouraged from referring by name to persons who are not Members of Parliament and who do not enjoy parliamentary immunity, except in extraordinary circumstances when the national interest calls for this. The Speaker has ruled that Members have a responsibility to protect the innocent not only from outright slander, but from any slur directly or indirectly implied, and has suggested that Members avoid as much as possible mentioning by name people from outside the House who are unable to reply in their own defence.

Mr. Speaker, in *Beauchesne's*, page 151, section 493(4) states: "The Speaker has cautioned Members to exercise great care in making statements about persons who are outside the House and unable to reply."

Mr. Speaker, on June 25, 2015, you yourself cautioned members that "members must remember that when they refer to people outside of the Assembly, those individuals have no ability to respond to the allegations" that have been made there.

Previously, Speaker Zwozdesky in 2012 made similar cautions. On November 26 of that year he said: "We should not be referring to people who are not here and not able to defend themselves."

Mr. Speaker, what the Member for Calgary-Lougheed did was outrageous. He asked members of government if Mr. Heaney had violated the ethics laws of this province with no evidence whatsoever that that had taken place. He has no evidence. He is trying to smear an individual whose contract is public and who is providing value for money for the contract that he has been engaged in.

3:00

This is very interesting because these are the very tactics, Mr. Speaker, that were employed by Joseph McCarthy during the witch hunt trials of the 1950s: smearing people by implication who can't defend themselves. The Member for Calgary-Lougheed, the Leader of the Official Opposition, purports to be and upholds himself as the defender of order and decorum, but it is pretty clear that he is very ready to get right down into the gutter and smear individuals with no evidence whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, it's my view that you in your role as the Speaker of the Assembly have a responsibility to intervene in these cases. It is always most difficult for us during question period to wait until the end while this kind of disgusting behaviour takes place in this

Assembly. I want the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed, the Leader of the Official Opposition, to come into this place and apologize to the House and to Mr. Heaney for smearing and slandering his reputation with no evidence whatsoever. If he has evidence, then he has a responsibility to place it before this House. Otherwise, he needs to desist from this disgusting behaviour.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was an interesting rant from the Government House Leader. Let me first start off by being very clear. The Leader of the Opposition nor any member of this party will ever apologize for standing up for Albertans and asking this government questions on behalf of Albertans. That is our job.

It is interesting the reaction that we're getting from the government about a question. At no time did the Leader of the Opposition accuse Mr. Heaney of anything, to be clear. He asked some questions about what the Finance minister said in regard to Mr. Heaney. In addition to that, he asked some questions about what that contract looks like and his role with the government. The Finance minister earlier today told the media that they, in fact, consulted with the Ethics Commissioner during this process. That now turns out not to be true, and the hon. member was discussing that.

Now, I'd like to refer, because the Government House Leader brought it up, to the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* on page 622. Let me be clear. The quote he's talking about says, "Except in extraordinary circumstances when the national interest calls for this." I would submit, without a doubt, that the public interest is at play here. It is the job of the opposition to ask questions on behalf of the public, and this clearly was in the public interest.

Further to that, Mr. Speaker, it is very rich for the NDP to stand up in this House and give an argument like that by the Government House Leader when that party across from me spent the entire fall session, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was not a member of this place, saying his name in this place and slandering it over and over and over to a record number in parliamentary history. Over and over, no objection. In fact, when we raised a point of order about that to try to bring some semblance of control and pointed out that that hon. member was not a member of this Chamber and did not have an opportunity to defend himself, that Government House Leader stood up and said that they had the right to do that, and you ruled with them. You're the Speaker. You felt that that was the appropriate ruling, and that was your decision. This certainly doesn't change anything.

Now, with all that said, this is clearly a matter of debate. While the government wants to dodge answering questions on their behaviour on this contract, the fact that they hid this contract from the public, the fact that they told the public that this individual had left the employment of the Premier and then just 72 hours later gave this individual a significant contract, which never became public till sometime around April, is really the question. Why the Finance minister told this Chamber that the Ethics Commissioner was consulted is a question. Why the Finance minister told the media that the Ethics Commissioner was part of that process is a question.

There are lots of questions that remain, but what is clear is that this is, in fact, not a point of order. It is an attempt to distract from this government's behaviour and for this government to go out of their way to not be held accountable in this Chamber. And that will not happen, Mr. Speaker. I can promise you that.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I find it very surprising that the government is calling a point of order around questions that need to

be asked of the government. Let's go back a little ways to when the government was the opposition. Right now if the Progressive Conservative Party – when I was part of that government and cabinet, they would have lit their hair on fire with the idea that a registered lobbyist has access to cabinet, looking at finance details and energy details. I'm not suggesting that the government is doing anything untoward or despicable, but it is not a stretch to imagine. It's easy to draw the lines, and it is shaking the public confidence that a registered lobbyist – I'll use this example. How do the people trying to create businesses in Alberta around marijuana and the sale and distribution of marijuana feel about their business plans knowing that a B.C. registered lobbyist is working on behalf of those companies but has access to the government, the Crown, in Alberta? That just does not make sense.

I am surprised that this government has put themselves in this position. I'm surprised that they have put Albertans in this position. We should not even be here.

Mr. Mason: That's not the point of order.

Mr. Fraser: This is the point of order. You're calling the point of order. So I'm saying that this is not a point of order; this is a matter of asking questions where you've put Albertans and Albertans' businesses at risk by allowing a B.C. registered lobbyist access to your government. It's completely wrong, and it's unacceptable.

The Speaker: Hon. member, if I might.

Mr. Fraser: It's not a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Calgary-South East, the point of order as I understand it is whether or not it's appropriate for an individual who is independent from the Assembly – he's a contract employee. Would you believe, in your opinion, that it is fair and reasonable that that person's work relationship could and should be mentioned within the Assembly. Is that correct?

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, let me clarify. When somebody works for Executive Council and for cabinet but is also listed as a registered lobbyist, in my mind, that is an extension of this government. They're working on behalf of the government, not private members. So it's a matter of debate. I don't feel that it was a point of order. This gentleman has put his name up as a lobbyist, and now he is working for the Crown in Alberta.

I think the questions are valid, and I don't see a point of order here.

The Speaker: Is there any new information, hon. member, new, significant information?

Mr. Cooper: Yes.

The Speaker: You'd better get to it quick, hon. member, because I've had too much experience in this place.

Mr. Cooper: I'll get to it very quickly, and I'll make one point, and that is just to correct the record. Mr. Heaney is not a contracted employee; he is an employee of the government.

The Speaker: Hon. members, this particular one I'd like to defer to a later date. I need to do some more research and thought on this matter.

Requests for Emergency Debate

The Speaker: Are you speaking to the Standing Order 30?

Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Completion

Mr. Nixon: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me. I am rising on the Standing Order 30 that I already gave notice of. I won't reread it to save time. I will point out that according to our standing orders I had to provide two hours' notice for this motion, and we were able to get that to your office well before 11:30 today.

The question, of course, is urgency in regard to Kinder Morgan. I think that all of the province and all members of this House agree on the urgency of that project. But the urgency of the debate that we are requesting today, the reason that that is an urgent situation and that we ask you to provide us the opportunity to have a discussion on behalf of Albertans in this Assembly is because, quite frankly, of the announcement. While all Albertans and all members of this House stand and are focused on making sure we get this project built, and our leader was very clear about that yesterday, our concern still remains that the deadline is essentially here tomorrow. Kinder Morgan has now left the situation. You have already recognized that that was an urgent situation and let us have a debate on that, but clearly the urgency and the certainty for this project has not been handled in the announcement by the federal government.

3:10

Yesterday B.C.'s Premier said: we will continue with the full force of my efforts within the courts and within the rule of law. Yesterday, in addition to that, Tzeporah Berman, the deputy director of Stand.earth, said, "All hell is about to break loose in British Columbia." The Prime Minister, despite promising on April 15, 2018, to reassert and reinforce federal jurisdiction on Trans Mountain, still has not done that, and the government of Alberta still has not given royal assent to Bill 12 nor used it.

What that is doing, Mr. Speaker, is that it's still creating a tremendous amount of uncertainty around this project, now a project that is owned by the taxpayers and something that we need to get fixed. A capital market analyst said yesterday: we maintain our previous concern that the federal Liberal government will likely be highly reluctant to exercise force approaching the window of the next election cycle, expected next fall. GMP analysis said: we view the announcement as negative for the entities considering large, resource-focused capital investments to Canada such as LNG, pipelines, or oil sands projects given the inability for the rule of law and the regulatory approvals to allow projects to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the uncertainty of the situation, the certainty for this project still have not been addressed. No clear action has been taken by either the federal or the provincial government, in this case Alberta, to deal with the main issue, which is that the B.C. government continues to disrupt this project and that the federal government has not taken any action against the environmentalists that continue to block it illegally.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I will close with this. One of the things that you need to consider, as you know, is whether or not there are other opportunities for us to have a debate on this process. Yesterday the Premier of Alberta stood for eight or nine minutes and talked about this from one angle. Some of it we agree with. Then the Leader of the Opposition only had about three minutes to be able to discuss that, and then that was the end of it. There is nothing else on the schedule for this House to discuss what is, arguably, the most important issue facing this province and this country right now.

This is the opportunity for the people's representatives of this province to have a discussion about the way forward on Kinder Morgan, and I ask that you rule that we can have a debate.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, just to clarify, there was an additional time granted to the leader. I'm bound by the standing orders, which is at three minutes for the response. There is no time limit that I'm aware of with respect to the ministerial, but that was the reason.

Mr. Nixon: I agree with you completely, Mr. Speaker. My intent was not to say that you ruled wrongly on that. My intent is to say that, clearly, this side of the House has not had an opportunity to debate this issue on behalf of our constituents.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the deal that was announced yesterday will be a great step forward for our economy and for our province, and it will put people to work building a pipeline to tidewater right away. We're getting closer than ever to breaking our land lock, to getting a better price for our resources, and to creating thousands of jobs.

It is very, very important, Mr. Speaker. The announcement yesterday is extremely important to this province, and I wish to acknowledge that. I am not going to dispute that at all. But as has been stated in this Chamber many times, being something of great importance does not make it a matter of urgent and pressing necessity as required by the standing orders. The standing orders state that a motion brought forward under section 30 must meet a number of conditions, including that it "must relate to a genuine emergency, calling for immediate and urgent consideration."

House of Commons Procedure and Practice provides further guidance. It says that "an emergency debate should be on a topic 'that is immediately relevant and of attention and concern throughout the nation'." It's my view, Mr. Speaker, that that doesn't meet the criteria.

There are very important criteria to be considered, and they have been laid out very clearly. One of them is whether or not other opportunities have existed for the matter to be debated. It must be an emergency, Mr. Speaker, and there must be no other opportunity for it to be debated in the House.

Citation 391 states:

The Speaker [must]... enforce the principle that subjects excluded by those rules cannot be brought forward thereon, such as a matter under adjudication by a court of law, or matters already discussed or appointed for consideration during the current session, whether upon a substantive motion, upon an amendment, or upon an Order of the Day.

Bosc and Gagnon similarly state:

Emergency debate provisions cannot be used to debate "items which, in a regular legislative program of the House of Commons and regular legislative consideration, can come before the House by way of amendments to existing statutes, or in any case will come before it in other ways."

That's at page 700.

This is a principle that has been applied in this Chamber by a number of Speakers; notably, a ruling on November 28, 2012. Speaker Zwozdesky explicitly pointed to some of those other avenues of debate in saying:

Urgency deals with whether or not there are other opportunities available to raise the matter. Now, I want to clarify for you that there are several vehicles available to you to do a [number] of things. One of them is question period, where a well-crafted question that meets the rules and proprieties of this House and of Houses across the world that are part of the Commonwealth parliamentary system – that exists there as one of those vehicles.

Secondly, a carefully crafted motion for return might accomplish something very similar, or a carefully worded written question might accomplish something similar. There is room for some debate within some of these vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, I would note for the House that there have been a number of opportunities for the matters contained in today's motion to be discussed in the Chamber.

There are three separate but related parts of the request; first, "the need to discuss what measures must be taken to ensure that construction of the Trans Mountain expansion project is completed following the withdrawal of Kinder Morgan." Mr. Speaker, the issue of what measures need to be taken to ensure the construction of the pipeline has been discussed probably more than any other matter during the course of this session. We put forward a very substantive government motion on this matter on the very first day of this sitting. The Leader of the Opposition and 11 of his caucus mates, a representative of the third party, and all of the independent members of the House participated in that debate.

The throne speech discussed the importance of the construction of a pipeline. Fifteen members of the Official Opposition spoke in response to the throne speech, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 12, Preserving Canada's Economic Prosperity Act, was presented by the government in April. The bill was directly relevant to the issue of measures aimed at ensuring the construction of the pipeline. All members of the Assembly were afforded the opportunity to debate that bill before it passed earlier this month.

A debate was held under Standing Order 30 on April 9 to deal with a very similar matter, that being the news about the suspension of nonessential spending on the pipeline by Kinder Morgan. Six members of the Official Opposition, including their leader, participated in that debate.

Of course, the opposition have raised these matters at length in question period during the consideration of estimates. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition's questions this session have dealt with little else.

Yesterday's announcement was very important, and for that reason, a ministerial statement was made by the Premier. The Leader of the Opposition, a representative of the third party, and independents were provided with an opportunity to reply.

Lastly, the request refers to "the declaration of continued opposition and uncertainty from the NDP government of British Columbia." The operative word here is "continued," Mr. Speaker. Bosc and Gagnon state: "Matters of chronic or continuing concern, such as economic conditions, unemployment rates and constitutional matters, have tended to be set aside" by the chair. The position of the government of B.C. is unfortunate, but it is a continuing one and one that does not need to be debated on an emergency basis.

Criteria two, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not the matter is vital to the public interest. Another criteria is that there must be an adverse effect on the public interest if the matter is not debated. *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms* is very explicit, stating that the item "must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention."

When a Standing Order 30 was actually proceeded with in 2013 on the issue of medevac services, Speaker Zwozdesky stated as follows:

I'm taking into account that the move of the medevac [airport]... is occurring tomorrow... Therefore, I find that there will be no other opportunity for this Assembly to debate this issue, which is of importance to many Albertans.

While yesterday's announcement was indeed very important, there is no reason to believe that a discussion of it this afternoon is necessary for the protection of the public interest.

3:20

I would note for members that we do have a number of very important bills set for debate this afternoon, including bills related

to women's right to choose, clean energy improvements for homeowners, financial security for persons with disabilities, and the electricity market.

We talk a great deal, Mr. Speaker, about pipelines in this Legislature, but when it comes to this deal to finally build a pipeline to tidewater, there doesn't seem to be as much to debate as the opposition would like to believe. Our time in this Legislature would be better spent on issues over which we have very genuine disagreement. Yesterday the opposition leader said that he supports efforts to get this pipeline built and even thanked our Premier for her hard work. Now is the time to move beyond talk and towards action. As our Premier said to Albertans yesterday: let's pick those tools back up; we've got a pipeline to build.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You wish to speak, Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre? Is there something significant you'd like to add to the matter?

Mr. Nixon: Are you asking me?

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

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a curious situation because we have two very similar notices of motion under Standing Order 30. It's quite curious. I received an e-mail from your office yesterday, and it states that upon your office receiving a hard copy of a motion under Standing Order 30, it is customary for the member or caucus submitting the SO 30 to inform other caucuses or independents once a hard copy has been received by the Speaker's office.

Now, I'm not sure if government members were given official notice by the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, but my office certainly was not. However, we provided significant notice both, actually, in a news release more than 24 hours ago that we'd be putting forward a very similar motion for an emergency debate as well as in an official notice that was given to your office.

Now, I'm speaking . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, we're dealing with the one that the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre dealt with now. I'm sorry. It must speak to the substance of whether or not it should be an urgent matter. So I'd ask that you get to that rather than talk about another Standing Order 30.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Very well. The topic put forward – I'll speak to it here because it's virtually identical to the motion I've put forward as well, to be, I suppose, debated immediately after this – is urgent, and it is timely. There has been no debate yet beyond a few questions in question period on the idea of the government owning a pipeline. We've had lots of discussion on pipelines, but the idea of the government becoming an owner: it is urgent; it is timely.

The government of Alberta has committed \$2 billion of taxpayers' money to backstop it, the federal government more than \$4 billion. I think that constitutes a genuine emergency. These are funds that have not been approved in any budget or supplementals. It has received virtually no debate in this House since the idea of the government owning and buying a pipeline was first proposed by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition about two months ago.

So far, to date, every single party in this House supports the idea of the government owning a pipeline, except for myself, but it has not received substantive debate. We have only just had a very small series of questions. I've asked the question about it specifically, and it's been indirectly touched upon, I believe, in a question by the

Leader of the Opposition. So it's had a total of about four questions, including supplementals. But while all parties here appear to support the idea of the government buying a pipeline and getting into that business, a clear majority of Albertans do not support the government owning and buying a pipeline. It is urgent, and it is an emergency because this deal was just cut and announced yesterday. There's been no time to debate it. The government is committing \$2 billion without any authorization from this House, without any authorization in the budget. That's a very substantial amount of taxpayers' money.

If they want to go forward with that, however much I might disagree with it, I think it deserves a little bit of debate, even if we were to informally agree to limit the amount of debate so we don't take up the entire afternoon of today's business on this particular matter. If we were to agree to one speaker per caucus or a maximum of two speakers per caucus, we could keep this in a relatively timely manner and go forward.

It will be interesting how you will rule, Mr. Speaker, because you'll have two virtually identical motions under Standing Order 30 before you.

I'm just curious as to why some members might not be able to stand the idea of me doing my job and showing up for debates and not skipping out on votes. I certainly hope that while some members would like to have a debate right now that if this debate does not take place, they will at least stay for the next debate and participate in that debate and vote in that debate.

The Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 30(2) provides that "The Member may briefly state the arguments," which we've had today, and it's the role of the chair to decide "whether or not the request for leave is in order." I am prepared to make a ruling at this point in time on the request for leave for this motion to proceed under section 30(2).

The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre has met the requirement for providing at least two hours' notice to the Speaker's office by providing the required notice at – it's important that the House hears this – 7:39 this morning. That motion, which I believe has been distributed, reads as follows:

Pursuant to Standing Order 30 be it resolved that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, the need to discuss what measures must be taken to ensure that construction of the Trans Mountain expansion project is completed following the withdrawal of Kinder Morgan, the recently announced deal with the government of Canada, and the declaration of continued opposition and uncertainty from the NDP government of British Columbia.

The relevant parliamentary authorities on this subject have been cited earlier, pages 694 to 704 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* and *Beauchesne's* paragraphs 387 to 390.

Hon. members, let me point out, firstly, that on April 9, 2018, the ordinary business of the Assembly was adjourned to debate a Standing Order 30 matter, the subject of which was somewhat familiar to the application that has been brought forward today by the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I wish to note for the Assembly that, while similar, the application made today constitutes a different question and therefore on that basis does not contravene Standing Order 30(7)(d).

3:30

On the question of whether or not the matter relates to a genuine emergency, while it is absolutely clear that the Trans Mountain expansion project is of great economic importance to Alberta and indeed to all of Canada, it would be difficult to conclude that a debate on what further measures must be taken in light of the

government of Canada's announcement to purchase the pipeline on May 29 is a genuine emergency. There has certainly been considerable discussion over the last several months and sessions about this subject.

Similarly, I would find that the need for a debate relating to the Trans Mountain expansion project was of a much more important nature in the circumstances facing the province of Alberta on April 9, 2018, when the debate on the previous standing order application went ahead. The circumstances are significantly different, and accordingly the chair does not find the request for leave in order, and the question will not be put.

I think we had a second Standing Order 30, from the Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Support

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a bit of an odd situation, where I suppose you're going to be making a nearly identical ruling. Perhaps I will move you with my eloquence and . . .

The Speaker: Hon. members, I'd really appreciate that you not leave when I'm speaking to a member. In getting between my eyesight and the other's, it's difficult to watch. Members, feel free to move now.

Member, just hold on a sec.

Mr. Fildebrandt: I suppose some don't want to stay for the next debates.

I'm not sure if I will move you with the eloquence of my arguments, Mr. Speaker, because I suppose your ruling on my motion, my request for emergency debate under Standing Order 30, is virtually identical. As I note . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, you ought not anticipate what I will say. That's up to me. But please continue.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Oh, I'm expecting to move you with the eloquence of my arguments, Mr. Speaker, but the arguments laid out, I believe, in the last round of discussion are very similar.

I believe that there has not been substantive debate yet on how the people of Alberta feel about the federal government owning a key and strategic piece of energy infrastructure for Alberta and about the Alberta government itself putting up up to \$2 billion towards backstopping this in the event that it fails. I believe that this is urgent and has not been substantively discussed, the idea of government ownership of the pipeline, as I pointed out. I asked a single set of questions in question period a few weeks ago, so if you include supplementals, I've mentioned it three times, and I think the Leader of the Opposition mentioned it perhaps once yesterday. So it has not received significant debate in this House.

We're talking about \$2 billion of provincial money and more than \$4 billion of federal money that are not approved by either level of government and a huge change in the strategic lay of the land for Alberta's energy industry in that we are now going to ostensibly support the idea of Prime Minister Trudeau controlling a strategic piece of energy infrastructure. It feeds into a whole lot of other debates. If we believe that we can ever get rid of the carbon tax, we certainly are never going to have a chance of doing that if there is a Trudeau who can turn off the taps on Alberta. If he owns the pipeline, I've got a pretty good feeling that that can be used as a hammer to hit us over the head with.

So I think this is important. It's timely. It's not been appropriately debated in the Legislature. This is a similar motion to what was put forward before. I feel like it's pretty much just that we are standing

in a queue and pretty much just skipping the line. I'm not sure what the point was, but I gave notice to . . .

The Speaker: It's the urgency, hon. member. The urgency matter: that's the thing you need to be talking about, not the substance of the debate, please.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Yeah. It is urgent, but it has not been discussed. There are likely not that many more sitting days left in this Legislature for us to be able to discuss this. I understand that people want to get back to their constituencies and out of here, so I would be — it's certainly an easy thing for me to say that my caucus will only put up one speaker, but if other caucuses were to agree, perhaps we could find a way to truncate the debate somewhat so that it doesn't take up the business of the entire afternoon.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think that to sum up the argument is to say that this was an incredibly important step for Albertans. I think that no issue has been as important for Albertans in a number of years as this issue is, but as the Government House Leader has made clear, importance and urgency are not the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, I am willing to be guided by you. I am happy to go through and reiterate some of the remarks made by the Government House Leader in response to the previous motion, but if you would be willing to simply take into consideration those remarks made by the Government House Leader, again, on this argument, I am happy to sit down and let you simply give that consideration.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Hon. members, the Member for Strathmore-Brooks has met the requirement of providing at least two hours' notice to the Speaker's office by providing the required notice at 8:42 this morning. I say that in reflection of the earlier time. The Member for Rimbeyst-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre arrived at my office earlier.

The motion from Strathmore-Brooks reads as follows:

Pursuant to Standing Order 30 be it resolved that the ordinary business of the Legislative Assembly be adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, details of Alberta's support for the Trans Mountain expansion project.

I would begin, hon. members, by commenting on the format and the substance of the application brought forward by the Member for Strathmore-Brooks. I would note that it should be clear from the application what the nature of the emergency actually is. Furthermore, this Standing Order 30 application, again, has to do with the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. Specifically, it deals with Alberta's support for the project in light of the announcement yesterday, May 29. Accordingly, this application, while similar to the one that was just dealt with, again, constitutes a different question. Therefore, on that basis, it does not contravene Standing Order 30(7)(d).

On the question of whether this matter is a genuine emergency, I would say that the matter does not meet the test as set out in Standing Order 30 and in the various authorities. As I noted earlier, debate relating to the Trans Mountain expansion project was of a much more urgent nature in the circumstances facing the province on April 9, 2018. In addition, I would find it difficult to make the conclusion that debating details concerning Alberta's support of the project would constitute a true emergency. Accordingly, the chair does not find the request for leave in order, and the question will not be put.

Orders of the Day

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have a request for unanimous consent to introduce a guest.

[Unanimous consent granted]

3:40

Introduction of Guests (reversion)

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you a number of incredible women who've been working to ensure abortion access and reproductive rights for women in Alberta for years. They are from organizations like Planned Parenthood, Woman's Health Options, formerly known as the Morgentaler Clinic, Kensington, and the list goes on. I ask that they rise as I introduce them. I'm not going to say each of their organizations, but I will say each of their names. We are so honoured to have you here today: Celia Posyniak; Sarena Finston Perry; Laura McBride; Erin Bilawchuk; Shirley Goodbrand; Melanie Anderson; Cathy Dawson; Muriel Stanley Venne, who's accompanied by Gwen; Nicole Jones-Abad; Tracey Berry; Donna Sansinsky; Nicole Bounds; Liz McCord; Heather Halpenny; Marie Gordon; Sheila Bellen; Ellen Ticoll; Joanne Combs; Barbara Howell.* I know that there are other women who are here as well and other supporters. Please rise if you're here to witness this debate and this historic advancement for women. Please, colleagues, join me in extending the warm welcome to all of these observers here today.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Service Alberta and Status of Women.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly staff from the Department of Status of Women who worked very hard and advised on Bill 9. We have with us today Susan Taylor, our deputy minister; Maryna Korchagina; Kelly Buckley; Michelle Hutchinson; Rabia Naseer; Stephanie Gazzola; Alondra Sanchez; and Cory Habulin. I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 9 Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to everyone. I'd like to begin by thanking all who've taken the time and energy to debate this piece of legislation, that I know will make life better for Albertans. This legislation is important to our government, as are the people this legislation will protect, patients and health care providers, many of whom are joining us today and are seated in the gallery.

It's fitting that we begin third reading of this bill today. Women's rights advocates remembered and recognized yesterday the anniversary of the death of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, who devoted his career to expanding abortion rights in Canada. Further, many of

us were inspired this past weekend watching as Irish women went home to vote in a referendum on one of the world's strictest abortion bans. I know that many of us followed #hometovote and were moved by stories and images of women going to great lengths, literally, to fight for their rights to assert their bodily autonomy. It's difficult to express how powerful it was to see tears of joy and expressions of love, support, and solidarity. These women reminded us, reminded the world that the fight for women's rights continues. Here today we honour that fight, and we move the marker a little bit more forward.

I'm pleased to bring up third reading of the Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act. This bill's purpose is to help protect Albertans from real safety concerns and barriers to privacy when they access health care. Here in Alberta no woman should face bullying or harassment when accessing health care, and no woman should have to live in fear of threats, intimidation, or violence. The legislation will also protect physicians and service providers, because supporting a strong public health care system means supporting the people who work in that health care system. Abortion has been legal in Canada for decades, so there's no reason why women who choose abortion should still feel that they have to face barriers, fear, stigmatization, and judgment.

Over 75 per cent of abortions in Alberta are provided in the two clinics I mentioned earlier, Kensington in Calgary and Woman's Health Options here in Edmonton. I've had the honour of visiting both of these clinics, and I've met with the staff who work there. They told me that they've seen an increase in protester activity, including women and health professionals being shouted at, photographed, and harassed as they enter and exit their doctors' appointments. Currently both clinics rely on injunctions to limit the number, proximity, and activities of protesters, but even with injunctions in place, protester activity at these clinics is increasing. Women accessing health services at these clinics and their supporters are reporting anxiety and fear as they approach and leave the clinic. Staff have also expressed that they feel unsafe while coming to and leaving their place of work. Mr. Speaker, that's just wrong. That isn't what a health care system built for all Albertans should look like.

We shouldn't be making patients go to court to protect themselves and their rights. We need stronger laws in place so that their harassers are the ones that end up in court, not the other way around. So that's why we are taking action. Bill 9 supports women by making this a public health and safety issue. It demonstrates our government's commitment to protecting safe access to all health services.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Some members at a recent political convention may have heard that women's rights are a swear word – I think it was feminism, actually – or that removing barriers for women is socialist garbage. Today I want to make it clear to all Albertans: women's rights are human rights. So I get concerned when members of this Assembly, elected to represent people, including women, from their communities, refuse to even engage in the conversation, and I get really concerned when the Leader of the Official Opposition says that women should just go to court if they want to access health care without harassment and intimidation.

Madam Speaker, Alberta women – care providers, patients – have all told us that the current protections aren't working. During the debate over this bill I've received letters from Albertans working in clinics, talking about what life is like for them under the status quo. One person, a doctor, talked about how painful it is that she can't guarantee the safety of her own patients. Another staff

*These spellings could not be verified at the time of publication.

member, who's a social worker, talked about clients being followed to their cars by relentless protesters. Even maintenance workers and mail carriers visiting the building get harassed and intimidated.

I was troubled to hear that a patient and her mother experienced extreme harassment outside Woman's Health Options just two days ago. This patient was intimidated and videotaped while entering the clinic, inside the current area that is covered by the court injunction. She was traumatized, worried that the protester would continue to intimidate her when she left her appointment or that her face would appear on social media or in an antichoice ad. I'm incredibly thankful to the caring, compassionate staff at Woman's Health Options who spent over two hours taking care of this patient after this horrific incident. But, Madam Speaker, they should not have to. That's not their job. Our job is to ensure that they can do their jobs and that women who exercise their choice can do so safely, without fear, harassment, or intimidation. Their jobs are demanding enough.

I'm dismayed that some critics believe that the status quo, which allows something like this to happen to a woman, is acceptable, because it is not acceptable. This legislation would make it illegal to take photos or record patients who are inside the access zones and would make it illegal to distribute those photos and recordings. With this legislation that woman, that woman just two days ago, and many others will be protected.

Madam Speaker, Alberta women are tired of being bullied and harassed when they access health care. They are tired of extreme special-interest groups trying to control their bodies, and they're tired of waiting – waiting for decades – for a government to finally bring in legislation to protect their human rights. We have heard this from women and health care providers and other allies and patients in the province whom I've met with and who've written and called my office, including Jennifer Berard. You might remember her; her story launched the same day we introduced the bill.

3:50

After refusing to debate or vote on legislation, Alberta women are right to ask the Official Opposition where they stand. Do you stand with Jennifer, or do you stand with extreme special-interest groups that have built your new party? Do you stand with the antichoice groups that encouraged members to vote to defund women's health care at convention, the folks who voted to ensure that parents have to sign off when a minor is accessing a health care service? In a few minutes, when we have another chance to vote, will you stand, or will you hide?

I know whose side I'm on. I know where we stand. We stand with women. We stand with health care providers. That's why on our side of this Assembly we'll be voting yes. This is certainly a pivotal moment in Alberta's history, Madam Speaker.

Thank you so very much.

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

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be speaking in general to third reading of the bill, but before I speak to it more broadly, I would like to put forward an amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Go ahead, hon. member.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The amendment I'm putting forward is that Bill 9 be not now read a third time. There's more to it in the words than that, but I do not believe that this bill should move forward.

Now, I want to thank all members of this House who have participated in the debate, who have made their views known in

speech and in their votes, who have participated in one form or another. We may disagree, but this is a place that is supposed to be full of disagreement. At the end of the day, a majority government pretty much always gets its way. Very, very rarely does a government have to back down. There are exceptions like Bill 6, et cetera, but when a majority government wants something, a majority government gets something.

In the Canadian Westminster system of our Parliament the opposition almost never gets to win a battle against a majority government, but what we do get to do is have our say. We get to speak up for our constituents, represent a minority of the Legislature, perhaps a majority of the public sometimes, but certainly the minority of the electorate from the last election. We might not get to change the final outcome of a vote, but we get to have our say. In fact, it is our duty to have our say, to speak up for our constituents on bills that we support, on bills that we oppose, and on bills that we might not even want to talk about. If they're on the floor of this Legislature, it is our duty to our constituents to stand up, speak up, and be counted every time.

Now, on the bill itself, I want to thank the Minister of Health for spirited debate on this. I think we have very different views on the suitability of this particular bill. I think it is well intentioned. It is trying to achieve something that I would . . .

The Deputy Speaker: I'll just interrupt you for a moment, hon. member. I've been asked to clarify something with you. With this type of an amendment – this is a recommit amendment – once you have presented this, you will have your speaking time on that, but then you cannot speak again in third reading. Just so that you're aware.

Mr. Fildebrandt: There's no debate on the amendment?

The Deputy Speaker: This is your third reading debate.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Yeah. You can go ahead, just as long as you understand that this is the one opportunity.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you.

We have different views on the bill, but I do believe that the government's bill is well intentioned in trying to fix something that I think, if we were to deal with it in a more co-operative and nonpartisan spirit, we could actually find some common ground on, but I do not believe that it strikes an appropriate balance.

Now, regardless of how you feel about abortion, whatever you feel about its legal status or from a moral perspective – and I do believe that people can have legitimate different views on the topic. It is a painful and difficult topic for most people, and for most people not in politics it's not pure black and white. They can have honest differences of opinion on it. But regardless of how you feel about abortion from a moral or a legal perspective, we should all agree that if a woman is accessing an abortion, she should not face harassment or intimidation. She should not be photographed. She should not be bullied. She should not be screamed at.

Now, while these things have happened before, they are very rare occurrences. I believe that the government is using a cannon to kill a mosquito here. What this will do is perhaps embolden some protesters to do this because they're told they can't do it. It is not striking an appropriate balance.

No right in the Canadian constitutional and common law tradition is absolute. We have the right to freedom of speech, but that freedom of speech is not absolute. It is as it is justified in a free and democratic society under the Charter. The right to freedom of

speech is not absolute. You can't slander. You can't incite violence. No other Charter right is absolute. Virtually every Charter right comes into at least some conflict with another Charter right, and both legislators and the judiciary are faced regularly with trying to balance competing rights. When we declare that one right does not need to be balanced anymore, that it trumps all others, then the delicate balance of the Canadian Constitution and our carefully constructed liberties begins to fall apart.

Women have the Charter right and all people have the Charter right to security of the person. That is a fundamental Charter right. I think that that is a right that the government is trying to uphold here, and good on them. But we also have the Charter rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. It would not be unreasonable to have some reasonable restrictions placed upon those latter two rights if they could be properly justified and balanced but also applied broadly. I do not believe that government should ever legislate on the basis of someone's race, religion, sex, political views, or social views.

The French philosopher Voltaire has a famous quote incorrectly attributed to him: I may disagree with you, but I will fight to the death for your right to say it. That is fundamental to our understanding of free speech. If you believe in free speech, you don't just believe in it for people who agree with you. You believe in free speech for those who disagree with you. In this case, frankly, I think even most passionate pro-lifers would disagree with people harassing people outside of an abortion clinic. There is nothing compassionate about that, there's nothing productive about that, and I don't believe there's anything even Christian about that. It is not becoming of someone to do so.

I'm not arguing and I don't think anyone here is arguing that people should be allowed to harass and yell at someone. But if we are going to restrict freedom of assembly and speech for one group, we should never single out a group because their political or social views are unpopular either broadly or with the government of the day. As much as some may feel that they'll be in power forever, you will someday be in the opposition, and someone else will be legislating your rights. Someone else, whom you disagree with, will hold a majority of seats in a Legislature, and you will pray that they respect your right to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly when they disagree with you. Governments of all stripes, on the left and on the right, too often forget that. It tends to be not a left/right issue but something that only the opposition of the day tends to remember and the government of the day tends to forget, but I'm sure members, if they ever were to find themselves in opposition again, would be reawakened to the principle.

4:00

There are, I know, in this House different views on the topic of abortion. I know some members here very well, and I know where they stand on the issue of abortion. There are passionate pro-choicers in this House, and there are passionate pro-lifers in this House. I think that there is a place for a public debate on the issue if it's before us. You know, the opposition doesn't get to pick the agenda here very often, as we saw right before this debate, but the agenda before us we have an obligation to deal with. If you are pro life or you are pro choice, if you are somewhere in the middle as a moderate, leaning one way or another, you have a right to express your views.

I am genuinely disappointed that on this issue and, frankly, quite a few more issues than I would have expected but on this issue in particular I've been given the dubious honour of leading the opposition. This corner of the House used to be known as the Valhalla section or Siberia, but I now call it the Alamo. It can be a little lonely sometimes being the only MLA in the entire House to

dissent, and frankly that honour often went to Grant Notley, the father of the Premier, when he had to effectively lead the opposition, I think, with just one MLA by himself sometimes. In that case it was just a giant majority government. It wasn't just that the other opposition wasn't doing its job.

Now, there are some MLAs in the opposition who are supporting the government. They're not abdicating their duties. They're supporting the bill and speaking up. You know, I applaud them for doing so even though I disagree with their positions.

This debate on this bill should be a wake-up call that when the opposition is away, the government will play. That is why the government tripled the size of the no-protest zone in this bill. That would have never happened if there was a vigorous Official Opposition showing up for work, standing up, debating, and voting, but because there has been virtually no major organized opposition to the bill, the government has had carte blanche. That is deconstructing one of the fundamental checks and balances of our system. So while a majority government can pass virtually any bill it wants, one of the very, very few things that check its power is knowing that if they go too far on something, the opposition will at least show up to work, and when that doesn't happen, the government has no check on itself. It has no check on its own power. It therefore has the right to expand the scope and powers of its legislation beyond what it thought it could originally get away with, and that is dangerous. It takes away one of the key mechanisms of accountability in our system of government.

I believe we've had a pretty long debate on this. I think that, short of the budget, we've probably debated this bill more than any other. I'm sure *Hansard* or Parliamentary Counsel can correct us, but I think we've probably spent more time on this bill and certainly had more votes on this bill than any other piece of legislation other than the budget, which is curious. We've also certainly kept our pages up late at night and our security officers as well.

But I want to thank all members who have participated in this debate and made their views known and stood up to vote to represent their constituents, however it is they may vote. I would beseech my colleagues in this House who may be under orders from outside this House to leave here when the roll call is called – I understand. I understand your situation. I understand you don't want to be in it, and I understand that many of you want to stand up and be counted. I certainly won't claim a moral superiority over it because you're in a bad position. It's not your fault. But I would at least beseech you to break the party whip, to stand up if not to debate, to at least vote and represent the conservative majority of Alberta.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane. On the amendment?

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to request unanimous consent of the House to shorten the division bells to one minute for votes pertaining to Bill 9, please.

The Deputy Speaker: We've had a request for unanimous consent to shorten the bells to one minute. I'll ask one question. Is anyone opposed?

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Deputy Speaker: On the amendment, the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I must say I give credit to the Member for Strathmore-Brooks for taking a

strong, principled stand on freedom of speech. Unfortunately, his amendment doesn't address freedom of speech in the act. He is objecting to section 2 and sections 7 and 8. Section 2 deals with restricted access zones, and sections 7 and 8 have to do with the residence of the physician or service provider and the physician's office, by which he proposes to justify removing this bill from the House and having more debate.

I'm unsure of why there's that inconsistency, but I certainly appreciate both his tenacity and his willingness to stand up on an issue of freedom of speech. He has done that very well in this session. We do have to be careful that we protect that sacred part of democracy that has been so badly damaged elsewhere and is always subject to threat by those who have power and those who have the ability to silence or self-censor in some cases out of fear.

Let me simply say – and this probably will also be my statement at third reading – that it's quite clear that this needs to go forward. It needs to go forward in a timely way. There are too many health providers, patients, families that are anxiously waiting to see this increased level of civility, maybe, and security. Again, I've said this in the House. The decision to have an abortion is an extremely difficult one. It rightly belongs to the woman, her family, her physician, her god. We, in the sense of creating a buffer zone around these facilities, are not restricting free speech. We're not restricting the freedom to organize. We are simply providing a measure of security and trying to reduce and even eliminate some of the harassment that occasionally occurs. It's not a regular pattern that I've seen around the Kensington clinic in my riding, but it occasionally occurs, and it cannot be allowed to continue.

Alberta, along with four other provinces, will be leading the country in ensuring that not only the patients but the health providers are not in any way feeling intimidated, harassed, or threatened and do not feel a sense of disrespect because they have a different view and because they're following the Health Act and because they're following the law of the land.

I don't think there's any basis for supporting this amendment myself. At the same time, I appreciate the member for expressing very clearly his views and his stand on behalf of some Albertans, especially in the area of free speech.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

4:10

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, to speak to the amendment, I'll recognize the hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: To the amendment. Okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to make a couple of points, speak to a couple of the points that the Member for Strathmore-Brooks made. One of the things that he was concerned about was emboldening protesters by passing the legislation. I believe that the only circumstance where that would actually happen is if the protesters suffer from oppositional defiant disorder. No reasonable person would want to defy such legislation.

Another comment that was made essentially equated morality to Christianity, and I just want to assert that no belief system can claim authority over morality. Morality is definitely a human endeavour. It's not exclusively Christian. It's not Jewish or Muslim or atheist or agnostic or any of the major belief systems. It's something that we all endeavour to incorporate, well, by and large, into our lives.

I also want to disabuse the Member for Strathmore-Brooks of the delusion of being the unofficial leader of the opposition. I for one am not inclined to follow him anywhere.

We're at third reading, and it's taken a while to get here. We owe it to the people of Alberta to put this particular bill to a vote today, and there's no need for this amendment. This bill is not primarily dealing with a free speech matter.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a) any questions or comments?

Seeing none, any other speakers to the amendment? Calgary-Bow.

Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Speaking to the amendment from Strathmore-Brooks, my message is clear here. Women shouldn't have to wait to be protected from harassment or intimidation and – you know what? – women have waited long enough. Time is up. It's time to get this bill moving forward. You know, we have a gallery full of women here today who deserve a government that will stand with them and will not run into the washroom every time a woman is asking for respect and protection. I'm going to vote no to this amendment, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 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 the amendment lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:13 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Fildebrandt

Against the motion:

Carlier	Gray	Nielsen
Carson	Hoffman	Phillips
Ceci	Jansen	Piquette
Clark	Kazim	Renaud
Connolly	Kleinstaub	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Littlewood	Sabir
Cortes-Vargas	Loyola	Schmidt
Dach	Luff	Shepherd
Drever	Malkinson	Starke
Eggen	Mason	Sucha
Feehan	McCuaig-Boyd	Swann
Fitzpatrick	McKittrick	Sweet
Fraser	McLean	Turner
Ganley	McPherson	Westhead
Goehring	Miranda	Woollard

Totals: For – 1 Against – 45

[Motion on amendment to third reading of Bill 9 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and speak to Bill 9 today. I want to start by saying that I'm really proud of our Minister of Health for her leadership on

this bill. It's a long time coming and long overdue, and I'm really pleased to be part of a government who is putting women's rights at the forefront.

I also want to acknowledge that I'm entering this debate with a fair degree of privilege. I'm a cisgendered heterosexual white male. I grew up in a nuclear family, so I pretty much check all the boxes of privilege, and I just wanted to acknowledge that before beginning.

I also don't have any experience or know anyone with experience accessing these health services, but I do want to use an analogy of something that I am familiar with. In my former role as a registered nurse in the operating room one of the most important factors for us was ensuring a good patient experience. If you can imagine that people are nervous going to the dentist, can you imagine how nervous you'd be going to have brain surgery? It was our job to ensure that patients going in for such a procedure knew that they were in good hands and that they'd be well taken care of.

All of the experience that a patient has coming into a hospital from the moment they walk in the doors, when they're going to have surgery, affects their experience. It is a struggle for operating room nurses when we're meeting a patient for the first time and we have to give them the confidence that they're in good hands. So it was very important how we created a relationship with the patients and made sure that they felt they were safe and in good hands and that they could trust us. That was job number one for us, trying to ensure that patients knew that they were protected.

So when I think of a bill like Bill 9, there are a lot of parallels. A woman coming in to access a health care service deserves to have the same experience as though they were coming in for brain surgery. It's an important part of accessing the health care system for them. They may have made a very difficult decision to get there in the first place. To enter a health care facility free of harassment and abuse and intimidation and bullying is so fundamental to having a good outcome. It's about how a patient starts and enters the health care system affects their entire experience and how they view that.

I can't be more proud of supporting a bill that ensures that women can have easy access to a legal health service and be treated with the dignity and respect that every other Albertan deserves. For that reason, I'm going to be voting in support of this bill, and I encourage all members to do the same.

Thank you.

4:20

The Deputy Speaker: Any questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Other members wishing to speak to the bill? Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak at third reading to Bill 9 – and it took us awhile to get here – to reiterate my complete and unfettered support for this bill and to remind everyone why the autonomy of women to make decisions about their own bodies needs reinforcing with this legislation.

Abortion affects women disproportionately. Abortion is an important element of women's rights because women are more affected by the abortion debate than men, both individually and as a gender. Pregnancy has an enormous effect on the woman involved. As Sarah Weddington put it in the U.S. Supreme Court case in 1973 *Roe v. Wade*:

A pregnancy to a woman is perhaps one of the most determinative aspects of her life.

It disrupts her body. It disrupts her education. It disrupts her employment. And it often disrupts her entire family life.

And we feel that, because of the impact on the woman, this ... is a matter which is of such fundamental and basic concern to the woman involved that she should be allowed to make the choice as to whether to continue or to terminate her pregnancy.

I'd also like to add the perspective of philosopher Judith Jarvis Thomas.

A great deal turns for women on whether abortion is or is not available. If abortion rights are denied, then a constraint is imposed on women's freedom to act in a way that is of great importance to them, both for its own sake and for the sake of their achievement of equality; and if the constraint is imposed on the ground that the fetus has a right to life from the moment of conception, then it is imposed on a ground that neither reason nor the rest of morality requires women to accept.

No one has the right to interfere with a woman's autonomy in seeking legal pregnancy care. Women's right to health care must not be interfered with because equality is too important to compromise. Subjecting women to harassment on the way to see a doctor is wrong. Even in the area of *Home to Vote*, women's autonomy is still under threat. Today's headlines include Arkansas banning abortion medication.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude to every member who has participated in the debate at every step along the way. As a woman, as a woman who at one time needed an abortion, and as a woman with a daughter, I am indebted to you. Thank you for making your thoughts known, for speaking up about an issue that is important.

I'm deeply disappointed that many members have continually absolved themselves of their responsibility in this debate. We are very fortunate to represent the people of Alberta in this Chamber, to participate in democracy in a way that so many people throughout the world do not enjoy. That honour should always be taken seriously. Because I am a feminist and because I passionately believe in equality, I am proud to stand in support of Bill 9.

The Deputy Speaker: Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), any questions or comments?

Seeing none, speaking to the bill, the hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I'm proud to be part of a government that since being elected has consistently offered unequivocal support to women in this province. Women in Alberta are strong, talented, and make incredible contributions to our province, and as Minister of Status of Women I'm proud to say that our government stands with the women in our province. Each and every member of this government is committed to making life safer, fairer, and better for women in Alberta. It is because of this commitment that the Minister of Health, our Deputy Premier, has brought forward Bill 9.

Madam Speaker, for too long women in Alberta have faced harassment and intimidation as they make their way to abortion services. Clinics that provide abortion services have told our government that protester activity outside these clinics has nearly doubled. These clinics and their patients have come to us and shared their concerns about the harassment and intimidation that they witness. Our government has a duty to lead. That's why the Minister of Health has tabled this legislation to create a bubble zone around abortion service providers so that those who access these services can do so free from fear and bullying.

Madam Speaker, women have a right to feel safe, and our government has a strong record of standing up for that right. Since taking office, we have boosted funding for women's shelters by \$15

million to help ensure that no woman fleeing violence is turned away. We've increased access to the legal system for survivors of sexual violence by removing the time limit for bringing forward civil claims, and we have made it easier for survivors of domestic violence to get out of dangerous situations by allowing them to break residential leases without financial penalty. Just this year we announced a historic \$8.1 million investment in the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services.

These significant new dollars go directly to more counselling, more crisis support, and more help navigating the justice and court systems in this province so that survivors who take the brave step to come forward have the vital help that they need close to home. We listened to the needs of those who have been ignored for far too long by governments that have come before, just like when on May 1 we proclaimed May as Sexual Violence Awareness Month and announced our government's commitment to ending sexual violence and just like we are doing now with Bill 9.

With Bill 9, like with all of the work of our government, we are doing this to make life better, fairer, and safer for women in Alberta. We say to the women of this province: we hear you, we stand with you, and we will never walk out when you need us. Women in Alberta deserve a government that sees our safety as a priority.

Madam Speaker, the opposition has implied time and time again that this bill is a distraction from important issues. The women who are subjected to bullying and harassment, who fear for their safety just because they are trying to access reproductive health clinics, that they have a right to access, do not see this bill as a distraction, nor do they see it as an unimportant issue. Perhaps the opposition would know that if they chose to participate in these debates, but they refuse to even listen.

Well, Madam Speaker, let me be clear. This government listens, this government shows up, and this government stands with women.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the bill? Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today and speak to Bill 9, Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care. You know, I've been here in this House and many times heard from the members opposite about the consideration that they feel I should be giving my actions in this House. I've been told that I've failed to consider how the votes that I've cast, legislation that I've supported, would affect farmers and ranchers or businesspeople or seniors or children in care or persons with developmental disabilities. I've watched as the members opposite have called myself and my colleagues out because they felt we were not speaking up enough on a particular debate. I recall in more than one debate, often during votes, hearing the refrain: Albertans are watching. Indeed, Albertans are watching today.

You know, Madam Speaker, I've also watched as members opposite have appeared on and with so-called media organizations that spread vile misinformation and prejudice about various Albertan communities, whether that be individuals from the Muslim community, the LGBTQ2S-plus community. Many have since distanced themselves. Others have continued that association recently. I've watched as the Leader of the Official Opposition has used language denigrating in marginalizing individuals struggling with substance use disorders and encouraging the spread of misleading information about peer support groups for LGBTQ2S-plus youth. I've stood in this House and I've called that out because

that kind of stigma does real damage to real people. To foment discrimination or prejudice is a dangerous, dangerous thing for persons who are public leaders and elected representatives.

4:30

Now, I recognize that on many of these issues people have concerns based on religious beliefs and on convictions of faith. Indeed, Madam Speaker, I grew up in the church. I grew up in a very strict Christian home, and for much of my life I subscribed to religious belief and it was very important to me. As a young man I was quite zealous. That changed over the years as I dealt with my own experiences and I grew to know more of the world, but always what I learned in those years has shaped me as an individual, the code of moral conduct by which I conduct myself, and indeed the types of decisions I make even on legislation such as this.

Indeed, when this legislation came forward and I saw this debate in the House, I was reminded of a story from the Gospel of John, from the book of John that I'm looking at today, a story of Jesus. He had gone to teach at the temple, and as he was sitting there and teaching people in the temple, teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman in front of him who they had caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of everybody in that crowd, and they said to Jesus: "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says that we should stone her. What do you say?"

Now, it notes here that they were trying to trap him. They were trying to get Jesus to say something they could use against him. Well, we're certainly familiar with that in politics. You know, Jesus ignored them and just sat and wrote in the dust with his finger. Then they kept demanding that he provide them with an answer, so he stood up and said: "Okay. Well, let whoever among you has never sinned cast the first stone." Then he stooped down, and he started writing in the dust again.

Every one of those people that were there to accuse that woman, one by one they slipped away, beginning with the oldest – that's an interesting note – probably because they have more memories of their life and the things they've personally done. But every last one of those individuals left. Then Jesus stood up, and he went and spoke to that woman. He said: "So where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?" And she said, "No, Lord," so he said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

Now, Madam Speaker, one of the things I have carried forward from what I learned growing up is that the most important principle when we are dealing with other people is that you put the people first. Compassion comes first. Judgment is set aside. Compassion comes first. Whatever my personal conviction, whatever my personal belief, that is the example I see when I read the gospels and when I remember what I have learned. Compassion, the spirit of the law, how we treat other people always comes before making a rule of moral judgment.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, that is at the heart of what we are looking at here today. None of us has the right to stand and cast stones at any woman at the most vulnerable point in her life, potentially, who is facing an incredibly difficult decision. None of us has the right to sit in judgment of that individual and tell her what she should or should not do. Indeed, none of us has the right to increase stigma on that woman and make her suffering worse. That is why we are bringing forward this legislation, to provide that protection and to provide that principle of compassion and understanding. Individuals can hold their personal convictions. They can do so at a respectful distance in a manner which is not going to increase the difficulty for women who are simply trying to access a health care service at a difficult time of their lives.

Madam Speaker, the floor of this Chamber, in between our two sides, is littered with stones cast from glass houses. I will say that I am disappointed. I respect that some members of the opposition are here in the Chamber today to be part of debate and as representatives of their parties, and I acknowledge the courage that takes, but I am disappointed, given, I guess, what has transpired and what has gone back and forth across this floor, that they are not here today to vote on behalf of their constituents and indeed to ensure that a reasonable and compassionate protection like this is provided to Alberta women. I will tell you that I will proudly stand in favour of Bill 9.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. minister of culture.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to third reading of Bill 9, Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care, and I do so proudly. I say “proudly” because I’m not afraid to have my position on this very important subject matter on the record. Now, I suppose that I could avoid the issue altogether either by not speaking to the bill or, perhaps, by running out of the House and hiding when a vote is recorded, as we witnessed a few minutes ago, but I have no issue whatsoever with standing up for women’s reproductive rights.

Now, as a male I will never be faced with the choice of having to make a decision of this nature. Admittedly, it is much easier to say that you are either one hundred per cent against or in favour of a woman’s right to choose when you will never be the one in that position of having to make that very difficult choice. However, as a feminist I feel it is my responsibility to stand up and defend a woman’s right to choose, especially when others, much to their shame, choose not to. To be clear, for me the question is not about being either pro or antiabortion. The question for me is this. Who should be able to make that decision? Is it the woman, with the help of her doctor, or the government? I think – and I speak for the members of this government – that the question is very simple to answer. It should always be the woman who chooses.

Decades ago women suffered horrifying back-alley abortions or used dangerous methods when they had no other recourse. So when there is any hint of opposition or any implicit attempt to limit a woman’s reproductive rights or, in the case of the UCP opposition, to boycott the debate altogether, I really have to ask: does anyone really think that pushing women back to the back alley is a better outcome? I find it offensive that the UCP opposition has chosen to boycott any debate on this piece of legislation and has opted instead to abandon the legislative duty that they were elected to do and not vote time and time and time and time again. Truly shameful.

Fortunately, we live in a country where the issue was settled by the courts. Women in Alberta and across the country have the right to choose. In fact, on January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court found that Canada’s abortion laws were unconstitutional. The laws were found to violate section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because they infringe upon a woman’s right to life, liberty, and security of person. The then Supreme Court Chief Justice Brian Dickson wrote, “Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman’s body and thus a [violation] of security of the person.” On that day Canada became one of a small number of countries without a law that restricted a woman’s right to choose.

I take the opportunity today to congratulate the people of Ireland, who recently voted to repeal an amendment that bars women’s autonomy over their bodies. I bring this up because, like many around the world watching the historic vote in Ireland, I learned of the hardship faced by woman there having to travel out of their country to freely exercise their reproductive rights. That is why I stand here today in this Chamber to tell the women of Calgary-Cross, my constituents, and women across this province that I will stand with them, and so will every single member of this government.

4:40

Now, based on the research and the reading that I have done on this issue, it is very clear to me that absolutely nothing is more important or more imperative than ensuring a woman’s fundamental right to reproductive freedom and that nothing is more odious and offensive than denying women the respect and the ability to live in a society in which they are encouraged to think of themselves as nothing less than first-class citizens and responsible human beings capable of making those kinds of decisions for themselves and, in doing so, ensuring that women have the confidence to exercise their autonomy over their bodies. Now, that autonomy can only be freely exercised by ensuring that women can access those services in a safe and dignified manner.

Shortly after the government introduced this legislation, members of the UCP caucus chose to walk out of the House, an action which has been described by some, and I quote, as political cowardice and a disgraceful dereliction of their duties as MLAs. In fact, members of the opposition went in front of the media to claim that the reason they left the Chamber was due to the heckling coming from government benches. I am certain that that kind of double standard and political game playing by the members of the UCP opposition is not lost on anyone. The very thing that they allege to need, a bubble zone protecting them from the heckling, is exactly the very same thing they would deny the women of Alberta. It is truly shameful. They would stand and still allow protesters to make women feel ashamed for the choices that they make. That, Mr. Speaker, is the pinnacle of irony. While I have much sympathy, compassion, solidarity, and empathy for the women being subjected to derision by protesters, I have none for the members of the opposition who choose not to stand up for the women of this province.

This bill is one that ensures dignity, equality, compassion, and respect for the women of our province, and that is why I stand again in this House today to say to every single one of my sisters: your body, your choice, and I stand with you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, other speakers to the bill? Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I begin, I just want to thank the hon. Minister of Health for bringing this bill, Bill 9, forward. I have not had a lot of opportunities to be able to speak in the House and specifically to this bill, and to be honest, I was contemplating if I would be able to actually do it. But I do feel, as I tell you this story, that it would be disrespectful to the journeys that I have travelled on with some of the people that I will talk about today to not stand here and talk about it.

As many of you know, I was a social worker before I was elected. I worked in child protection, and I worked in the inner city with high-risk youth, a population of women that I don’t think we spend a lot of time talking about. The youngest that I started working with when I worked in the inner city was 12 years old. She’s now in her,

like, mid-20s, so we don't need to talk about how long ago that was. She was 12, she was living on the street, and she was homeless. She had been abandoned by her family, she had been traumatized, she had been shamed, and she had been sexually exploited. She was involved in gangs, and she became pregnant.

I was her social worker, so I had a responsibility to support her through her process, her journey, and for her to be able to decide at a very young age what she was going to do. We spent a lot of time talking about her choices because my responsibility was to give her all of her options. It was hard. She was young. Of course, as an adult you think about her future and you think about this, like, young woman and what her future could be and what I saw her future being as a very resilient, amazing young woman. You know, I had thoughts, right? I had biases. I'm a social worker. We have to acknowledge that we carry our biases with us in our profession. She was a child in care. She didn't have a lot of supports and really had nowhere to go, no home. She had to make this decision, so we walked our journey together. I learned so much from her and how she was going to decide to make this choice.

She ultimately made the decision that she was going to access her rights and have an abortion. I said: "Okay. Well, let's go. I will hold your hand. I will walk with you. I will be what you need someone to be." We were in Edmonton, and we went to go access her health rights. Twelve years old.

Again, we had spent a long time talking about her options. We walked down the street, and there was somebody standing there with a sign telling her that she was a murderer, shaming her for making a choice that she had every right to make. A 12-year-old girl. She looked at me, and she said: "Heather, look, we've talked about this. You told me this was going to be okay and that this was okay for me to do." Of course, I, you know, walked her through it, and I said: "Yeah, this is your choice. This is okay. You need to make your choice."

So we accessed the facility. Of course, she went through all the supports that she gets when she goes to access her supports. She got to talk to her counsellor, and she got her time to sit quietly and think about what she wanted to do and to decide whether or not this is what really made sense to her. And we left because she couldn't do it, because somebody had stood outside that building and had shamed her.

She had been shamed her whole life. She had been victimized repeatedly in her young, young life as an inner-city youth, constantly told that she was a bad person, that she was shameful, that what she did in her life was wrong, that her whole existence in life was wrong. And the one time where she took control of her life, where she made a decision for herself to say, "I am taking control of myself, I am taking control of my body for the very first time in my life, and I am making a decision," someone stood outside of that building and told her that she was wrong.

When we stand here and we have these conversations and we talk about how this is just a political game and we see members of the opposition who love to stand up in question period and talk about the importance of mental health supports for Albertans and how we need to make sure we're taking care of children in care and how important that is and that as Albertans and as this government we need to be doing that work, well, this is doing that work.

I want to thank the women that are in the gallery, because we went back, and this young, very powerful, resilient woman, who is now an adult and is doing amazing things in her life, was able to access the supports that she needed with the support that she needed.

This bill is extremely important, and this bill is not just important for adult women who are accessing the health care that they deserve. This is about allowing vulnerable people, people that as

legislators we have a responsibility to protect and to take care of, to be able to access this, to be able to make a decision, to be able to follow through on the decision that they have struggled so hard to make, to be able to do that in a safe space, to be able to go and access that without someone retraumatizing them, reshaping them, making them feel that they don't deserve to honour their own bodies. [Noise in the gallery] I hear you. That's how I feel, too.

I wholeheartedly support this bill because if this bill had existed when I had to go take that 12-year-old girl, we wouldn't have had to go back a second time, because she would have been able to make that decision, be confident in herself, be able to access that support the first time, not the second time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under Standing Order 29(2)(a)?

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

The hon. Minister of Health to close debate.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and to all members who have taken the time to engage in today's discussion, the discussion of the past several months, the discussion of the past 30 years here in Alberta. We are so grateful for the courage and leadership of so many in this province who brought us to where we are today. I am proud that when we leave here today, we will be taking Alberta one step further, and we need to keep ... [some applause] Yeah. Thank you. I'm proud that we continue to move forward and not backward in women's rights and in ensuring that all of us feel safe and respected in this place.

4:50

I do want to tell one personal story and to thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning, who just shared her experiences. The story that I'm going to share isn't mine. Again, I mentioned in committee – or maybe it was in second – a number of stories that I heard from women at Kensington.

I want to share one from a woman at Woman's Health Options who talked about how she got pregnant while in an incredibly abusive relationship. The abuse really escalated once her partner realized that he had a fetus in her body, and he felt that he had extra authority over her body. She had been in this relationship for a while and knew that she needed to get out for her physical safety and for the well-being of herself. She knew that it wasn't going to be easy, and one of the things that she also decided was that she needed to exercise her right to have an abortion. When she showed up at the clinic that day, fleeing an abusive partner, she experienced new abuse and new disrespect and new taunting and intimidation. So just like the 12-year-old girl who was trying to exercise her autonomy, even a 30-year-old woman can experience the same sense of fear and disrespect and distrust.

Some people said: well, people on the sidewalk are trying to counsel people about their options. It is not about counselling. It is about shame, harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Counselling is what happens inside the clinic. Counselling is what happens in our community. Counselling is what happens when you call 811. Counselling is what happens when you exercise your options. When you have chosen to make that decision, it needs to be respected, full stop, the end.

We respect the workers, we respect the patients, and today I ask that we all respect Albertans, who've been asking for this legislation for 30 years, and move Alberta forward, not backward, not into the hallway. Let's stand here, let's do our jobs, and let's show women that we stand with them.

Thank you.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:53 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Carlier	Gray	Nielsen
Carson	Hoffman	Phillips
Ceci	Jansen	Piquette
Clark	Kazim	Renaud
Connolly	Kleinstein	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Littlewood	Sabir
Cortes-Vargas	Loyola	Schmidt
Dach	Luff	Shepherd
Drever	Malkinson	Starke
Eggen	Mason	Sucha
Feehan	McCuaig-Boyd	Swann
Fitzpatrick	McKittrick	Sweet
Fraser	McLean	Turner
Ganley	McPherson	Westhead
Goehring	Miranda	Woollard

Against the motion:

Fildebrandt

Totals: For – 45 Against – 1

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a third time]

Bill 6

Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move third reading of Bill 6, Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.

If passed, this legislation would bring us closer to putting in place a system for legalized cannabis that reflects the views and values of Albertans as well as strengthening the AGLC and creating a new opportunity for the liquor industry.

Madam Speaker, we began developing the system for legalized cannabis after the federal government announced, in 2017, that cannabis would become legal across the country the following year. As we've developed our system of legal cannabis in Alberta, we've engaged thousands of Albertans. Through that engagement we developed four policy priorities that our system is built on. Those priorities: 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 market.

Madam Speaker, at every step we have taken on this file, we have taken that with the input of Albertans. It may not have been our choice to legalize, but we have put in place a plan that reflects the views and values of Albertans. I would like to thank everyone who has participated in providing input, whether through the survey, submissions, or by participating in the round-tables. Legalization will not mark the end of this process. We will continue to monitor this emerging industry as we move forward.

This legislation would bring further clarity to retailers and the public about the use and sale of cannabis in Alberta. The proposed changes would build on the important work we've done to date. These changes would modernize the act and the AGLC to adapt to a marketplace that includes legalized cannabis. This would also

give the AGLC and law enforcement tools to better enforce the rules. There's been a good discussion about these changes so far.

5:00

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, legalization of cannabis represents a major shift for our province and our country. Passing the legislation will allow us to meet the expectations of Albertans as we continue to work towards putting in place a system that prioritizes public health and safety.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I would ask that all members support me in moving third reading.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak in support of third reading of Bill 6, the Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018. This bill is the third one to make changes to various acts to create an Alberta-made framework to deal with the legalization of recreational marijuana. Curiously, after years of hearing that legalization would come on Canada Day 2018, the federal government has suddenly gone quiet about the date marijuana will be legalized. But regardless of that date, Alberta has to be ready, so we have Bill 6 before us today for third and final reading.

I will point out that this bill is a bit of a hodgepodge as it also includes completely unrelated amendments to the liquor sales, but I'll keep my remarks focused on the cannabis-related sections. This bill includes marketing restrictions for marijuana and has provisions to assist the Alberta gaming, liquor, and cannabis commission to handle a higher caseload of appeals. Bill 6 also fills holes in the act introduced last session, and as legalization comes closer, we will no doubt see the government introduce other amendments as more holes are discovered. We hope that that does not mean that the government is simply writing legislation as quickly as it can to get it on the table. This is a complex issue, and due diligence needs to take place.

This government claims its top concern is the safety of children and public health, but when reading Bill 6, it is clear the government has failed Alberta's families by refusing to align its public consumption rules on marijuana with alcohol rather than tobacco. At this point, when marijuana becomes legal, people will be able to walk down the road smoking it. I've said this before: you cannot walk the road with a beer. That's why so many municipalities are scrambling right now to consult with their citizens to pass bylaws with stronger restrictions. In the end, we'll see a patchwork of consumption rules around the province, making it hard for citizens to know if it's permissible for someone to be consuming marijuana in any given place such as parks and festivals. We've been trying to highlight this problem for months, and the government has chosen to ignore it.

Bill 6 does contain some positive sections, most particularly allowing prosecutions based on evidence that a substance had an odour of cannabis or appeared to be labelled or packaged as cannabis. This section does align with the rules for liquor and is particularly important for the strict rules regarding transporting marijuana in vehicles. When the federal government legalizes edible cannabis products, allowing officers to identify them through packaging and smell will prove particularly important. The addition of this section is a common-sense amendment, likely inadvertently left out of last fall's Bill 26, and will be important when enforcing the minor ticketed offences of youth possessing cannabis, improper transport in a vehicle, and consumption in the public and restricted places identified in Bill 26.

This government has been silent, however, on the issue of possessing marijuana in schools. The problem is that students aged 17 and under can't possess marijuana at all, but students 18 and over can possess up to 30 grams, and although last fall's Bill 26 restricts anyone from smoking it on or comparatively near school grounds, there's nothing that prevents them from having it in their possession at school. This is the kind of public safety issue that I believe the government has failed to address. Perhaps it plans to address this issue in some other way, but I ask the government to let parents and school boards know now. Alberta United Conservatives will continue to monitor marijuana use in our province and deal with concerns such as this one and bring them to the government. We cannot take for granted that laws enacted today, prior to legalization, will take care of all of the issues that may arise. While this government has told us that its priorities are children and public health, we want to see those assurances reflected in legislation.

Madam Speaker, I now want to address another serious public safety issue relating to driving. Police chiefs are telling us that there are deficits in training and the tools to keep Albertans safe on our roads postlegalization. A special concern is that, unlike with alcohol, there's no roadside device that has been approved for reading levels of THC. We keep hearing about public safety being the most critical aspect of all legislation that is going through Ottawa and here in this Legislature, yet we know our roads will become more dangerous when marijuana is legalized. The Transportation minister, to his credit, admitted that when he unveiled amendments to the Traffic Safety Act in Bill 29 to include drug impairment administration sanctions. Ensuring that police are prepared to handle legalization is a critical component.

This government has admitted that the lion's share of the cost of implementing legalized marijuana will fall to municipalities. Edmonton and Calgary, for instance, have both pegged the cost of planning, zoning, and administration as well as bylaw policing and inspection services at \$9 billion to \$12 billion. The outstanding question, Madam Speaker, is just how much of the tens of millions of dollars the province will collect through the recently approved excise tax and how much of it will go to the municipalities. The Premier has stated that the first few years of legalized marijuana will likely be a net loss despite these revenues from this tax estimated to reach \$80 million in the first full year of legalization. I urge this government not to dismiss municipalities. They are carrying a huge burden, and they want to do everything right for their citizens. For instance, they are having to step in and create public consumption bylaws for parks and streets because this government would not do so.

Another aspect of public safety includes ensuring that a retail regime stamps out the black market. The black market means organized crime, and that brings deep-seated trouble for Albertans. A goal of legalization is to erase the black market, which they control by offering a safe product by legitimate retailers. Price, however, must also compete with the black market. That's why the tax on the sale of each gram is important. Ironically, thanks to the previous Conservative government, which refused to implement a sales tax, Alberta will have the lowest cost marijuana in Canada since the price of a gram has been set at \$8 by the federal government, with the dollar excise tax added on. The only variables are the various sales and harmonized taxes.

Bill 6 also allows the AGLC to add a markup to the price of cannabis. It is something we'll have to watch carefully if we want to make and keep the black market irrelevant. I certainly hope that this NDP government, which likes to surprise Albertans with unexpected taxes, does not look at the markup as an opportunity for revenues. For although legalized marijuana may not have been the choice of everyone, eradicating the black market and organized

crime that controls it can be one of the positive effects to come out of this process.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, legalizing a new recreational drug is a complex, multilayered issue. We hope that when legalized marijuana rolls out in a few months, the government does not hesitate to address any outstanding issues. In closing, I urge the government to view municipalities as partners in the rollout of this cannabis framework and always hold up the safety of children, families, and citizens as the most important objective when crafting legislation and then monitoring how legislation and regulations are affecting their lives for the better.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

5:10

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. minister to close debate.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think a great deal has been said about this bill, so I will be brief on this one. Just to address the comments made by the hon. member opposite, I think that in terms of the saliva-testing devices I would reiterate that we, too, have concerns around that. Unfortunately, we don't have jurisdiction to alter the legalization date, which is a bit of a moving target at this moment, as I am speaking. What we did commit to do as a government is to ensure that we had an Alberta-specific model in place in time for that legalization, whenever it may turn out to be, and we will do that.

Madam Speaker, I think the other comment I would like to make is that when this decision was made by the federal government, this government, our government, committed to taking into account the views and values of Albertans, so we went out with one of the largest consultations I think that we have ever had. We came back, and we implemented the model that Albertans told us they wanted to see implemented.

I know the hon. member had indicated that potentially there's a problem with parks. I did want to reiterate that our model ensures that there are restrictions around anywhere you would ordinarily find children, so things like play parks, splash parks, that sort of thing, that restrict smoking in those areas. That model was very well supported by Albertans. When we went back to them and said, you know, "Is this the model that you support?" we received 73 per cent support for that. We said that we would do it, and that is what we did.

With that, I will close debate on this issue. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

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

Bill 5 An Act to Strengthen Financial Security for Persons with Disabilities

The Chair: Are there any questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. You know, as we get back into this after having a long break, I just wanted to take a quick moment as we get going with debate, and I'm sure we'll have comments on what I'm sure will be some expected

amendments. I want to just start off on a real positive note that thus far in this debate the debate in this House has been quite good. It has been wholesome, and I think we've done a really good job of considering the various parts of this bill. Of course, I have to admit to a certain bias for this bill because it is pretty much verbatim my private member's bill, Bill 211. I wanted to thank all members of the Chamber for the great debate we've had on this thus far.

With that, I look forward to hearing more debate on this bill in Committee of the Whole. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 5, An Act to Strengthen Financial Security for Persons with Disabilities. As I've said in the House on a number of occasions, I'm pleased to support the legislation.

You'll know, Madam Chair, that I was a little bit disappointed to see the amendment that we had proposed that would have provided for a little bit of additional flexibility amongst those who have the benefit of a trust as well as receiving AISH to not have an amount of money that would be drawn from the trust on a monthly basis have a negative impact on their eligibility for AISH – I was a little bit disappointed to see that the minister was unable to create a pathway where that could be possible. While the amendment may not have been perfect, I think that certainly the minister has the ability and has the capacity to do so, and it was unfortunate to see him not make that possible. I know that I heard from a lot of stakeholders who certainly would have preferred to see that.

As well, there is essentially no net cost or impact to the taxpayer, so it's unfortunate that we weren't able to find a win-win situation, a win-win for those who are both eligible for AISH and have a Henson trust. You know, these are the types of things where we should be looking to find ways to say yes, but unfortunately in this case the government found a way to say no and didn't endeavour to find a way to say yes on something that we could have got accomplished here during this period of debate. So that was a bit disappointing.

I know that I heard from some stakeholders afterwards who were appreciative of the advocacy that we had done, just like they appreciate the advocacy that the Member for Calgary-Currie has done on this particular piece of legislation. You know, he's done a significant amount of work, and I appreciate the work that he's done and will continue to do on not only this bill but also this very important issue.

We're happy to support this legislation, that will give much-needed peace of mind to families of disabled Albertans, knowing that any inheritance they leave to their children will not disqualify them from AISH benefits. You know, as a matter of fact, it's a little bit surprising that that wasn't the case already, so I appreciate that we've made it to be the case.

Advocates in the disability community have made it clear that they support this legislation, and we are committed to amplifying their voices here in the House. I think it's important that we listen to stakeholders, that we consult. I know that this government hasn't had the best track record on consultation, but on this particular piece of legislation I think that they've done a fair and reasonable job, with the exception of the amendment that they refused to pass, that would have had a major impact and benefit on the quality of life of so many Albertans that have the benefit of a Henson trust as well as receiving AISH benefits.

We're pleased to see that the government has included the one-year grace period to allow AISH recipients time to navigate the financial system, to make informed choices as they inherit funds in discretionary and nondiscretionary trusts without their monthly

AISH benefit being impacted. You know, any time that individuals suffer loss and, as such, have an inheritance, particularly in the form of a trust, we need to be able to give them some time and ability to make the best available decisions for them and their families.

The government has done a fair and reasonable job with respect to this piece of legislation. You know, it's not perfect. Unfortunately, it's difficult to make legislation that is perfect. There are certainly some cases that we raised some concerns around with respect to cognitive ability and the type of discretionary or nondiscretionary fund and whether or not there need to be checks and balances. I don't believe that those have been addressed in the legislation. I'm not sure if we can legislate for every inevitability, but we certainly should be endeavouring to do so wherever possible.

5:20

I'd also just like to briefly remind the House on some of the challenges of the exempt and nonexempt considerations and that we need to be aware that these exist going forward. You know, I believe that it's reasonable for us to review these types of legislation over a period of time to make sure that we have the exemptions correct. I think it's reasonable that we do that as governments on a regular basis, that we review the types of things that are exempt. Perhaps in the future there would be an opportunity to correct this issue around individuals who have the trust as well as are on AISH benefits, for them to receive an exemption for a monthly amount that they could withdraw from the trust.

On balance, I think that we have a good piece of legislation here. Albertans have been asking for it for quite a significant period of time, so I look forward to supporting it here in Committee of the Whole.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to rise for my final comments on a progressive piece of legislation that I think will not cost the government anything and will help clients significantly. I presume, having said that, there will be more people coming on the roster who weren't eligible before because this is extending the capacity of these individuals to receive monies while being on AISH, which is good, some of those folks who formerly were excluded. It's going to be interesting to know how many the minister is expecting to come on and what that might mean for the program.

I realize that he is expending more dollars for AISH this year with the new budget – all good – but the living allowance has not been increased since 2012. There's been a significant increase in the cost of living and inflation since 2012. As the government in opposition railed against the Conservatives at the time, and as I have raised more than once in the House, we need to index the AISH benefits. These folks deserve to be able to stay abreast of the significant cost of living in Alberta today and the inflation that goes along with a growing economy such as we have.

Under current law Albertans with assets totalling more than \$100,000 weren't eligible to receive AISH, although there are exemptions for such things as a residence and vehicles for disability. It's important to remember that the AISH benefits end at age 65, and this is an important added support for people and their parents and their other extended family who want to see more stability and security for their future. Close to 62,000 Albertans receive AISH benefits today if my numbers are still accurate.

There's no question, in my mind, Madam Chair, that this is positive for Albertans and especially for those who need some

security into the future. Like many, particularly without the added resources to these folks since 2012, I was disappointed that the government did not accept some increase in the eligibility of supplementary funds beyond the \$800 a month to allow these folks to enjoy a higher standard, especially at this time.

I am certainly hearing from people in my community on AISH who are struggling with the current monthly income, so I hope the government will take under advisement the important steps towards indexing our AISH payments and show the world, especially those people who are on disability. Most of the people on disability obviously don't have this kind of a legacy opportunity. This is a small proportion of all the people on AISH who can benefit from a trust fund. Let's take a serious look at the needs of the majority of people on AISH.

To give credit where credit is due, this government has done a lot for people on the margins, for those families and those individuals. Certainly, it's the legacy of the Conservative government before that really neglected services for many of these disadvantaged people. I do recognize that this government has done more than governments in the past, but we're falling behind. These folks at the very least need to have their income indexed to protect them against the inflation and cost-of-living increases that we're all absorbing, but for many of us it hasn't caused serious quality-of-life changes.

I'll certainly be supporting this, Madam Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this time.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to Bill 5? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise today to introduce an amendment to Bill 5, which seeks to improve quality of life for persons with disabilities by allowing them to keep more of what they earn due to increases in minimum wage. I move that Bill 5, An Act to Strengthen Financial Security for Persons with Disabilities, be amended by striking out section 1(3) and substituting the following:

- (3) Section 12(1) is amended
 - (a) by striking out clause (c) and substituting the following:
 - (c) respecting the determination of the income of an applicant or client and his or her cohabiting partner, including providing for an increase in the amount of the allowable deductions from employment income in circumstances where an increase in income is attributable to an increase in the hourly minimum wage established under the Employment Standards Code;
 - (b) by adding the following after clause (d):
 - (d.1) designating assets for the purposes of section 3.1(b)(ii).

The Chair: This will be amendment A2.
Go ahead, hon. member.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair. Unlike most minimum wage earners, who get to keep most of their minimum wage increases, when the minimum wage increases for AISH recipients, it counts against their benefits. When the minimum wage increases, those who work face the choice of being able to work and contribute less to their communities or having their government support reduced. In both cases they lose purchasing power and quality of life as the prices of basic household goods increase due to inflation. While other minimum wage earners at least have a chance of keeping up with inflation, the total maximum of earned and supported income for AISH beneficiaries has not increased since 2012.

This amendment would index the amount that an AISH beneficiary can earn to increases in minimum wage so that they do

not lose out on purchasing power every time the minimum wage increases. This isn't a perfect solution in that AISH beneficiaries earning above minimum wage may not benefit directly from this indexing, but we can do better for Albertans by ensuring that those many AISH beneficiaries who earn minimum wage can do so without worry that their spending power will be continuously eroded. It also bolsters the ability and pride of AISH beneficiaries in working and contributing to their communities.

I know this amendment would mean a lot to AISH recipients, who often struggle to get by. Madam Chair, I urge all members of the House to support this compassionate amendment for an important group of Albertans.

The Chair: Any members wishing to speak to amendment A2? Calgary-Mountain View.

5:30

Dr. Swann: Well, thank you, Madam Chair. This is a very creative and timely option, particularly as it's been six years since there's been any increase in the monthly income for AISH people. This provides a very rational and income-based alternative to the earlier comments I made about indexing this monthly stipend they receive. It's something that I hope the government will seriously entertain and adopt because it's truly adding to the support, that these folks, who are actually below the poverty line – the reality is that they live below the poverty line; these folks are not getting away with anything – have supplements to what they're currently getting. Even once their income is brought up with the cost of living, if it ever happens that they get indexing, this particular adjustment will simply be a part of that calculation when costs of living and inflation are brought into the considerations for these folks. It's eminently sensible and helpful, and I think we should be adopting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I would like to thank the member opposite and, in fact, all of them for their contribution to the discussion on Bill 5. We have discussed Bill 5 over the last few weeks. I continue to be proud of the strength of this legislation. The foundation of this bill comes from the important work, important consultations that were done by my colleague the MLA for Calgary-Currie and the contributions of disability advocates and Alberta families across this province. Bill 5 would allow Albertans with disabilities and their families to plan for the future. It will provide them access to the same tools all Albertans have to save and provide for their families.

While the amendment that has been proposed is outside the scope of the intent of the bill and not what individuals and families were consulted on, I value its intent. Unfortunately, however, this amendment doesn't actually accomplish what it intends to as it wouldn't change anything for AISH clients for the most part. What this amendment does is to refer to an authority which already exists. This amendment doesn't speak to what the threshold should be or to what kind of change is needed, and passing this amendment would not make a huge difference in the lives of Albertans who count on AISH. Regardless, as I said, I value what I think the intent was, to make this program better.

There are 60,000 Albertans who rely on this program, who get supports from this program: a living allowance of \$1,588 and other benefits, including health benefits – the costs of dental, optical, prescription drugs – and some of the costs of child care. It's a comprehensive program. Any changes that should be made: I believe that we need to make them in a thoughtful manner and in

consultation with the community. Right now, with whatever information we have, we know that a little over 15 per cent of people who receive support from AISH have employment income. As I said, any potential change would need consultation and would need to ensure that it benefits all Albertans and wouldn't create any unintended consequences. I'm sure that members opposite will understand that there is a need for more analysis, and I have heard a suggestion from other colleagues as well.

We have done a number of things to improve this program. Like, in the last four budgets we have added \$103 million to make sure that Albertans get the support they need. We also put forward an AISH action plan, which will make sure that this program is accessible to Albertans.

I can say that these are all very good suggestions. As government we have always said that we are absolutely committed to looking at our programs to make sure they respond to the needs of Albertans. I thank the member. I will certainly take back their suggestion and will look at that at a later time.

Thank you very much. I will ask members at this point to vote against this amendment.

The Chair: Any other speakers to the amendment? Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the input from my colleague from Calgary-Mountain View and the minister. I would question: if the authority already exists to increase the amount of money that an AISH recipient can earn without being penalized, if the power to increase that allowance already exists, I wonder why it hasn't been done already. AISH recipients are the least able to be able to do anything about their circumstances. As my colleague pointed out, many people who receive AISH are living below the poverty line, and they're dealing with disabilities on top of being impoverished. That seems like incredibly unfair circumstances to leave people in if you have the power to make it different for them.

Dr. Swann: Even a small improvement.

Ms McPherson: It is indeed a small improvement.

Bill 5 is a good bill. However, my understanding is that the number of PDD recipients that would actually be positively impacted by this bill is less than 1 per cent. If we have the opportunity today, to use the minister's statistic, for 15 per cent of AISH recipients, if we can improve their quality of life today, I cannot think of any good reason to not go ahead and approve this amendment. I wonder if there are any AISH recipients that would disagree with me. I am very confident that if we were to poll AISH recipients, we would get close to a hundred per cent support for this sort of amendment today. For those reasons, I implore all MLAs to please vote in favour of this amendment.

The Chair: Any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? Seeing none, I'll call the vote.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

The Chair: Back on the main bill, are there further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to the bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question?

[The remaining clauses of Bill 5 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. At this time I would move that we rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

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

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 5. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report?

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Any opposed, say no. So ordered.

5:40

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

(continued)

Bill 17

Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2018

[Adjourned debate May 10: Mr. Panda]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to move third reading of Bill 17, the Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.

I also want to thank the members of the Assembly for their thoughts and debate in regard to this bill. As we've heard, Alberta's tax laws are typically reviewed every year and amended to ensure that government policy decisions are implemented and that the integrity of our tax system is maintained. This bill will maintain consistency between federal and Alberta legislation, align provincial legislation with administrative practices, address technical deficiencies, and repeal expired provisions.

I'd encourage all members of the House to support the bill. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, the hon. minister to close debate.

Mr. Ceci: Closed.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a third time]

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

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Seeing the excellent progress we have made today and over the last several days, I would move that we call it 6 o'clock and adjourn until 7:30 this evening.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:42 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Statement by the Speaker	
Page Recognition.....	1335
Introduction of Visitors	1335
Introduction of Guests	1335, 1352
Members' Statements	
Farmer's Day.....	1337
Official Opposition and Government Fiscal Policies.....	1337
Off-highway Vehicle Users' Public Land Access	1345
Climate Leadership Plan.....	1345
Premier's Former Chief of Staff's Consulting Contract	1346
Supervised Drug Consumption Site in Lethbridge	1346
Oral Question Period	
Trans Mountain Pipeline Public Purchase	1337, 1339, 1343
Provincial Response to Pipeline Opposition.....	1338
Multiple Sclerosis Research and Treatment	1340
Provincial Debt-servicing Costs	1340
Mathematics Education	1341
Premier's Former Chief of Staff's Consulting Contract	1342, 1344
Educational Curriculum Review Participants	1342
Adverse Possession of Property.....	1343
Accessibility Initiatives	1344
Notices of Motions	1346
Tabling Returns and Reports	1346
Tablings to the Clerk	1346
Requests for Emergency Debate	
Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Completion	1348
Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Support	1351
Orders of the Day	1352
Government Bills and Orders	
Third Reading	
Bill 9 Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act	1352
Division	1355
Division	1360
Bill 6 Gaming and Liquor Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.....	1360
Bill 17 Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2018.....	1364
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 5 An Act to Strengthen Financial Security for Persons with Disabilities	1361

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