



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, May 28, 2019

Day 4

The Honourable Nathan Cooper, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature**

First Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP), Speaker
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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
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Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)
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Ganley, Kathleen T., Calgary-Mountain View (NDP)
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Glasgo, Michaela L., Brooks-Medicine Hat (UCP)
Glubish, Hon. Nate, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (UCP)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP)
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Gottfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
Guthrie, Peter F., Airdrie-Cochrane (UCP)
Hanson, David B., Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul (UCP)
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Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP),
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Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UCP),
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Toor, Devinder, Calgary-Falconridge (UCP)
Turton, Searle, Spruce Grove-Stony Plain (UCP)
van Dijken, Glenn, Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock (UCP)
Walker, Jordan, Sherwood Park (UCP)
Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)
Wilson, Hon. Rick D., Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin (UCP)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Tyler Shandro	Minister of Health
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Nixon, Jeremy
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Vacant
Vacant

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Singh
Smith
Turton
Yaseen

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a school group from Landing Trail intermediate school of Athabasca. They are accompanied by their teachers: Shauna Bredo, Heather Gulka, and Dallas Fuchs. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you and welcome. Had the chance of saying a brief hello. Mr. Fuchs' parents are constituents of the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. It's a pleasure to have you.

The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a couple of constituents from my riding of Taber-Warner. I'd like to have them please rise as I say their names. I would like to introduce Melody Garner-Skiba, the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers; Caitlin Sparrow, with Kate Andrews high school; Janae Smyth with Kate Andrews high school as well; and Colleen Gensorek, with Kate Andrews high school as well. Please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member. It's my hope that the sugar beet growers can make you just a little bit sweeter, sir.

Edmonton-Whitemud, please.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly two guests in the gallery today. Kathy Rickett is the director of Edmonton northwest early learning and child centre, located in the fantastic riding of Edmonton-Glenora. Deborah Fehr is the pedagogical partner for the centre, who coaches the centre in implementing Flight, Alberta's early learning and child care framework, and, I understand, also a constituent of the wonderful constituency of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. The centre is one of 100 across the province that is part of the \$25-per-day daycare pilot program implemented by the previous government. The centre offers exceptional quality and affordable child care to working families. I would like to ask Kathy and Deborah to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

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

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to stand before you and introduce my aunt and uncle Chuck and Cindy Harper. They've come all the way from Vernon, British Columbia; they used to live in Calgary, Alberta. Although they are not blood relatives to me, they essentially have been like a second mother and father to myself and the minister of environment and worked alongside my parents in helping to build the Mustard Seed down in Calgary and have dedicated their lives to the service of the poor in our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This being National Paramedic Services Week, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you Genevieve Marshall, an Edmonton metro EMS paramedic who worked for four years in rural Alberta before coming to serve here in Edmonton since 2008. She is the co-chair of the Edmonton metro section of the Health Sciences Association of Alberta. This being perhaps my last opportunity to make an introduction in this House, it's an honour to recognize her service and that of all her colleagues during this week. I'd ask that all give her the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Member for Peace River.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mark Jones, the CEO of the Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre. Mark is not only the advocacy centre's CEO but also a long-time family friend. The work that he does, which is the sister organization to Sheldon Kennedy's organization in Calgary, supports the recovery of youth and the families associated with them who have suffered abuse, helping promise them the possibility of a healthy future. Mark, I ask that you rise and receive the traditional and warm welcome from this House.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

High School Graduation 2019 Grande Prairie Stompede

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and congratulate the graduating class of 2019. High school commencement ceremonies have been held over successive weekends in Grande Prairie at Peace Wapiti academy, Grande Prairie composite high school, Charles Spencer high school, l'école Nouvelle Frontière, and St. Joseph Catholic high school.

It was a tremendously proud moment for me and my husband, Serge, along with our family to celebrate this past weekend the commencement of our son Alexander from Charles Spencer high school. I would like to take this opportunity to thank his teachers for their investment in the children and their excellent instruction. I know our children have been challenged and supported to grow in their logic and reasoning skills as well as their extracurricular pursuits, including athletics and music. Thank you to each member of the faculty and staff for your personal investment in our youth. We are blessed to live in such a vibrant community and grateful to celebrate another graduation in our family personally.

I would like to commend all graduates from the city of Grande Prairie as well as across the province of Alberta on this achievement and wish them every success in their future endeavours. I wish to remind all graduates and their escorts to be safe and responsible in this season of celebration and to refrain from drinking and driving.

May is a very busy month in Grande Prairie. In addition to the high school commencement ceremonies, Grande Prairie is once again hosting Stompede. Yes, I said Stompede, not stampede. That was not an accident. Stompede is our annual rodeo from May 29 to June 2. Held at Evergreen Park, Stompede events include rodeo and chuckwagon events as well as a midway. Recent years have seen as many as 50,000 people attending over the five days of Stompede. This event was first held in Grande Prairie in 1977, and we celebrated our millionth visitor in 2014. The chuckwagon races at Stompede serve as the opening event of the World Professional

Chuckwagon Association's season. I'm excited to attend this weekend as the new Member for Grande Prairie, and I would like to wish everyone a successful run in their competitions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud is rising.

Affordable Child Care

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to have Kathy Rickett and Deborah Fehr of the Edmonton northwest early learning and child care centre in the Chamber today. Just recently I met with them about our government's \$25-per-day daycare program and heard incredible stories about the difference affordable child care has made for families across Alberta.

Because of our investments, 100 \$25-per-day child care centres like theirs have helped almost 6,000 children, and 1,200 more parents are able to enter the workforce. Albertans don't need to choose between diapers and paying their child care bills. Families don't have to make a second mortgage payment every month just for child care costs. Women, like myself, who want to return to work or have to return to work have the opportunity to do so.

But for far too long this hasn't been possible. Working parents in Alberta have been left behind by previous Conservative governments that believe investing in affordable and high-quality child care is a waste. The Premier himself has openly criticized affordable child care and has said that he prefers, quote, a parent at home. End quote. We all know what that means. It means the mother should stay home. While for some families having a parent stay at home is the right choice, the point is that there should be a choice. It should not be imposed on Alberta families or specifically women because of the lack of affordable and accessible child care.

There was no mention of child care in the throne speech or in the UCP platform. This government has clearly shown that they don't want to make life more affordable for families. They are more committed to tax cuts for corporations than they are to the care of our children. This government says that they care about jobs, but they're ignoring that one of the largest barriers to women participating fully in the workplace is affordable child care. It seems that only some workers are worthy of this government's attention, and it isn't women.

I will continue to advocate for accessible child care so that all Alberta families have the freedom to make the choice that is right for them.

Provincial Election 2019

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Mr. Speaker, in the recent election I personally knocked on almost every door in Calgary-Klein, and I almost completed that feat twice. At the doors I talked with hundreds of people who were either facing unemployment or whose small businesses were struggling. If not personally impacted by the downturn, they knew someone who was going through tough times. I heard of students graduating university looking at moving out of the province because there was no employment for them here or parents forced into early retirement with insufficient savings.

1:40

My constituents elected me because of our plan to restore business confidence in Alberta and to get Alberta back to work. That's why I'm happy to say that our government has wasted no time in pulling the levers that will allow for prosperity and growth to return to Alberta. The acts proposed – Bill 1, repealing the carbon tax act; Bill 2, make Alberta open for business; Bill 3, the job-creation tax cut act; and Bill 4, red tape reduction act – are a solid

start to fulfilling our duties of restoring investor confidence and helping Alberta grow. Promise made, promise kept.

I made an additional promise at the doors. Contrary to the rhetoric that they were hearing from our opponents, my constituents did not have to choose between a strong economy and excellence in government services nor supports for the vulnerable. In fact, we cannot have one without the other. A strong economy allows the opportunity for us to help build up our community. That is why I'm so proud of what I have dubbed our compassion platform and the eagerness of this government to immediately start to invest in supports for mental health and addiction recovery. I look forward to fulfilling my promise to my community and always being a strong voice for the vulnerable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Affordable Housing

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Since this is the first time that I've spoken in the 30th Legislature, I just want to congratulate all the members on their election; and secondly, my heartfelt thanks to the citizens of Edmonton-Riverview for supporting me for a second term.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans have a lot to be proud of. We are a province of hard-working citizens. We support our families and serve our communities. However, at times, despite our best efforts, we may need assistance. I know this first-hand. As a young single mom returning to school, I was fortunate to live in subsidized housing while completing my social work education. Subsidized housing meant my children and I lived in secure and appropriate housing while I laid the groundwork for a better future for our family. I would say that that investment on my behalf was well worth it. It was worth it for my three sons and the clients I served as a social worker and the constituents I now serve as an MLA.

Our NDP government took bold action while in office, investing \$1.2 billion in affordable housing. We created our province's very first affordable housing strategy. As the Minister of Seniors and Housing at that time, I was extremely proud to oversee this work. We know that having a place to call home is fundamental to a bright future.

Sadly, too many Albertans do not have the access to affordable housing that I had many years ago. Successive Conservative governments did not make affordable housing a priority, significantly neglecting the sector. Recently I was very disappointed to hear that the current Conservative government is intent on leaving many Albertans behind. Rather, they are rushing to give huge tax giveaways to corporations.

I call on this government to not repeat the past but, rather, ensure that Albertans have the affordable housing they need.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche.

High Level Area Wildfire Response

Ms Goodridge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the fires in northern Alberta rage on, we have heard countless stories of generosity of Albertans who are helping friends, neighbours, and strangers as they leave their homes. Alberta's generous spirit continues to be shown during the hard times across Alberta, and I am pleased to rise and celebrate this great Alberta trait.

As I watch these people help others by finding them places to stay, donating to not-for-profit organizations that support the evacuees, and volunteering at centres to make people comfortable,

it is easy for me to think of the outpouring of support Albertans gave to my very own community of Fort McMurray just three short years ago. I am proud to share that several of my community members are now returning the favour, packing trailers with supplies and delivering them to evacuees across northern Alberta, including all the way up to Fort Vermilion.

To the towns who have taken in these evacuees and have made them feel safe and provided for, you are doing a great service by making them temporarily part of your community. I am confident that they are extremely grateful for all you are doing.

To the organizations, big and small, that work to ensure evacuees have access to daily necessities while away from home, we are so incredibly grateful. Organizations such as the Red Cross and the High Level food bank have been accepting donations from across the province to ensure that these displaced families have everything they need to support their families.

Thank you to our front-line staff, including the firefighters who have come from across our country to assist as we fight these fires. I know that you will experience the heartfelt gratitude of Albertans and their generous spirit. You are, without a doubt, heroes.

Thank you.

Labour Legislation

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, I believe that every worker deserves basic workplace rights to ensure that they go home safely at the end of the day, including workers who put food on our tables. I was dismayed when I heard that this government planned to roll back farm workers' rights with their third bill of this legislative session. I am glad to see that they are now looking at fall legislation. I would ask that they would reconsider these rollbacks altogether.

I'm very concerned about the plan to repeal Bill 6 and replace it with the proposed farm freedom and safety act. Despite indicating that they would launch comprehensive consultations for this act, they've already predetermined two crucial pieces of the legislation that will impact farm workers: farmers would be able to choose not to join the WCB system and instead purchase private insurance; small farms would be exempt from most employment legislation. Mr. Speaker, I'm confused. How can you have meaningful and comprehensive consultations if you have already determined the outcome?

Small farms, as we know, are the backbone of Alberta's agricultural industry. Exempting small farms from employment legislation would deny many farm workers basic protections. Do the people who help put food on our table not deserve workplace rights to be protected by WCB? This plan puts both farmers and farm workers at risk. Private insurance is designed for profit, not for the worker. These companies will favour farms with low claim rates, creating a culture of not reporting injuries, transferring the burden on to the worker. In addition, employers or paid farm workers will not be protected as they are under WCB from the liability of lawsuits resulting from workplace injuries or fatalities. One lawsuit can kill a family farm.

These rollbacks ignore the advice of the AgCoalition and the 28 agricultural produce groups it represents. Mr. Speaker, the previous government undertook extensive consultation with the AgCoalition and Albertans to create rules that make sense and that balance the need for flexibility for farmers and ranchers regarding safety with the need for a safe workplace for workers. Farm workers in other provinces have had workplace safety laws for decades. Alberta farm workers deserve to keep the rights they've only just gained. They are not second-class Canadians.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: Thank you. I see the hon. Minister of Finance, President of Treasury Board rising on introduction of a bill.

Bill 3

Job Creation Tax Cut (Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment) Act

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 3, the Job Creation Tax Cut (Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment) Act.

Alberta has seen investment in capital leave our province for the last few years. Our province can no longer boast of the most competitive business environment in the country. We intend to improve this situation by taking bold action to renew the Alberta advantage and help create jobs in our province. The proposed amendments are a central part of our plan to get Alberta working again. We are proposing to reduce Alberta's corporate tax rate by a third over the next four years. This measure will help to attract investment to Alberta and stimulate economic activity at a time when it is sorely needed. Reducing Alberta's corporate tax rate was one of our government's central commitments, and I am proud to bring this bill forward and take the next step in getting Albertans back to work.

I hereby move first reading of Bill 3, the job creation tax cut, and I look forward to providing more details shortly. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a first time]

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

2017 UCP Leadership Contest Investigation

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On October 26, 2017, the now Solicitor General warned of potential voter fraud in the UCP leadership race. On March 28, 2019, Albertans learned the RCMP is investigating allegations of voter fraud in the UCP leadership race. On May 26, 2019, the Solicitor General was interviewed about voter fraud in the UCP leadership race by the very police he directs, and today the Solicitor General likely attended a cabinet meeting with the Premier, his boss, who directs him. Is the Premier still claiming Albertans should not be worried about this conflict of interest?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, it's disappointing to continue to see the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition continue with the same tactic that failed for them during the election, fear and smear and Team Angry and that approach. Albertans aren't falling for them. Again, we respect the independence of the RCMP. The RCMP are doing their work. This government, Alberta's government, is focused on Albertans. I suggest the opposition start focusing on Albertans.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the member opposite does find it a bit embarrassing to have as many people in his caucus under RCMP investigation, but those are the facts, and he's just going to have to deal with them. Now, we did only find out that the Solicitor General was interviewed as a witness by the RCMP through the media yesterday. Will the Solicitor General please advise this House whether he has discussed the

substance of the interview between him and the RCMP, either directly or indirectly, with the Premier since the interview?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, we respect the independence of the RCMP. The foundation of our justice system is to have that independent process. As I've advised this Assembly yesterday, and as I've said publicly, the RCMP reached out to me. I met with them in my personal capacity. I am not under investigation. I was happy to assist them with their investigation. I answered their questions fully.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, he didn't answer the question, but I'll wait for another time to ask it again.

Now, the SG was pleased to breach his "this is with the police, so it would be inappropriate for me to comment" rule yesterday when he told the media that he is not a suspect in the investigation, so can the Solicitor General now inform this House if either his boss, the Premier, or anyone working on the campaign of his boss, the Premier, are suspects in the RCMP investigation into campaign fraud during the UCP leadership race?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again we have the opposition focused on fear and smear, not focused on government policy, asking about internal party matters in this place. It's all that the opposition has, and it's why they ended up on that side of the House. It's disappointing. I encourage the opposition to get to work on behalf of Albertans. We respect the independence of the RCMP. We respect their role. We'll let them do their work. We're going to focus on our work, which is focusing on Albertans. I suggest they do the same.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition for the second set of questions.

Corporate Taxation and Job Creation

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This UCP government is planning to ram through a tax cut for wealthy corporations that will leave a gaping \$4.5 billion hole in the budget, a hole this government will expect Alberta's kids, seniors, families, and patients to fill almost immediately. To the Premier: will you at least agree to put on the record that your own platform acknowledges that no new revenue will be generated by this reckless action for at least two years?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, we will not be lectured by this opposition, and we won't take, quite frankly, advice from them on this issue. They brought in the largest deficits in the history of this province. They completely messed up our finances. This government is focused on our platform. We made commitments to Albertans. We're going to be focused on getting our fiscal house in order, standing up for Alberta, getting them back to work. It's ridiculous for this opposition to even try to provide any advice given what a mess they've left our finances in.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To be fair to the Government House Leader, if my platform was as wrong-headed as his, I'd be tempted to fudge the answer just like he did, too.

But let's look at the dismal record of corporate tax cuts elsewhere. In the U.S. telecom giant AT&T promised President Trump that it would hire 7,000 new employees in exchange for a \$1 billion tax cut. Instead, they cut 23,000 jobs. So is that the kind of

business the Premier wants to be open for, and why should Albertans believe we won't be taken to the cleaners in exactly the same way?

The Speaker: I just might provide a cautionary note to the Leader of the Official Opposition. When making accusations like fudging, the language could move in the direction of unparliamentary.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, we won't be lectured by the opposition, who oversaw the largest job loss probably in the history of this province. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs under this government. This government, the new government, the Alberta government, has a plan with our tax cuts to bring in 55,000 jobs. We made a promise to Albertans that we will focus on getting them back to work. We will make things easier for job creators in this province. We're going to honour that promise. I understand that the opposition doesn't like that. It's too bad. We're not going in their direction, which is people out of work. We're going in our direction, which is getting people back to work. That's where we're focused.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we have lots of examples right here in Canada of how these things that they're planning don't work. The Premier's Conservative pals in Ottawa cut corporate taxes by 7 per cent over four years. Did it create jobs? Nope. But what it did do is that it left a \$500 billion stockpile of corporate cash that former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney described as, quote, dead money. To the Premier: it didn't work for you in Ottawa, so why are you punishing Albertans with your outdated, ideological plans designed only to help your friends, your insiders, and your donors?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, when the NDP was in government, they raised tax rates, and – guess what? – revenue went down. Do you know why that is? They punished employers. They made job loss all across the province. Employers and investment fled Alberta, moved away from here under their policies. We're going to bring forward the policies that we promised Albertans. We're going to bring forward job-creating tax cuts, we're focused on the economy, and we're going to get my constituents, your constituents, and their constituents back to work because we're not going to focus on their ridiculous policies.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of platforms, the Premier ran for years on a premise to balance the budget a year earlier than our government had planned to, 2022 to be precise. Now, I always thought that that was a bad idea for many reasons, but the Premier told Albertans repeatedly that that's what he was going to do. And now it's not. To the Premier: will he now admit that his timeline to balance the budget is exactly the same as our government's was, that he likely knew that all along but he told Alberta voters something else in order to get elected?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've committed all along that we intend to bring this province back to balance by '22-23, which will be the last year of our first term. We have found the finances to be in difficult order as a result of the previous government's undoing of the finances of this province, but we will

be committed to deliver high-quality services and bring this province back to balance.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's the old "the previous government left the books in a mess" play. Never seen that before. You know what leaves the books in a mess? Going out and buying a \$4.5 billion tax cut for your friends, insiders, and donors. That's what leaves the books in a mess. To the Premier: if they've suddenly discovered that their big corporate tax gift is going to make it harder to balance the budget and they've already admitted it won't create jobs or revenue for at least two years, why won't the Premier delay a tax cut until they determine whether they can afford it?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, our tax cut will create 55,000 jobs. It'll bring investment back to Alberta. It's a promise that we made Albertans, and it's a promise that will be kept because the Alberta government is now focused on keeping promises for Albertans, unlike this opposition when they were in government, who ended up bringing in policies they never even campaigned on and then oversaw the largest devastation when it came to job loss inside this province. We're going in a totally different direction. That's where we're headed. I know that your constituents are happy about it, and I certainly know mine are as well.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you. You know, the Finance minister has said that we're facing economic headwinds, which is true, and he's admitting and has admitted that the election promise to balance by 2022 has changed a little bit, which is true. The Finance minister can't answer basic questions about funding education, funding municipalities, or public service negotiations, so why won't he admit that it is premature and irresponsible to move forward with a \$4.5 billion tax cut for his wealthy friends and PAC donors?

2:00

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, we were very clear with Albertans during the campaign that our government would be about job creation, about attracting investment back into this province, providing opportunity for all Albertans. We're committed to going in that direction, and this job-creation tax cut is about attracting investment again, investment that fled under the previous government. It's about attracting investment, creating those jobs, and leading to long-term revenue stability for this province.

The Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition, your last leader's question.

Worker Overtime Pay and Minimum Wage

Ms Notley: Thank you very much. Yesterday I asked the Premier why he is cutting the overtime of energy and construction workers hurt the most during the oil price crash. After accusing me of mudslinging, he then claimed his changes only reduce banked overtime to straight time at the request of the employee. The Premier is dead wrong. Bill 2 clearly permits employers to force employees to accept banked overtime with no premium. Will the Premier apologize to this House for misleading us and commit to amending Bill 2 so that employers cannot force their employees to hand over their overtime premium?

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The objective of this change is to provide flexibility for workers and employers. The old

policy led to many construction and seasonal employees having their overtime hours limited as a result of this policy. That meant they didn't earn the time at time and a half or have the ability to bank the time. By returning to a 1 to 1 banking ratio, this will provide greater flexibility for both the employer and the employees, and a written agreement is still required to take advantage of this provision.

Thank you.

Ms Notley: Well, yes, you're giving them more flexibility to get paid less. Way to go. Way to go.

Yesterday we heard from 16-year-old Karissa, a restaurant worker who will see her pay drop to \$13 per hour, a 13 per cent drop. Today the Premier is introducing legislation that will give that young girl's employer tax relief to the tune of a 33 per cent bump.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Point of order.

Ms Notley: To the Premier: isn't it enough that your tax gift to her boss is going to make Karissa's classroom more crowded and her university education more expensive? Do you need to cut her pay by 13 per cent, too? What do you have against young people?

The Speaker: I would just note that a point of order was called at 2:02.

The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The student job-creation wage is about creating jobs for Alberta's youth. When the minimum wage increased, many employers were forced to lay off workers, and unfortunately it was most often the inexperienced workers, the younger workers, that were impacted. By reducing costs on employers, we can help students get their first job to develop the skills and gain the experience that they need for the future.

Thank you.

Ms Notley: Well, you know, what's more concerning is that if Karissa dropped out of school or lied to her boss about whether she was in school, she would still be entitled to the \$15-an-hour minimum wage. Now, Karissa works hard at school, and she told reporters yesterday that she wasn't comfortable lying. She shouldn't be. Why is this Premier pitching a bogus policy that encourages young people to give up on their education or lie to their bosses about whether they're in school?

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration, please.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, this policy is about creating jobs for students. Under the previous government we actually had a reduction in jobs for young people, and currently we have a 4 per cent higher unemployment rate. By putting in this new student job-creation wage, we can actually create wages for employment. I'd actually like to point out that this program that we've based the Alberta program on has been in place in Ontario for approximately 20 years, and employees and employers have been able to work that out amongst themselves.

Thank you.

Provincial Fiscal Deficit

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, in the recent election our party and our now UCP MLAs made commitments to the people of Alberta to get our fiscal house in order. Specifically, we made the commitment to bring our provincial finances to balance by 2022. Can the Minister of Finance confirm that we are on track to deliver on this promise to Albertans?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member for this important question. We are committed to our promise and will balance the budget by 2022-23. We formed the MacKinnon panel of experts to objectively assess our fiscal reality and will be making smart budgetary decisions based on their recommendations.

Our government has also taken swift action to introduce the carbon tax repeal act and will very soon take further actions with the job-creation tax cut – in fact, we’ve done that already – and the Red Tape Reduction Act. Albertans can be sure we will deliver.

Mr. Loewen: Given that for the last four years under the NDP the principles of fiscal prudence and responsibility were not made a priority and given that this NDP mismanagement resulted in provincial debt approaching \$60 billion, can the Minister of Finance confirm that responsible fiscal management is and will remain a top priority for our government?

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even though we are committed to balancing the budget this term, it’s true that balancing will not be easy with the NDP out-of-control spending that we’ve inherited. Under the NDP Alberta was spending \$1,200 per person higher than the Canadian provincial average. We spent \$2,700 more per person than our neighbours in B.C. We are bringing back discipline, structure, and rigour to Alberta’s budget.

Mr. Loewen: Given that the government has appointed the MacKinnon panel to review our provincial finances and government spending and given that you have said that this work will be reflected in our next provincial budget, can you confirm that drawing up the path to balance without raising taxes is a key priority of the MacKinnon panel?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous government, who imposed the largest tax increase in Alberta’s history and still managed to drive us into crippling debt, we will not enforce a tax on our path to balancing the budget. We’re focused on renewing Alberta’s advantage and bringing business back to our province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Minimum Wage for Youth

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the campaign and including on election night this Premier told an emotional story about a 17-year-old young worker from Hardisty that he had met. This youth had told him that his father had lost his job and he was now working to help support the family. To the Premier: why are you proposing to cut the wages of hard-working young Albertans when you know from powerful, first-hand conversations that many youth, like this young man from Hardisty, are working to support their family?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, our Premier travelled all across this province for several years and has heard terrible stories like the hon. member is referring to. What he did learn during that time, I have no doubt, is how sad it is that under the NDP so many people have lost jobs, including young people at a disproportional rate. Our Premier brought forward a platform plan to help young people get back to work. We’ve campaigned on it, and a record number of

Albertans voted for it. That’s a promise made and a promise that will soon, hopefully, be kept by this Legislature.

Ms Gray: Given that the young woman we met yesterday named Karissa found herself in a very similar situation to that of the Hardisty youth as her father at one point was laid off from his job, can the Premier please explain directly to Karissa and other young workers who may need to help cover the family’s bills why he thinks it’s a good idea to cut their wages?

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the student job-creation wage is about creating opportunities for Alberta’s youth. By reducing costs on employers, we can help students get their first job to develop the skills and gain the experience that they need for the future. That’s what this change is about, that’s what we committed to in our platform, and that’s what we’re going to do.

Thank you.

Ms Gray: Given that cutting youth wages will not create new jobs and given that cutting student wages creates unequal pay for equal work and given that the student wage rate could actually incentivize vulnerable young Albertans to drop out of high school to get a \$2-per-hour raise, will the minister commit to sitting down with me so I can walk him through how devastating this pick-your-pockets bill is going to be for working Albertans? If not, may I join the minimum wage panel?

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, our focus is on creating opportunities for youth. Under the previous government there was actually a reduction. In the hospitality industry, for example, which largely employs the youth segment, there was a reduction of over 10,000 jobs. This change will create opportunities for youth. As to the member opposite, I would be happy to sit down with her and hear her concerns.

2:10

Premier’s Travel to Ontario

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, it’s been more than a full week since 5,000 residents of High Level were forced from their homes due to a wildfire burning in close proximity to the town. Now, I want to give credit to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry for taking action to get these folks emergency funding on Friday. But I am concerned, frankly, that our Premier headed to Ontario again this past weekend while a major evacuation order remained in place. To the Premier: why did you not postpone the trip and stay here to monitor this emergency?

Mr. Madu: Thank you for that question. I can confirm to this particular House that the evacuation process has gone very well. It has actually been successful regardless of whether or not our Premier is here. [interjections] The government has experienced ministers like myself and the other member, and I can confirm to the House that this evacuation has gone extremely well. [interjections]

The Speaker: Members, we heard the question; we’ll hear the answer.

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, given that I can appreciate the Premier’s need to speak to the business community but given that the speech he gave was on Friday, I must ask the Premier why he decided to stay in Ontario until Sunday so that he could campaign for the

Conservative Party of Canada and why he feels that the people of Brampton are more important than the people of Beaver Lake?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of our ministers, our Premier, and the hard work that they're doing on this file. Again, we won't be lectured to by a party whose leader sat in this very spot right here the last time that there was a big fire going on and said to the then Leader of the Opposition, Brian Jean, that he was fearmongering while his house was burning down. I will take our government's approach any day. They should be ashamed for even raising this issue in this way. The Premier and the ministers are working very, very hard on this. It's a very important issue. The opposition should not be using it for partisan purposes.

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, given that there is really no excuse for partisan campaigning on a taxpayer-funded trip to Ontario on the same day that nearly 500 residents of a second community, Paddle Prairie, were forced from their homes, will the Premier apologize to those Albertans who expect him to be here managing an emergency rather than campaigning for his federal buddies?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, again, I'm proud of our Premier, and I'm proud of our ministers who responded to this very, very quickly. We're very concerned about the people of northern Alberta. We are monitoring this very closely. We're standing with them and putting in a policy that will help them as they go through this process.

Again, Mr. Speaker, as you know – you sat here – this party while in power told the former Leader of the Opposition while his house was burning down that he was fearmongering by asking a question in this place about the fire. They should be ashamed for even raising this in this way inside this Assembly.

The Speaker: The Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Driver's Licence Road Tests

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The online driver's test-booking program was radically altered by the NDP. Now the test-booking system is utterly dysfunctional. A registry manager said, and I quote: it is absolute garbage. It is not user friendly. Exam dates are not released into the system; it just says: no bookings available. People cannot get appointments for months in advance, if at all. Consequently, examinations are down 27 per cent over last year in Lacombe alone. Minister, what are you going to do to fix this NDP mess?

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

The Speaker: I would note the point of order at 2:14, please.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. He's right to point out that the previous government messed this file up on March 1 last year. Before March 1 there were 154 driver examiners on staff. After they made their changes, a few days later we were down to 73. That was in March, at the beginning of the busiest part of the year for drivers' examinations, that they had it cut in half. The hon. member is right. As a result, we are behind, but our government is working hard to catch up. We are about 90 per cent up to strength today.

Mr. Orr: Given that in Lacombe an examiner was sent to do an advanced test, and he admitted that he was not certified to do so, and the registry manager tried to advise the department and was told to mind her own business and given that last Tuesday an examiner showed up, but there were no appointments scheduled in the

booking system, so he sat all day and did nothing, and on another day three examiners showed up to do one exam, to the minister. The NDP have left drivers' examiners disorganized and some untrained. What is this minister's plan for the future of the instructor program?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. I will reiterate to the hon. member that we are committed to cleaning up this NDP mess. By the end of next month we will be up to 155 driver examiners. We are working through the booking system and the changes there to make it work better. We will stay in touch with the hon. member, and I would be happy to hear from him, the registry agent, the driver examiners, anybody, because frankly these changes were made without any planning. We are putting the pieces back together now that the previous government left messed up.

Mr. Orr: Given that a Lacombe entrepreneur over the years created and ran the driver test booking software and contributed to the economy and jobs in Alberta but the NDP unilaterally cancelled his contract, did not allow him to bid on the new system, and awarded the new, dysfunctional contract to an American company, exporting jobs, to the minister: in support of Alberta tech and jobs, will you review that contract and launch a proper contract bid process?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for doing research on this. For the record an open request for a proposal was administered by the government in 2016. The successful proponent was a software company actually based out of Medicine Hat, which has since been sold to a U.S. company. What it comes down to is that we will keep working with that company. Tech support is still provided out of Medicine Hat, and I thank the hon. member for his concern about jobs based in Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall has a question.

Oil Transportation by Rail

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are still awaiting decisions on Trans Mountain, and there have been delays with construction of Keystone XL and the line 3 expansion. Now we are reading reports that the Premier intends to legislate away the oil-by-rail deals we signed earlier this year. Those deals are due to generate nearly \$6 billion in economic return for this province. Why is it that this Premier continues to put his ideology and election rhetoric over the economic well-being of Albertans?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, what a ridiculous question. This Premier has been more focused on this issue than this government ever has been. On his first day in office he got on a plane and flew to Ottawa and fought for us on this issue, which is where the fight is, whereas when this opposition was in power, they spent their time trying to shore up Justin Trudeau. This government will continue to be focused on getting this pipeline built. We're focused on getting people back to work. We're focused on jobs. We're focused on pipelines. It is ridiculous to hear this question inside this Assembly.

The Speaker: Might I just remind the Government House Leader to pass your comments through the chair.

The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that thousands and thousands of jobs depend on this question, this contract, and it's not ridiculous at all.

Given that this Premier ran on a campaign of jobs, the economy, and pipelines and given that now he wants to cross his fingers and hope the private sector will ship our oil when they were not willing and able to do that in the past, can the Premier explain how his plan to rip up these contracts will help jobs, the economy, and our efforts to build pipelines?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, our government has been clear from the beginning: these contracts should not have been signed by the government of the day. They were rushed in by a desperate NDP government at the time on the eve of an election. There was no reason why private companies couldn't have stepped up to carry more oil by rail. Again, if these contracts cannot be transferred to the private sector on acceptable terms, our government will do what is necessary to protect Alberta taxpayers. As you know, that is the great difference between that party and this party. Our focus is on standing up for Albertans and Alberta taxpayers; their focus is on their ideological agenda.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you. Given that the Premier is literally putting the brakes on moving oil by rail, can you tell this House just one thing that you will do to move our products to market while we wait for pipelines? Just one thing.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the biggest thing we've done to help our oil and gas industry and our energy industry and all industries, for that matter, in Alberta was to get the NDP government voted out of office and to replace them with an Alberta government that is focused on Albertans, that is focused on jobs, that is focused on the economy, that is focused on pipelines, fighting for our energy industry and for the hard-working Albertans of this province. Instead of a former government who was focused on ideology and standing up for their ally Justin Trudeau, this new government is focused on standing up for Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

2:20 Springbank Reservoir Flood Mitigation Project

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Every day during the campaign we heard a different story from the UCP about flood mitigation. Some days they'd support the Springbank dam, some days they'd oppose it, and some days they'd do both in one day. Their flip-flop would be funny if it wasn't such a critical issue for Alberta's largest city and for the lives of so many Calgarians. To the Minister of Transportation. Enough is enough. Will you offer unqualified, one hundred per cent support for the Springbank dam?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question is rich from a government that did nothing on this file for four years. However, this early in the process I can tell the hon. member that we are working hard to get the answers to the questions left unanswered by their government to the federal environmental authorities and the provincial environmental authorities. We expect to have them there. The fact is that nothing can be built till we get permission from the environmental authorities, and we've already hired an expert to help us with that. We're already taking actions on what they failed to do.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you. Given, Mr. Speaker, that multiple studies have shown that the Springbank is the best, fastest, and most cost-effective way to protect Calgary from another flood and given the large amount of work that the previous government put into this file and given that Calgarians still remember the cost, both financial and emotional, of the floods and given that Calgary deserves a commitment from this government, will the minister stop dithering and start acting?

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, dithering is the definition of what the previous government did on this file for four years.

We were only sworn in for three days when we appointed an independent expert to look at where we are on this file to make sure it moves ahead after no action was going on by the previous government. Mr. Speaker, this is a high priority. We know, as they ought to know, that nothing can be done till we get those environmental approvals, and we are on the job.

Ms Ganley: Given, Mr. Speaker, that the MLA for Banff-Kananaskis is actively lobbying against the Springbank dam and given that during the campaign she told Albertans that the UCP was the only party not committed to the Springbank dam and given that the minister of culture has refused to endorse the project and that the Premier himself has said, quote, I'm not committed to any one proposal, what do you have to say to Calgarians worried about the future of their city?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would say that there's going to be some action where there was none in the past; second of all, I would say that our Member for Banff-Kananaskis is representing what she believes the views of her constituents are; and third, our government is committed to getting the approval done at the earliest stage. We've already hired an expert. We will get the answers to the questions the NDP did not answer in to the environmental assessment agencies. We will work to get this approved with the minimum possible delay, and we are already busy doing just that.

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

Transportation Infrastructure in Airdrie

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Almost 70,000 people live in my constituency and hometown of Airdrie. In fact, we're one of the fastest growing cities in all of Canada and have been for quite some time. The constituency of Airdrie-East is no longer the place you drive through to get to Calgary. Unfortunately, though, Airdrie and area have seen very little investment from the provincial government for years, and transportation infrastructure has not been able to keep up with growth. Minister, my constituents in Airdrie-East want to know where transportation projects fall on the priority list.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is advocating for her constituency, as she ought to be. I can tell the hon. member that we are going through the budget approval process and the capital planning process, which is no easier with the \$60-billion-in-debt mess left behind by the previous government. But, that being said, I acknowledge that the transportation issues around Airdrie are important. We've been working with a number of

municipalities in the area to review the infrastructure needs for the area, and we will not delay in coming to a conclusion on this.

The Speaker: The Member for Airdrie-East.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. That's the most attention that Airdrie has had for transportation needs in the past four years.

Given that Airdrie only has two exits and entrances in or out of the city and given that our large and growing population numbers are putting significant stress on these overpasses and given that the 40th Avenue and QE II overpass has been identified as number 2 on the Calgary and north region prioritized capital funding list, Minister, could you please let my constituents know if this project is as much a priority for our government as it is for those struggling to get around the city?

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government understands that, unlike the previous government, announcements aren't where it needs to end. We need to actually do our homework and put a plan in place. We actually need to have a financial ... [interjections]

The Speaker: I might just caution members, particularly in the third row of the Assembly, from having such boisterous remarks.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, he should know.

The Speaker: I might just caution members, particularly the one from Edmonton-Gold Bar. He might be cautioned with his remarks.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, despite the mess that we were in with no plan going forward, we will make a plan. I acknowledge that the hon. member is anxious to get this project done. I will let her know that the city is undertaking detailed design on the particular project, but it still needs to fit into the budget plan and the capital plan before anything else can happen.

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

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The constituency of Airdrie-East contributes a significant amount of wealth to this province, and given that large employers like Amazon and Walmart rely upon the QE II 566 overpass and are just part of the large and growing commerce of the entire area – I would be remiss not to mention the many families that regularly visit the CrossIron Mills mall and the Century Downs race track – Minister, families and businesses that I represent want to know where the upgrading of this particular overpass falls on the priority list.

The Speaker: I might remind members of the cautionary tale of preambles.

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, while I admire the hon. member's enthusiasm and I know that this is an important project, it's an important project in a sea of important projects. I want the hon. member to know that the mayor of Airdrie has been all over me as well about this project. It's important for us, the hon. member and I and our government, to continue working with municipal partners to identify their priorities by region, and the more information that we get from you and the mayor will be helpful. I can assure you that we will be considering this in our budget and planning process as we go forward.

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

Free Speech on Postsecondary Campuses

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been revealed that this UCP government is planning to introduce changes to Alberta's postsecondary. These changes would, and I quote: require Alberta postsecondary institutions to adopt controversial free speech policies based on U.S. principles that allow speakers, no matter how unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive, to say what they like on our campuses. To the Minister of Advanced Education I have a very simple question. How does your government differentiate between free speech and hate speech?

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

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and let me say congratulations on your election given that it's my first time to rise and speak in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, free speech is at the heart of the academic experience. It's critical to the free flow and exchange of ideas and important to exist within all of our academic institutions, and we're going to make sure that that happens.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, given that our campuses already have free speech guaranteed by the human rights code and considering that postsecondary institutions are much more likely to be concerned about the likes of the Soldiers of Odin rather than, say, Bill Nye, the Science Guy making presentations on campus, to the same minister: why does your government seem compelled to roll out the red carpet to hate groups?

The Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very important, of course, that hate speech is not permitted on campus, and it's good to know, of course, that there are already strong protections in the Criminal Code of Canada, the human rights acts of Canada and of Alberta, that protect against hate speech. We want to encourage the free flow of ideas and to debate ideas on campuses, which, again, is critical to the academic experience, and we're going to make sure that that happens.

Mr. Eggen: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the minister said that this move at Alberta universities would make them more competitive with the United States, for example, to the same minister: don't you think that providing adequate funding to our universities and colleges is a better way to strengthen them rather than attracting hate groups to speak out on our campuses?

The Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, our government is focused on encouraging more individuals to enter the trades and helping to connect them with education that is going to see them land good, high-paying jobs. That's the priority of our government, helping to connect education to jobs, and we're going to continue to do that.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

2:30

Affordable Housing

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our NDP government invested an unprecedented \$1.2 billion in affordable housing, which previous Conservative governments neglected for decades. We

supported thousands of Albertans to live in dignity. Today the current Conservative government is blowing a \$4.5 billion hole in the budget by cutting corporate taxes and thus pandering to their elite friends while neglecting single moms and their children. To the Minister of Seniors and Housing: how much are you cutting from affordable housing?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Pon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your questions, hon. member. Our government always is focused on a mixture. We have affordable housing and take care of our seniors, especially the low income. We will continue to research all of the seniors' housing and care and do consultations and make sure that we do contribute all the funding that they need and want and build the homes that they need.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll hold her to account that all the money will be given.

Given that in the past the government continues to take care of all their friends while forgetting about the rest of Albertans and given that, while the minister may not want to hear this, there is no way to deal with Alberta's affordable housing issues while at the same time giving a multibillion-dollar tax break to wealthy corporations, has the minister asked for an analysis of how many Albertans will fall into homelessness or live in unsafe or inappropriate dwellings due to your government's...

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Pon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the NDP did nothing to reduce the red tape that's slowing down new projects, placing a barrier on builders and increasing the regulatory cost of new housing, we will work to reduce the burden of red tape, and Albertans will benefit from new funding and program models from our new government.

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

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I certainly would be very pleased if the hon. minister does actually do as much as we did on affordable housing. We significantly invested.

Given that an important measure of a province's greatness is how it treats its most vulnerable and given that access to affordable housing is foundational to the well-being of Albertans, how can this minister not support all people who need affordable housing?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Pon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government's focus is on creating jobs, having jobs, and creating funding, getting affordable housing. We will build more affordable housing and serve our seniors' needs and wants, and that was an NDP government that failed to do that.

Seniors' Housing in Rural Alberta

Mr. Loewen: A year ago the Berwyn Autumn Lodge was closed down by North Peace Housing. This left the small rural community reeling as the related jobs and economic benefit to the community were lost. The seniors were traumatized by this experience. Keeping facilities like this open helped keep small rural communities like Berwyn alive, not to mention that it allowed seniors to age as close to their friends and families as possible. The

building is shuttered now but still there. We know that there is a continued need for seniors' facilities. Minister, will you consider reopening Berwyn Autumn Lodge in some capacity or build another facility in Berwyn?

The Speaker: The Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Pon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, as I mentioned before, our government is a responsible government. We will create jobs, build the pipeline, grow the economy, get the funding and build all the affordable housing for the seniors that they are looking for, and serve Albertans as they need and they deserve.

The Speaker: I just might remind the Minister of Seniors and Housing to direct your comments through the chair.

Mr. Loewen: Given that the previous government approved up to \$24 million for 52 supportive living and 40 new renovated lodge spaces in Spirit River and given that a needs assessment by the five municipalities in the region concluded that more lodge spaces were required in the region and given that presently the Pleasant View Lodge, a 40-unit, 60-year-old facility in Spirit River, is the main facility in the region and that Grande Spirit Foundation, the local housing authority, deemed the building of this new supportive living project to be its highest priority, will the minister commit to continuing on with this project that will allow the seniors in Spirit River to age in their community?

The Speaker: The Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Pon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will be reaching out to those organizations like Grande Spirit Foundation, who received a letter, to discuss the project and to make sure that Alberta taxpayers are getting the most value out of their hard-earned money. This government will build more community care facilities for fewer dollars, saving Alberta of money in the long run. Our government's plan will grow Alberta's economy, create jobs, and also for all Albertans will strengthen the social programs that we all value.

Mr. Loewen: Given the importance of seniors aging in their own communities near their friends and families and given the importance of keeping small rural communities thriving, will the minister tell us what she is doing to keep seniors' facilities in small-town rural Alberta, and will she commit to doing everything in her power to ensure that seniors can age as close to their friends and families as possible?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Pon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government will work closely with the stakeholders to make certain that seniors' concerns are heard and that they are supported in aging safely and independently in their own communities. This government will also support civil society organizations that provide services to seniors. Our government will work tirelessly to make sure our seniors, the foundation of our province, will be able to stay close to their friends and family.

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

Opioid Use Prevention

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the 1990s doctor-approved prescriptions of opioid substances have greatly contributed to the rise of addiction. Given the steady increase in deaths due to opioid abuse in our province, to the Minister of Health:

what is being done to discourage doctors from overprescribing their patients?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. To its credit the College of Physicians & Surgeons has acknowledged that overprescribing did contribute to the rise in opioid addiction. The college has led a concerted effort by the profession to do better, not to stop prescribing opioids but to prescribe them better. The key result is that the overall volume prescribed is down more than 20 per cent in the last two years, and that's real change. But I emphasize that the college has made it clear that the goal is appropriate prescribing; that is, whatever is in the best interest of the patient. The interest of the patient always comes first.

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

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the supply of illicit opioids and, in particular, fentanyl has increased exponentially over the past few years and given that these drugs are now being sold illegally on the street, to the minister once again: what initiatives are under way to combat the illegal sale of opioid substances to individuals?

Mr. Schweitzer: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to report to this Assembly that after years of underfunding this government is committed to making sure that drug treatment courts have the funding that they need to provide critical service to addicts across this province. It's an important part – for me, it's actually a passionate thing. I used to be on the board of the Calgary drug treatment court. This program changes lives. After years of underfunding we're going to make sure that they have the resources they need in a compassionate way to deal with addictions here in Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in a report done in early 2018 by the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta, it was shown that Canada is the second-highest prescriber of opioids in the world, with Alberta leading the way, and given that the most recent report states that as many as 746 people have died from apparent accidental opioid poisoning and given that despite the introduction of a provincial opioid commission, deaths continue to rise yearly, to the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions: what is being done to address this crisis?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for raising this very important question. Our government is committed to the creation of a mental health and addiction and recovery strategy. We're focusing on getting people well. We have committed \$100 million for the creation of the mental health and addiction strategy. An additional \$40 million is aimed at additional detox beds. Our government will be examining ways to create a recovery-oriented system that removes gaps and helps people recover.

2:40 **Tabling Returns and Reports**

The Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three tablings today. The first one is a series of letters from a constituent, exchanges with

driver exam standards, with difficulty in the fact that there are no bookings online within 100 kilometres of Lacombe, searching for hours and hours. I'll just table the letters.

The second one is from another constituent, basically the same thing: no exam site within 100 kilometres of Red Deer. That includes most of central Alberta. That's not acceptable.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, I have a series of exchanges here with regard to the registry and the driver system, detailing a driver examiner who was uncertified for an advanced test but was sent and was expected to do an advanced test even though he was uncertified.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Members, I might just give 15 seconds or so for those who wish to move to the lounges to do so.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite copies of three articles I referenced last night: the first one, from Vox, Why Conservatives Keep Gaslighting the Nation about Climate Change; the second, from the *Guardian*, We Have 12 years to Limit Climate Change Catastrophe, Warns UN; and the third one, from *National Geographic*, One Million Species at Risk of Extinction, UN Report Warns.

The Speaker: Does the Member for Edmonton-West Henday have a tabling?

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite five copies of a CBC article I referenced when speaking to Motion 501 yesterday, titled Alberta Couple Blindsided after Adopted Girls Turn Out to Have Fetal Alcohol Disorder, from June 2015.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader rising on a tabling?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the appropriate number of copies of an article called The Inheritance of Shame: A Memoir, in which the Health minister is quoted as saying that conversion therapy is not taking place in our province, in regard to a point of order, that you asked me to table yesterday.

The Speaker: Are there others?

Ms Hoffman: I noticed, but you're still wrong.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Glenora will hold her comments to herself while the Speaker is rising.

I have one tabling this afternoon. I have five copies of a letter from the Chief Electoral Officer. In accordance with section 146 of the Election Act – my office received the letter on the 21st of May – it is a letter from the Chief Electoral Officer confirming the results of the judicial recount for Calgary-Falconridge.

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. Mr. Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations, pursuant to the Metis Settlements Act the Metis Settlements Appeal Tribunal annual report 2018.

On behalf of the hon. Mr. Shandro, Minister of Health, the Hospital Privileges Appeal Board 2017 annual report and 2018 annual report; pursuant to the Public Health Act the Public Health Appeal Board 2018 annual report; pursuant to the Health

Professions Act the Alberta College of Medical Diagnostic and Therapeutic Technologists 2018 annual report, the Alberta College of Paramedics 2018 annual report, the Alberta College of Social Workers annual report 2018, the Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists annual report 2018, the College of Alberta Denturists 2017 annual report, the College of Naturopathic Doctors of Alberta annual report 2018.

The Speaker: Sounds like some intriguing reading for all members. I'm sure you've been waiting with bated breath.

The Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on Standing Order 23(h), "makes allegations against another Member." Around 2 p.m. today the Leader of the Opposition asked a question – and I must apologize; I do not have the benefit of the Blues. It was along the lines of: "I asked the Premier why he is cutting the overtime of energy and construction workers . . . will the Premier apologize . . . for misleading us" and amend Bill 2 so that employers cannot enforce employees on banked overtime.

There are many examples, Mr. Speaker, as you do know, of Speakers' rulings which state that it is unparliamentary for a member to accuse another member of misleading. I would draw your attention to a Speaker's ruling on March 4, 2014, when a Deputy Speaker asked a member to withdraw their use of the word "misleading." I also draw your attention to page 146 of *Beauchesne*, sixth edition, which lists "mislead" and "misleading the public" as examples of expressions ruled unparliamentary since 1958. The hon. member certainly knows that, and I think the Leader of the Opposition should withdraw her remark and apologize to the House and to the hon. Premier.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Pertaining to this, first of all, I want to say that the Premier was in fact wrong and gave incorrect information. That's what the Leader of the Official Opposition was referring to, and, you know, what she was trying to get to, really, was to call out that if the Premier did misspeak, he did clarify or would clarify in this House because what he had said out to the media versus what the Government House Leader is saying today are two different points.

What I will say on this, Mr. Speaker, is that we will apologize for the use of the word "misleading" and withdraw that comment.

The Speaker: Thank you. Opposition House Leader, I consider this matter concluded.

The second point of order from the Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Language Creating Disorder Gestures

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on 23(h), (i), and (j) in regard again to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, who, I think, at this point probably has the record of every member of this Chamber for having to apologize in this place. I know he just had to do it again yesterday, I believe, for comments he made to you. During question period today he heckled and said something to the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs basically along the lines of "use your mouth to speak," implying and making fun of the hon. member's accent, certainly from our perspective completely

inappropriate, and then went on to make a gesture that certainly looked inappropriate to us. I think you probably had a better angle. You may or may not have seen that. I'll leave that with you.

Again, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar should stop trying to go for the record of being the most vulgar person inside this place and instead act within parliamentary procedure in this place and treat people with respect, and he should rise and apologize and withdraw his comments in regard to the hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, the characterization that the Government House Leader just made of the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is incorrect. He did not make fun of the way the Minister of Municipal Affairs was speaking. In fact, his comment was – he does heckle often. I will agree with that. But to rise and try to make allegations against another member claiming that he said something which he did not, something that is offensive and even – you know, first of all, this is not a point of order. Second of all, it's an offensive point of order to allege that a member made a comment that the Government House Leader interpreted as either offensive or making fun of the way the Minister of Municipal Affairs speaks. It's completely and patently false. It is incorrect. We will not apologize for something that was not said. I think also that this needs to be clarified, the mischaracterizing the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

The Speaker: Thank you to the hon. members.

I see the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul is rising. I can only imagine that he's intending to provide new comments to this particular point of order, specifically with respect to language that might create disorder, as that's what we've heard from the Government House Leader. I hope not to dispute the facts, but I'm happy to hear new information.

2:50

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Having the ability to sit a little bit closer and actually hear what came out of the member's mouth this afternoon, I clearly heard him also refer to the minister's "stupid comment." You know what? I was going to call a point of order on him at that point, but seeing as the point of order had already been called, I'd just like to add to that. Indeed, the member has used language in this House previously and does hold the record for the most apologies in the last four years, and I think he should stand up and apologize to all members of the House for his behaviour.

The Speaker: I thank you for your interjections. I am prepared to rule on this point of order. I see that the Member for Fort McMurray-Lac La Biche is rising. I will ask her to take her seat.

With no disrespect to the member, what this isn't going to turn into is a significant debate about what the member did or did not say. I'm not convinced that it is conducive to the productive use of the Chamber for us to use these points of order to continue to create more disorder.

Having said that, during debate at approximately 2:14 I did receive a number of notes from members inside the House about what may or may not have been said. I, however, did not hear what was said, but I do have some concern. Also, at that time the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka was on his feet asking his question. At that time I did see the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar make some hand gesture that may have been inappropriate. I, unfortunately, did not see exactly what that would be.

What I would say is that we are embarking on a six-week marathon here inside this Chamber. I would encourage all members to behave in a manner that is becoming of the Chamber. I would also like to remind members of the procedural memo dated May 22,

which I am sure you have all read. As a reminder, there are additional microphones inside the Chamber other than the ones that are on each desk. As such, should the Speaker choose to, it is possible to be able to hear some of the banter that I may not be able to hear from the dais.

I think, given the fact that I did not hear the accusations of the words that have been used in the Chamber, I would encourage the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, if in fact he did use those words, to withdraw and apologize. I will take him at his word and the words of others that that wasn't the case, but certainly I would strongly caution the use of gestures across the aisles, which I did see, that may in fact create disorder.

With that said, I consider this matter concluded.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1

An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

Ms Sweet moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

[Debate adjourned on the amendment May 28: Ms Pancholi speaking]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has the call.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to continue my remarks regarding Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax. I'd like to begin, actually, with a treaty acknowledgement and acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of Treaty 6 and the Métis, who have a deep connection to this land. We don't know how much longer this will be used regularly in government business. [interjections]

The Speaker: Members, I might just encourage you to take any discussions that you might have to the lounges or the members' lounge behind us as we are respectful to the member who has the call.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To continue my comments, I just wanted to make that treaty acknowledgement while we still have the opportunity to do so. We will continue to do so on this side of the floor because we believe very much in acknowledging our indigenous peoples.

On that note, I would like to comment on my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, who earlier this morning in his comments on Bill 1 gave an excellent overview of the potential impact and the very significant and real impact that repealing the carbon tax will have on the indigenous communities in this province. I want to thank him for his insight. He's probably the most knowledgeable person in this Chamber on these issues, and it comes from a place of deep passion and heartfelt commitment. I think we should heed his words wisely, particularly as we know that this province has not had a great history in terms of protecting, listening to, and respecting its indigenous people. A lot of great headway has

been made over the last four years, and I would hope that we don't lose any of that. So I'd like to thank my colleague from Edmonton-Rutherford for those comments.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I'd like to begin as well by talking again about a comment I made earlier, which is that it's a little bit unfortunate that we still have to talk about climate change and reiterate what we already know, what we all already know, which is the very real crisis that climate change is and the potential impact that it will have on us, on our children, on our grandchildren and why we need to take it seriously now as we haven't for many, many years.

I want to actually make some comments and quote from the United Nations environment program of the World Meteorological Organization. These are comments from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It was actually quoted, Madam Speaker, in the decision of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, who recently ruled on the constitutionality of the federal carbon-pricing program, as you will know. We'll get back to this legal challenge in a moment. As you may know, the court upheld the federal carbon tax, but in its decision the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal quoted some information from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I think it's really important to talk about this because they really pulled out some key quotes that are important to remember about climate change. Some of the information in that report included that "climate change will amplify existing risks and create new risks for natural and human systems. Risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development."

The report also stated that we need to be wary of the impacts of climate change on our globe but also highlighted that climate change impacts affecting Canada and Canadians are widespread. Actually, the report indicates that "predictions show that Canada's temperature, particularly in the Arctic, will warm at a faster rate than that of the world as a whole." This is important to note because when we talk about climate change, we often hear the criticism of: why should we take the lead in Alberta when we know that there are other countries in the world that are contributors to climate change and perhaps don't do their part? We often hear references to countries such as China and India, but we need to stop thinking about climate change as something that we cannot control or impact. This is something that we have a very real ability to influence within Alberta, and we also have to know that there are very real impacts here in Canada.

We can't keep thinking of this as something that's going to happen in the future. It's happening now. We've seen a number of significant natural disasters in this province alone but also across the country over the last few years. We know that is a result of the shift in climate in this country.

It is a very real issue, as I mentioned in my earlier comments this morning. I don't really think that there is an issue about climate change. There shouldn't be an issue about climate change denial anymore. Anybody who is doing that is really just clinging to missed facts. They're clinging to denial. I don't really think that that's the problem. I think the issue really is that people don't want to make the changes that are necessary. There's a hesitation to do that, which may be difficult to do, but as we've talked about in this Chamber before, there are a lot of things that we do that are important to do because they have a long-term impact on our future even if they are a little bit difficult to do.

My colleague the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie earlier this morning gave an example of the recycling program, the blue box program, and how when that first rolled out in the city of Edmonton,

there was a huge resistance to it because it was going to cost money, it was going to be a hardship, and it was going to be difficult for people to sort through their garbage. But we now do it as a matter of practice and fact. We have to normalize and incorporate the steps that are necessary to take to protect from climate change, and we need to do that now.

I actually don't really want to harp for too long on the realities of climate change because, frankly, we should have moved past that. I remember as a 13-year-old, which was now almost 30 years ago, having a protest at my junior high school, caring a lot about the issues about environmental impacts, and talking about, as it was called then, global warming and greenhouse emissions. Here we are 30 years later, and we're still not making incredible progress like we should be to deal with those issues. If you had told my 13-year-old self that we would still be talking about the basics, I don't think I would have believed it. I always believed that adults and politicians knew better and were wiser and would make the right decisions. I guess that's why I'm here running for office and why I'm here in a political, elected role because I think, yeah, maybe now it is time for people like me to step forward and say: enough of talking; we need to start doing something. That's what this NDP government did over the last four years.

We've heard lots of talk from members on the other side about how maybe in 2015 they alleged that voters were not aware that there was a carbon tax that was going to be brought in, but actually what happened after the election of the NDP government in 2015 was that they did what governments should do, which is that they gave thoughtful and very careful consideration and researched consideration to the issues that it was responsible for and that it needed to take action on. That's how the climate leadership plan was developed.

3:00

I stand here before you as somebody who was not part of this government for the past four years. Although most of my colleagues here have a great deal of experience as ministers and have been here for four years or longer, I actually for the last four years was watching, like many other people in this province. I was an average Albertan who was just watching and seeing what my provincial government was doing. What I saw when they were doing the climate leadership plan was a very thoughtful and researched approach to governance, which was that there was a pressing issue that needed to be dealt with. This government decided to gather the experts in that area, which were environmental researchers but also oil and gas companies, to talk about: how do we develop a way forward for our province? That is how the climate leadership plan was developed. It actually had a very thoughtful approach.

As you know, the Climate Leadership Act didn't just deal with the carbon levy; it was about reducing emissions as well. But the Climate Leadership Act did this. It established a carbon levy on transportation and heating fuels in Alberta. It provided exemptions from application of the levy. It set out the requirements for rebates and exemption certificates, and it provided those consumer rebates and biomethane credits mostly to low-income Albertans. It set out the rules for remittance and recovery of the carbon levy, most importantly saying that the money that was gathered through the carbon levy would only be used for certain projects, that it was not to go into the general revenue fund. And it set what those carbon levy rates were at.

I actually was very impressed with the process that this government underwent, as an average Albertan watching what was happening, because they actually were the first government – I've lived here almost all my life, and I've worked, actually, within government. I worked under Progressive Conservative governments

for eight years, and I had not seen a government who was willing to take on a challenging but pressing issue like this in a way that, quite frankly, would mean that people would have to do some uncomfortable things. You know, it would be challenging to accept it, but it was important to do. That's what governance is about. You have to make decisions that are important for the future of the province, for the constituents of this province, and for our future, not just about the people who live here but about what kind of an economic future we want as well in this province.

It was a very thoughtful way of bringing together all of those people and talking about: "What should we be doing? What do we need to be doing?" Carbon pricing, as many of my colleagues have spoken about already, was very well thought out, researched, and supported, particularly by conservatives, as a way to deal with carbon emissions but also move forward to be able to invest in environmentally friendly and green energy sources.

I'm just going to take a moment to cite some of the support that the climate leadership plan had. I was very heartened to see that for several of the members across, their constituents actually were supporters of the climate leadership plan, in particular the Member for Banff-Kananaskis. The mayor of the town of Banff, Karen Sorensen, in 2016 was quoted as saying:

The Town of Banff is a national park community, and the protection of a healthy environment is of paramount importance to us. We applaud the direction toward climate leadership taken by the Province, which will help us sustain our tourism economy and provide a better future for all Albertans.

Similarly, another constituent of the Member for Banff-Kananaskis, from the town of Canmore, John Borrowman, the mayor, said:

I am pleased to add my support for Minister Phillips and the Government of Alberta in implementing the Climate Leadership Plan, which recognizes that all Albertans must take responsibility for protecting our environment. The plan resonates well with the Town of Canmore in our goal of being municipal leaders through our Environmental Sustainability Action Plan.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any comments or questions under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I was so riveted by the enlightening quotes that the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud was sharing with us, and I wondered if she had any more that she would like to share with the Chamber.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Yeah, as I was saying, there was a lot of great support for the climate leadership plan from rural and municipal leaders, from oil and gas leaders.

But what I really want to talk about is my constituents because – you know what? – when I was at the doors in Edmonton-Whitemud, I had a lot of great conversations with my constituents about the carbon tax. Of course, people don't like to have to pay a little bit more, and there was some resistance to that. But what I found was two things. One was that there seemed to be a great deal of misinformation out there about the carbon tax. Honestly, we saw that quite a bit during the campaign from members from the other side. They seemed to perpetuate statements that were misinforming intentionally, it seemed, at some points, their constituents about how the carbon tax worked and what it was actually being used for. For example, you know, it's really important to note that the carbon tax wasn't a general revenue fund. It was actually dedicated

specifically for green projects. When I talked to my constituents at the door, what they were really impressed with knowing is that there were direct impacts and benefits to them right in their riding from the carbon tax.

In particular, I would highlight that in Edmonton-Whitemud residents of that riding have been advocating for a long time for improvements to the Terwillegar expressway, to Terwillegar Drive. It's been a congested route for some time, and the city recently announced that they will be building a new Terwillegar expressway. A quarter of that budget is coming from the province, and it was actually because that Terwillegar expressway is going to increase public transit by allowing for more bus routes down that route. Because of that, it met the mandate of increasing green transportation options for residents of Edmonton-Whitemud, so it got support from the carbon tax levy fund. That's really important. I like to highlight to the residents of Edmonton-Whitemud that we saw benefits from that right there.

Most importantly, Madam Speaker and to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, what my constituents wanted to know is: if the carbon tax is going to be repealed, as we know the members from the other side intend to do, what is the plan going forward? What they appreciated was that there was a plan to move forward that the NDP government was making. That was part of looking to our future. Most importantly, it was about saying that we know that we take climate change seriously and we're going to take action on it and we're in this together. We are a province. We are a community. We all need to take steps forward.

Even if it does mean that there was a little bit of hurt, they understood that the bigger picture was that we were going to make green, sustainable energy sources. We were going to make that more of an option and more accessible to Albertans, and therefore we could move away and reduce our carbon emissions. They saw the bigger picture. That's why I believe that the residents of Edmonton-Whitemud chose to support me and to re-elect the NDP in their riding, because they believed in the bigger picture and the bigger benefits of that carbon tax.

That being said, with it being removed, again, what is the plan? I think that is what most Albertans are going to want to know. If the carbon tax is repealed, what is the plan going forward? To date we have heard nothing from the members on the other side about what they're going to do. They've talked about continuing to look into the issue. Well, that is what's been going on for decades in this province. It is time for us to move forward, so if the carbon tax is going to be repealed, my plea to the members on the other side is to take this issue seriously. What is your plan? This is not a partisan issue. This is an issue for all Albertans, for all of our children, and for our grandchildren. What are we going to do to move forward to ensure that we can offer a safe, clean environment for our children and for our grandchildren? That's what I want to hear from the other side.

Of course, we all knew this was sort of coming down the pipeline, so to speak, in terms of: this was going to be repealed. But I was hopeful that there'd be a little bit more thought put in than what we saw in the throne speech and what we saw in the UCP platform about what was coming next. What we got was nothing. What we got was a small, little bill that's just going to repeal what was there, with no vision for the future of this province, no vision for climate change, no vision to deal with the environment. That's my great disappointment, I have to say, and that will be the disappointment of many residents in my riding as well. They want to know: what is the plan for this government going forward? We can't just score cheap political points by repealing this act without talking about what's coming next.

My hope, Madam Speaker, is that the government will take the time. We should send this back to committee because we need the time to talk about what's next. This needs to go to committee so there can be a plan, not just repealing. What are they proposing? What is going forward? What are the measures that are going to be taken so that we can provide assurances to our residents, to all Albertans that we are going to be leaders on climate change, that we are going to take this seriously, and that we are looking to the future? I don't think any of us wants to just move back to the — as the Leader of the Official Opposition said, back to the future seems to be the theme of this government, but I encourage you to think beyond that. I think that not just repealing something . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm thrilled to rise and speak to this referral. I think that it's incredibly important that we send this bill to committee and have a conversation. Again, like my colleagues have said before me, I don't think we're in a position to relitigate the issue of the repeal of the act, but I think the outstanding question that continues to plague us is: what do we intend to do in its place? I think it's critical that we address this particular issue.

3:10

One of the big conversations that I had during the election campaign with a number of different people all over the place was, you know, that I think it's accepted now that climate change is real, that it's human caused, and that we ought to do something about it. I would like to believe that every member in this Chamber accepts those three basic premises. I think that if we don't accept those three basic premises and if we aren't willing to do those three things, it's our children that are ultimately going to have to pay those consequences at the end of the day. Many of us, I think, in this room, Madam Speaker, have children who are going to pay those consequences, and if we don't, I think we probably have friends or relations or others who have such children. I think we should all be concerned about what the future of this planet is going to hold.

There are some things, at the end of the day, that can be paid back and some things that cannot be paid back. This was another conversation that I had many times during the election. It is the case that if you borrow money, whether you're a government or whether you're an individual borrowing to, say, have a mortgage on your house, you can pay that back. On the other hand, if you refuse to invest in services and if you refuse to invest in infrastructure, those children who enter school who may need assistance learning to read and who don't get it: they'll never get that back. Those people who enter hospitals: they'll never get that chance at a better life back. It's the same thing with climate change. If we don't begin to make progress now, we can't go back. It's not something that can be paid back, and that's why it's an issue that's so urgent and that must be addressed immediately.

The question that's at issue and the reason that this ought to go to committee is: what do you plan to replace it with? I mean, it's pretty easy to criticize, right? It's pretty easy to look at something and say, "Well, that's imperfect," for whatever reason you feel that's imperfect. I think in this instance this was actually a very good and well-thought-out piece of policy. I won't reiterate the comments of my colleague who spoke before me, but I think it's well supported. It's well supported by a number of people from all different ends of the political spectrum. So you've criticized, you say that you want to deconstruct, but then what do you plan to do

in the alternative? Again I'll return to those three basic premises: climate change is real, it's human caused, and we ought to do something about it. If we accept all those basic premises, then what is it that we're going to do about it?

You know, there are a lot of cases in which individuals criticize something, but they don't know what they want to put in its place, and it usually leads to a big mess. I mean, we need only look to the United Kingdom, to England, to the Brexit situation. You know, folks resoundingly said that they wanted to leave, but they didn't say on what terms, and that has created an enormous amount of consternation for the government and for the entire country. I think what we're wanting to do here is to discuss: well, what replaces it? You know, that's fine. I think we don't need to relitigate the issue of whether we ought to move forward, but move forward to what?

I think that, you know, there are basically two options. One option is to replace it with a policy that will take in the same amount of funds. One of the things that has been discussed is essentially getting those funds from large emitters only, not from individuals, who are the end-users. Now, I don't think that that's the way to proceed forward, and the reason I don't think that's the way to proceed forward is because ultimately in a market system if you're not working on the demand side, you're never going to make any headway. Working only on the supply side isn't going to make any headway, and I actually believe that in economic terms it's more punishing to the economy here in Alberta than it is to act on the demand side.

I think the other thing is that, you know, we heard from members across the way over and over and over again: well, businesses are getting charged, and they're going to pass it on to their consumers. Well, if we charge only the large emitters, do we believe that they aren't going to pass it on to their consumers? Ultimately, if what we're doing is that we're having the same take, so we're taking in the same amount of money that we would have taken in under the Climate Leadership Act, by only extracting that money from the large emitters, the large emitters are just going to pass that on. So the tax continues to exist, it continues to be on the same things, but it's just that now it's hidden. People don't know they're paying it, so they don't have the opportunity to modify their behaviour in the same sort of way. In essence, everyone pays the same, but we don't have any of the beneficial effects.

The other alternative is that you intend to take in less money, and if that's the case, then I think that the people of Alberta are owed an explanation as to which projects are going to be cut. Now, there are a number of incredibly important projects, and a number of people have spoken at length about those. The projects, I think, that I'm going to speak about that are incredibly important are the green line because it's incredibly important to the citizens of Calgary. The Springbank dry dam I think is incredibly important, also part of the climate leadership. Finally, a project that's incredibly important to the folks in my riding is that we had committed to one of three upstream mitigation options on the Bow to ensure that we don't see a repeat of the devastating floods.

Again, what we're hoping to do is refer this to committee so that a longer conversation can occur about what's going to replace it and what that replacement is going to do. Is it option A, which is to say that we continue to take in the same amount of money – it's just hidden – or is it option B, which is to say that we aren't going to take in the same amount of money, which means that we're going to cut some of those projects that were going to be funded out of the carbon levy?

I think, you know, that the people of Alberta are owed an explanation. The stories that I still heard, even in the campaign occurring in 2019, about the floods: people's lives were impacted, their businesses were impacted, their homes were impacted. A lot

of them still have a lot of fear that they're carrying with them as a result of that. It's very challenging. You have to take your family and your pets and your kids and move out of the house on very short notice. You don't know what you're coming back to or what the situation is going to be. I think there's nothing more fundamental to us as individuals as having a safe place for our family to reside and to call home. The constituents in my riding and in many ridings throughout Calgary who are worried about exactly that I think are owed an explanation.

Another project that I think was incredibly important that was going to be funded out of the carbon levy was the green line. You know, I think the people of Calgary have waited a long time to see the sort of transit that is necessary to become a thriving metropolis.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

The members across the way laugh at the idea that anyone might prefer to ride a bicycle or might prefer to take transit, but those people exist. Honestly, I fall into that category. Obviously, I spend a lot of time commuting between Calgary and Edmonton, but prior to the birth of my daughter, I did it primarily on the bus because that was my preference. I think that that's a legitimate preference and a preference that ought to be supported.

I think that for many people in Calgary, especially those who work in the downtown core – the rates of parking in the downtown core of Calgary are exorbitant. People have a really hard time being able to pay that cost, and many of those people would like to make a different choice. We're not saying that everyone has to make that choice. We're just saying that if you want to make the choice, if you'd like to make the choice to take transit, that option ought to be available to you and that your government ought to invest in that option. I think that's a very reasonable request on the part of those individuals: to ensure that those projects that are so important to them are continuing to move forward.

I think individuals would like to know. You know, for all of these projects individually at some point some commitment was made to say: oh, we will find another source of revenue. Well, that's fine, but what is that source of revenue given that it's the case that there's also been a commitment to blow a \$4.5 billion hole in the budget by giving away taxes to incredibly profitable corporations, keeping in mind that the corporations that we're talking about are posting profits in excess of half a million dollars a year in order to fall into this category? We're giving them a \$4.5 billion giveaway, and we're saying to people starting out their careers who are unable to afford a parking spot in downtown Calgary: well, maybe the funding for your green line won't be there, or we're going to find it somewhere else though we won't say where. We're blowing a huge hole in the budget and, you know, we may or may not have a climate plan that may or may not be able to pay for it. I think that that's a real problem, and I think that that's a problem that ought to be addressed. I think people continue to have real questions about that. You know, the economic benefits are clear. I think the benefits in terms of infrastructure are clear.

3:20

I think some of the questions that remain are action on climate change itself. You know, there was a report released very recently that talks about Canada, that talks about the fact that we're warming at twice the rate of most of the globe. I think that that should be a huge concern. It isn't just about warming; it's about changes in the frequency of adverse weather events. When we talk about ensuring that flood mitigation is in place in Calgary, we're not just talking about having the funds to invest in the infrastructure; we're talking about the fact that as climate change becomes more pronounced,

we're likely to see more frequent weather events, which is one of the reasons that we need to continue making progress on this issue.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

You know, at the end of the day, I think that this is an issue that may have an impact on not just the lives but the health of our children, and I think we should all care about that. I think we all do care about that, so I think it's reasonable to say: given that it's an issue that will have an impact on every one of us, given that it's an issue that will touch our children, given that it's an issue that's going to get worse as we go along, what is the action we plan to take?

I think that for each and every one of us who stands in this place, who acts as a leader for our communities, you know, history is going to call on us to be able to say: what did you do? When the time for action was clear, when it was clear that we had to take steps to move forward, what was it that you did? I think members in this House are asking that we be in a position to answer that question, and I think Albertans are asking that we be in a position to answer that question. You know, at the end of the day, history will judge us, and I hope that it judges us well. I hope that it judges us as proper stewards of the environment, of the economy, and of the lives of everyone in this province.

Of course, we're speaking to a referral amendment. To return to the substance of the issue, the substance of the issue is that we want to have a conversation about what's going to take its place. You know, this bill, in particular, certainly does the repeal. There are some transitional provisions, but it doesn't breathe a word of what's going to happen in the alternative. I think that what's going to happen in the alternative is the big, open question. I believe that when Albertans voted in this new government, they believed the promise that was given to them that we're going to get rid of the carbon tax but that we're going to bring in something else in the alternative. I think that they believed that, and therefore I think that they are owed that.

One other thing that I think is worth noting on this issue. You know, the world is moving on, whether we would like it to or not. It is. People in Alberta accept those three basic premises that climate change is real, that it's human caused, and that we ought to do something about it. So do people the world over. Despite the incredible work of our energy industry here, sometimes that message doesn't penetrate to the country. In the last four years we've made incredible progress on that. We went from the majority of Canadians being opposed to pipelines to the majority of Canadians being in favour of pipelines, and that happened because they trust that we're taking steps. They trust that we understand that balance.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any comments or questions under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for — come on; I study the whole time you guys are talking — Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Member for Calgary-Mountain View mentioned the fear that her constituents experienced. She shared some of the stories she heard as a result of the floods and, you know, other stories related to climate change and support for the climate leadership plan. Her riding is far different from mine in the socioeconomic sense. Many folks in my riding struggle and benefited greatly from the rebates from the carbon tax. Despite the differences, we both heard stories about the support in our ridings for the climate leadership plan of the previous government, and I would just like the member to talk a little bit more about some of the individual stories that she's heard and just why it's so important to listen to these voices and act upon them.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much. As you may well be aware and as the member may be aware, the riding of Calgary-Mountain View is on the north side of the Bow River, so the community of Sunnyside, in particular, was very much impacted by the flooding in 2013. We actually have, as you're probably aware, a commemoration of that. We call it Neighbour Day. It's occurring this year on June 15. Communities throughout the city sort of get together to celebrate the resiliency of Calgary and people coming together.

Despite the fact that all those people come together, I think there's still a lot of concern and a lot of fear. You know, people are worried. I've had many, many conversations about the Springbank dam and many, many conversations about upstream mitigation on the Bow as well. People are still concerned about those projects going forward. Every time that spring comes, when the rest of us celebrate, they're worried. They're worried about their homes. They're worried about their children. They're worried about their pets. They're worried about their jobs, their future. I think that that's a legitimate concern that those individuals are experiencing, and I think that we have to commit to moving forward.

You know, certainly, I had the opportunity to ask a question on this today. It's true that there's an enormous amount of regulation around building these sorts of projects. That's why we moved so quickly after we came into government: to ensure that we were advancing and to ensure that we were pushing things through the regulatory process. You know, we're most of the way down the field. We've started to make deals with most of those landowners. We're most of the way there. All we need in terms of Springbank is the commitment.

With respect to the Bow, obviously, it's a bit more complicated. There are three possible projects that are under consideration, and those studies are still under way. You know, certainly, we had committed to moving forward on one of those, and I think they're necessary. They're necessary in order to protect the people of Calgary and in order to give them that security. Madam Speaker, I don't know if you can imagine anything worse than spending the entire spring coming home every day worried about whether or not you're still going to be able to get into your house and whether or not there's going to be a flood in your basement. That's really, really hard for individuals, and it's still top of mind for them. So I hope that we're able to continue forward with these projects.

At the end of the day, you know, we can speak to our values all we like, but the truth is that our values are where we put money. Our values are signalled by how we use the funds entrusted to us by the taxpayers. If we truly do value this, we have to do more than just say it. We have to be willing to do it.

Those are some of the conversations that I've had the opportunity to have. I sincerely hope that this new government is willing to continue the good work that we've been doing for years to move this forward. I genuinely believe that this is not a partisan issue, but I do have concerns that arise from some of the statements that some of the members on the government side have made about those projects, and I do have concerns about where ultimately the funding is going to come from.

With that, I think I will thank you and close my remarks.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, are there any more speakers to the referral amendment? I will recognize the hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's really my pleasure today to get up and speak to this referral amendment because I think it's really important. This is something that I know members of the now government have spoken to many times in the past. It's really important that we get this bill right. I think it's something that's very important for all Albertans, that we understand the implications of the bill. It's important that all members of this Assembly should understand the implications of this bill. That's why we need to take the time to go out and recognize and study it in committee, where we can talk to Albertans and we can talk amongst ourselves about what the Trudeau carbon tax implementation act really means for this Assembly and really means for this province.

Madam Speaker, I want to tell the Assembly through you a little bit of a story. It's a story about a young man who's trying to decide what to do with his life. He knows that the roller coaster of our resource economy is not for him. He knows that he wants a job that is going to be stable, is going to be long term, and is going to be able to provide for his family for years and years to come. That's why he sees a great program at NAIT here in Edmonton. It's the solar install program, and you can learn to do this new, fascinating field of solar technology. So he goes out and does that.

3:30

Now, Madam Speaker, what this government has just done is put his job prospects at risk. That is what this government is doing with this bill. That's why we need to be able to take a look, really, and say: "Is this the right bill right now? Are we willing to put thousands of people who have been studying, transitioning into great, new, clean, renewable jobs out of work? Is that what we want to do today?"

Madam Speaker, I think it's something that we really need to think carefully about because these are the types of projects that are going on all across the province. These are the types of projects that people across the province have been studying for, have been training in, have been learning, and have been moving forward and investing significant amounts of time and money in, and I think that when we look at the Trudeau carbon tax implementation act, it is very clear to me that the government has not put the thought into what that means for so many Albertans.

I want to also talk about a few other things, Madam Speaker. I want to talk about some of the benefits that we have from what happened with the climate leadership plan. One of the very earliest memories I have as a child is being woken up in the middle of the night. My parents would wake me up I think it was every four hours in the middle of the night when I was maybe three or four years old. What we would do is that I would go over to this big, rumbling machine. They'd pull it out of the washroom, and they'd put some vapours in it, and I wasn't quite sure what was going on. They strapped this mask to my face, and I breathed in and out really heavily for, like, 20 minutes or something. I would go back to sleep, and we'd do it again in a few hours. What happened was that I was having asthma attacks, and that was something that we needed to do to help manage those attacks.

Now, Madam Speaker, you'll note that Edmonton, the city I grew up in and have lived in my whole life, is just downwind of a coal plant, and we know that one of the things that is the highest indicator for whether there will be a disproportionate number of people with asthma is being downwind of a coal plant. One of the things that the climate leadership plan did was that it meant that we would have better health for Albertans, maybe not like me – I've missed the boat on that one – but the ones who come after me.

We wanted to invest in a province that was going to have cleaner air for all, and that's why in 2015, when the climate leadership plan

was introduced, Noah Farber, the acting president and CEO at the time of the Asthma Society of Canada, said, and I quote: there is a direct link between the burning of coal and asthma exacerbations, hospital admissions, and untimely deaths, not to mention climate change; the then Alberta government has responded to protect the health of all Albertans, particularly those who suffer from respiratory diseases such as asthma; we are extremely pleased with the unwavering commitment the province has made today to ensure the air we breathe is clean. End quote.

Madam Speaker, the work that we have put in as this Assembly, as the government, the work that has been put in to make sure we have safe, clean air for all Albertans, is at risk because of this. This implementation plan, this Trudeau carbon tax implementation plan, puts what we have accomplished at risk, and I think that we should spend the time to make sure we get it right. We should go to committee, we should study it, we should review it, and we should talk about what is important for Albertans. What are the types of projects, what are the types of health risks that Albertans want to see us mitigate? I think that's something that all members of this Assembly will agree on. They'll agree that we should be able to talk about these issues in a fulsome debate in committee.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk a bit about some of the other things that the climate leadership plan funded. I know members opposite have spoken at length about how they want to protect jobs and the economy and small businesses. Well, as a matter of fact, when the NDP government was in power, they introduced a small-business tax cut, and they reduced small-business taxes by a full third. That was funded entirely through the climate leadership plan. Now, I guess the question for me here now is that that's hundreds of millions of dollars that was used directly from the climate leadership plan to help support small businesses. Are members of the government, of the Conservative government, willing to put that at risk? Are they willing to take that money away from small businesses right now? That's what we're talking about unless we find a meaningful transition solution, and I think that's really important for us to consider as well.

I think that members of the Conservative government here and Conservative backbenchers know that they don't want to punish small businesses. They know that they don't want to put that tax break at risk for them, but unless we go and talk about what the implications of the bill will be, unless we go into committee and actually discuss these impacts and look at what the climate leadership plan funded, look at what the climate leadership plan was intended to do, we won't be able to have that fulsome debate. We won't be able to have those types of discussions and determine where there may be unintended consequences of implementing Ottawa's carbon tax instead of an Alberta-made one.

When we implement what Ottawa wants – and I know that the Premier is very fond of Ottawa, Madam Speaker. I know that the Premier spent a lot of time in Ottawa. But I truly believe that if we have to pay for this, we should control what we do with the money. We shouldn't let the Prime Minister, we shouldn't let people in Ontario tell us what to do.

Madam Speaker, I know that the Premier often spends much time, as frequently as the day after he was elected, in Ottawa, but I think that's not the right move today. I think that today we should focus on Albertans. We should focus on what Albertans elected us to do, and that's to make sure that we have plans that work for Alberta.

Madam Speaker, I can talk at length about some of the projects as well. I know that my hon. colleague spoke about transit. Now, \$1.47 billion was earmarked for the valley line here in Edmonton as well as other LRT improvements, \$1.54 billion was earmarked for the green line in Calgary, and \$967 million was for GreenTRIP

for projects throughout the rest of the province. Those projects, I think, are essential, not just in the major cities through the LRT projects but GreenTRIP as well, to connect our hubs across the province.

When we talk about these projects, when we talk about these transit opportunities, they are projects that I don't think the people in Ottawa – and I know that the Premier knows the people in Ottawa better than I do, but I don't think the people in Ottawa understand the needs of Albertans as well as we do here in this Chamber, Madam Speaker. I think that we should take the time in a committee to talk about which of these transit projects the Premier is willing to cut, which of these transit projects the Premier doesn't want anymore, which bus isn't as important, which route doesn't matter as much. I think that's really important for Albertans, who elected us.

I think that we need control of the projects we decide to fund. I don't want to leave that up to the Prime Minister. I don't want to leave that up to people in Ottawa. I think that we have a duty here in this House to do that work. We have a duty here to go and say that we know there are really important projects in the climate leadership plan. We know that it funds really important projects in all of our constituencies, Madam Speaker, and that's why we want to debate the projects fully. I'd encourage us to look at this in committee and say that, well, we can really dig into the numbers. We can really dig into exactly how many GreenTRIP projects will be cancelled because we cancelled the climate leadership plan. We can dig into exactly how many LRT projects will have to be cancelled.

I mean, when we look at the impact that the climate leadership plan had on infrastructure here in Alberta, it really is unparalleled to any other program, Madam Speaker. It speaks to infrastructure projects across this province. It touches nearly every single community. I know that just a few weeks ago a number of media outlets, Postmedia, put out an article that had lists of which projects were in which ridings, and I encourage every single member to look at that, because overwhelmingly the climate leadership plan funded projects in rural ridings. In the majority of ridings it was projects that were important, things like making upgrades for community halls, things that would help the lives of individuals and individual Albertans like you and me in our communities.

That's why I really want to make sure we get this right. That's why I supported the bill the first time. I mean, I think we debated it for 16 hours or so last time. That's why I want to make sure that we get this right. We talk about those projects. In, let's say, Devon they applied for municipal funding for solar upgrades for their municipal buildings. When we talked about those solar programs, it was so important to be able to help them reduce their electricity costs and to have that funding through the climate leadership plan. We can look at the climate leadership plan and see not just in the two major cities, but we can see all across the province, in all municipalities, that they were able to apply for and in many cases receive significant amounts of funding for significant infrastructure that was really important for their community. It was projects that made a difference for their constituents.

3:40

Madam Speaker, the climate leadership plan was a plan that got our two pipelines approved. It was a plan that secured our energy future and allowed us to begin a transition to a new future with value-add for Albertans. It was something that we needed at the time to move forward. Now, today we are debating whether we should continue to study that before we throw it out the door, and I think the answer is really clear. Let's make sure we review this fulsomely. Let's make sure we actually do the work.

I know I was elected here by my constituents because they believed in a vision in which we committed to building important infrastructure in our communities. I know they understood that we needed to make sure that we had clean air. They understood that we needed to believe in the science of climate change. I know that when they ask us to do that, they say that they don't want us, like the Premier, to ignore the problem and walk away from all the progress that we've made.

Now, Madam Speaker, I'll be the first to admit that maybe it wasn't a perfect solution in every single aspect, but that's the reality of legislation sometimes. The reality is that we don't get it right a hundred per cent of the time, every time, but what you do is that you do the absolute best you can. I think that if we want to do the absolute best we can today in this Chamber as legislators, what we should do is that we should commit to studying the issue. We should commit to sending it to a committee so that we can look at it and review what worked and what didn't work.

Maybe there were projects that members opposite didn't like. Maybe we can review which projects work. Maybe the GreenTRIP projects need to stay on the table. Maybe connecting communities is something that's still important to them and their communities; maybe it's important to their constituents. Madam Speaker, I think that's something that every single member in this Chamber should think about and should say: "Would my constituents care if suddenly the GreenTRIP funding was cancelled? Would they care if suddenly the solar panels were pulled off my community hall by debt collectors next week? Would they care if we weren't able to put in the new insulation in the buildings as well?"

Madam Speaker, these are some really important things. I think there are important things all across the province. I talked about some of that infrastructure investment. Really, it was over \$40 million that was invested in schools, universities, hospitals, and colleges all across the province, and it helped those large institutions do things like cut emissions and save operating costs and reduce their load on some of our grids and whatnot. I think these were very important projects that we needed to fund, and we talked about all this.

For the members that are new here – they weren't maybe around when some of these programs were being implemented – the types of projects that were funded were community spaces. They were projects that were designed to help families. Madam Speaker, I don't know about some of the other members, but I know that when I talk to families in my communities, they want to see a government that cares about them. They want to see a government that is committed to investing in projects like community halls, like hospitals, like schools in their community. They want to make sure that the schools in their communities are able to operate as efficiently as possible. That's what the climate leadership plan was able to do.

Really, I hope that we'll be able to as an Assembly send this to committee so that we can review the issues in wholeness and say: are there benefits to some parts of the climate leadership plan? Really, Madam Speaker, I think there are. For some, if not the majority, the climate leadership plan is essential for us here in Alberta because of the types of things that it enabled us to do as a government and as Alberta, as Albertans. The types of projects that the climate leadership plan enabled us to do are really something that were at the forefront of our country. I don't want Ottawa and maybe the Premier's friends in Ottawa to tell us what to do with that instead of ourselves.

Thank you very much. I really encourage members to vote for this referral.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments or questions under 29(2)(a)? I'll recognize the Member for Calgary-South East.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the hon. Member for Edmonton-South and, by extension, his colleagues. As you know, the majority of Albertans support the elimination of the carbon tax. You are also aware that the elimination of this tax will return or, rather, not take further hard-earned money from Albertans that desperately need it. I'm just wondering: are you opposing the repeal of the carbon tax because you have no regard for the will of the majority of Albertans or because you still think that Albertans can't be trusted with their own money?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-South.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think that's a really interesting talking point that the hon. member has brought up. What I think is that Albertans should trust Albertans with their money. I think that Albertans shouldn't trust the bigwigs in Ottawa with their money. I think that Albertans shouldn't trust the Prime Minister or the federal government to tell us how they should use our carbon money. We know that this is the Trudeau carbon tax implementation plan. This is the plan that brings in the Liberal's plan federally for carbon pricing because they have already said that they will implement it, and the Premier has no tools to fight it. We've seen the court case fail in Saskatchewan, and we know it's going to continue to fail elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, what this is is that member and members across the aisle in the government saying that they're okay with Ottawa controlling our money, and I think that's not okay. I think what we should be doing is that we should be committing to saying that Albertans deserve a plan that works for them. They deserve a made-in-Alberta plan. I think that's what, if we went to a committee, we'd be able to talk about, we'd be able to fight for, and we'd be able to work out the nuances of.

Now, unfortunately, it looks like members of the government are okay with Ottawa controlling our finances here in Alberta. It looks like members of the government are not only okay with it; they won't even speak to it, Madam Speaker. They'll refuse and deflect, and they won't even mention that, really, this brings in the Trudeau carbon tax. This is the Trudeau carbon tax implementation act, and members of the government ought to know that. If they had read the bill, they would very clearly have been able to see that this brings in a federal carbon tax. If they had read the news, they would be able to see that this brings in a federal carbon tax. Now, we can really clearly see that members of the government are okay with that. In fact, the Premier actually said that he was okay with a federal carbon tax himself.

Madam Speaker, I am actually quite concerned with that. My thought being, of course, that Albertans should be able to control their own futures, and Albertans should be able to control their own carbon monies and where we direct those projects. That's why I spoke at length about transit opportunities across this province. That's why I spoke at length about community projects and things like solar panels and investing in education for transition jobs right here in Alberta, because what that member opposite just said and what Conservatives across the aisle have been saying for the last few days here is that they're okay with Ottawa taking that money, putting it in their general revenue, and not sending a cent of it back here to Alberta. That's what they're okay with when they vote against this referral.

They are saying that they don't trust Alberta's own government to run the carbon levy. They trust Ottawa more, and I don't think that's the right way to go. Madam Speaker, I think very clearly that

the Premier trusts his friends in Ottawa, the Premier trusts the Trudeau carbon tax. We here in the opposition don't. We think very clearly that we want to invest in Alberta-made plans, and we want an Alberta-made plan that keeps jobs, keeps investment, and keeps a project right here in Alberta. We want to make sure we can commit to those projects right here in Alberta, and we know that we won't be able to do that if the Premier is allowed to implement Trudeau's carbon tax.

We know that these projects are essential to our communities, and I know that some of those projects are probably in the hon. member's community as well. When we look at those projects, we can see very clearly that I don't trust, and I don't think any of my hon. colleagues here should trust either, that the federal government would know the nuances of those as well as anybody in this Chamber because the members in this Chamber are elected from their communities. We hear from our community members every single day, so we know to come back here and ask and say: why is our carbon plan not being invested in our communities?

But when it goes to Ottawa, Madam Speaker, when the Premier and the Conservatives are allowed to implement Trudeau's carbon tax, we will have no say. We will have no say on where that money goes, and I'm not okay with that. I don't think Conservatives should be okay with that, but if they're not willing to stand up and speak to that, Madam Speaker, it's very simple, that they are okay with that. They are okay with the Trudeau carbon tax implementation plan. That's not what we here in the opposition believe is right for Alberta. That's not what I think Albertans believe is right for Alberta, and that's not what I believe voters believe is right for Alberta. I think we should make sure we have a plan that works and is made right here in Alberta.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Any other members wishing to speak to the referral amendment? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise on this amendment to refer this bill to the Economic Future Committee that was so thoughtfully brought forward by my colleague from Edmonton-Manning.

First of all, I'd like to preface my statement by saying that, you know, it feels strange for me to be standing up and recommending that we send bills to committee when I spent most of the time in the 29th Legislature arguing why we shouldn't be sending bills to committee.

3:50

I think there's an important difference to be made in that when the members opposite continually referred all of our bills related to the climate leadership plan to committee, that was an obvious stalling tactic, and then they just made up the reasons for referring it to committee on the spot. In this case when I'm arguing to refer this to committee, it's because we actually need to go through the process of consulting with the people of Alberta about what the impacts of implementing the Trudeau carbon tax will be on the people of Alberta. Make no mistake, Bill 1 is the Trudeau carbon tax implementation act, because as soon as Alberta repeals our carbon tax, the very next day Ottawa will impose their carbon tax on us, Madam Speaker.

How much consultation did the federal government do with stakeholders in Alberta about their federal carbon tax? Zero, Madam Speaker. The federal government didn't do any consultations with the people of Alberta about their federal carbon tax because they thought it wasn't going to apply here. They

deemed that the carbon tax programs that we had implemented, the economy-wide price on carbon as well as the carbon competitiveness and investment regulation, were compliant with the intent of the federal carbon price and didn't need to be refined or consulted on in any way.

Now that this gang here across the way has decided to throw out the carbon tax plan and replace it with who knows what, we're going to be saddled with the Trudeau carbon tax, that will be imposed upon us without, actually, any consultation with the people of Alberta. I think, you know, the members opposite owe it to the people of Alberta to consult with them to make sure that everybody understands what the implications of imposing the Trudeau carbon tax on the people of Alberta will be, and the way to do that is to refer this bill to committee so that we can undertake that work, so that when the Member for Calgary-South East goes door-knocking the next time in his constituency, and his constituents ask him why he voted to implement the Trudeau carbon tax, he can tell them why, Madam Speaker, he voted to implement the Trudeau carbon tax. You know, I really hope that he records those conversations and posts them to social media because I'm looking forward to hearing what his constituents have to say to him when he goes to tell them that he voted to implement the Trudeau carbon tax without any consultation whatsoever.

Now, Madam Speaker, you know, I want to thank the members from Edmonton-Whitemud, Calgary-Mountain View, Edmonton-South for their thoughtful interjections on this matter, and I think they raised some important points that weren't considered when the members of the treasury benches rushed headlong to scrap the carbon tax without any thought for any of the implications.

There are three things here that I think we need to talk about, though, that haven't been mentioned. One of them is what the effect on the actual price of gas will be. Now, all of us remember those pictures of the former Member for Strathmore-Brooks, Derek Fildebrandt. He was grimly standing next to his truck, filling it up with gas on December 31, 2016, before the carbon tax was implemented. Lord knows where he was going. He probably just came from a hit and run and was on his way to poach something somewhere. Regardless of what he was doing at the time, he filled his truck up with gas, and then, you know, the joke was on him because actually the price of gas went down on January 1, 2017, even though the carbon tax had come into place.

We also remember the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford; the Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, Andrew Scheer, all grimly filling up their vehicles with gas before the Trudeau carbon tax comes in. I'm very thankful, Madam Speaker, that Mr. Scheer and Mr. Ford weren't actually at the same gas station doing that at the same time because I'm afraid that they probably would have gotten into a fatal gas fight, much like the one that the people in *Zoolander* did if you recall that movie.

The point is that everybody is concerned. The members opposite have told the people of Alberta that once the carbon tax is scrapped, our gas prices will go down, and I'm here to tell everybody and the people of Alberta that nothing could be further from the truth. Madam Speaker, you may be thinking: how could he possibly come to this conclusion? If you reduce the tax on gas by 6.6 cents a litre, obviously the price of gas is going to go down.

Well, actually, Madam Speaker, we have an instructive case study. That case study happened in the city of Lloydminster. When we implemented the price on carbon here in the province of Alberta, we debated among us cabinet ministers at length about what to do with the gas stations in the city of Lloydminster because gas stations on the Alberta side would have to raise their taxes on gas by 4.4 cents a litre at the time, but the gas stations on the Saskatchewan side of Lloydminster wouldn't have to do a similar tax increase. So

the question was: how can we compensate the gas station owners on the Alberta side, who will probably have to charge a higher price for their gas, that will make them uncompetitive with their neighbours on the Saskatchewan side of Lloydminster? Now, we of course came up with a rebate program quite unnecessarily, because what actually happened was that the gas stations on the Saskatchewan side of the border took advantage of the higher price in Alberta to raise their own prices and put the difference in their own pockets.

That's exactly what is going to happen here in the province of Alberta the day after this carbon tax is scrapped. The people of Alberta are already used to paying \$1.13 a litre – this morning in my riding – so if we reduce the price of gas, if we reduce the taxes on gas by 6.6 cents, which is the carbon tax amount, what gas station owner is going to lower the price of gas by 6.6 cents when their customers are already used to paying \$1.13 a litre? Not one. There isn't a single business owner who would see the opportunity to charge 6.6 cents more in profit and not put it in their own pockets rather than giving it back to the consumers.

I am looking forward to the members opposite going out on June 1 or whenever this carbon tax is scrapped and explaining to the people of Alberta why their gas prices haven't actually gone down, Madam Speaker. I think that that's why it's important to refer this to committee. You know, we need to understand the impacts of shifting the difference in prices of gas and taxes on the actual price of consumer goods in this province, and I'm looking forward to the members opposite explaining to that committee why it is they favour lining the pockets of big oil companies by letting them inflate their gas prices rather than keeping the money for the people of Alberta to invest in the useful carbon reduction initiatives that our government brought in over the past two years.

Now, the second point that I'd like to make that hasn't yet been raised by my colleagues is one that actually should be near and dear to the hearts of Conservatives because they are nothing if not enamoured with finances and free markets. Every major financial institution and large industries are ringing the alarm bells, saying that we need to do something immediately to act on climate change because the economy is at risk. The Bank of Canada last week announced that they view climate change as a major risk. The Bank of England has said this for a number of years now, and, in fact, insurance companies have been raising the issue of the effects on the insurance companies.

I'd just like to bring up a quote from Kathy Bardswick, who was president and CEO of The Co-operators. She said in 2016, prior to the introduction of our carbon price, that

as an insurance company, we understand the risks associated with climate change and are supportive of carbon pricing as an important step in transitioning to a low-carbon economy. We have identified climate change as one of three focus areas for our impact investments, and hope to invest alongside the government of Alberta to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions as we work toward our ambitious impact investing target.

What is the impact on the insurance industry going to be in Alberta when we implement the Trudeau carbon tax? We don't know because nobody from the federal government has actually consulted with the Alberta insurance industry to determine what the impact is going to be. Like I said, Madam Speaker, the federal government assumed that our carbon tax system would stay in place and didn't do any work to understand the effects.

4:00

I also want to know. It's not just the impacts on the insurance industry, Madam Speaker. Not too many of my constituents are very fond of the insurance companies that they have to deal with,

but they understand that that's a reality of the system that we live in. But they don't want their insurance premiums on their houses to go up; that's for sure. Certainly, with the increased risks of flood and fire that we're subjecting Alberta to by not acting on climate change, what are the impacts going to be on the insurance premiums of the constituents in my riding who need to have home insurance? We don't know. We don't know because we're just rushing headlong into implementing the Trudeau carbon tax without any consultation, so we're leaving the homeowners in my constituency uncertain about what's going to happen with their insurance premiums on their homes, the largest investment that many of them will make in their lives.

I think we owe it to the people in my riding as well as in everybody's ridings here in this Chamber to fully understand what the impacts on insurance are going to be by implementing the Trudeau carbon tax or any other proposed measure that this government wants to take on climate change.

There are other significant risks to the economy that are potentially going to occur. Robert Walker, vice-president of ESG services and ethical funds, NEI Investments, said in 2016:

We believe that a robust and credible climate change policy will be critical to the success of Alberta-based companies, including the energy sector, by reducing investor uncertainty. And implementing a broad-based price on carbon is one of the most important near-term actions governments can take towards a credible policy. Investors are particularly interested in the opportunities that can spring from an effective carbon pricing regime and we believe Alberta is well-positioned to take advantage of the growing investor appetite for these low-carbon opportunities.

Many of the constituents in my riding rely on the energy sector for their well-being and their livelihood, and here we have a prominent investor saying that action on climate change is needed to improve investor certainty in the energy sector, Madam Speaker. So we need to refer this to committee so that I can go back to my constituents and tell them what impact the members opposite's failure to deal with climate change will have on the future of their jobs.

Now, my third point is one that hasn't yet been raised, and that's on the issue of migration, Madam Speaker. I've read a number of articles over the last few days as climate change has become more and more of a focal point around the world. There are a number of interesting studies that are under way, computer modelling done on the impact that climate change will have on world-wide migration. We already know, from the experience in Syria and the millions of migrants who have left that country for other countries around the world, how destabilizing politically mass migrations like that can be. With climate change we can expect multiple Syrias occurring all at the same time, and we need to know what economic impact that will have on the province of Alberta as people from around the world leave their homes because they've become unlivable due to inaction on climate change.

I know that many of the members opposite share a number of concerns around migration, shall we say. Of course, during the election it came to light that the UCP candidate, at the time, for Calgary-Mountain View was very afraid of whites being displaced from their homeland, and we know that the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat and the Member for Calgary-Acadia supported her in those views. You know, we have a number of concerning statements about migration of Muslim people here to the province of Alberta. The Member for Livingstone-Macleod, of course, is on the record as sharing those concerns. And, of course, we have a number of people who seem to believe that there's a conspiracy . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any comments or questions under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Wonderful. Thank you. I do appreciate the member's comments. I think they're important questions, especially when it comes to migration and how the people on the other side of this House respect those people who are being displaced by climate change.

But I want to move to a separate point. I know that over the last four years you had the honour of being the Minister of Advanced Education. I'm just hoping to find out if you had conversations with postsecondary institutions around the steps that they wanted to take towards addressing climate change and the work that you were able to do in conjunction with them and how repealing such an important piece of legislation will affect those decisions for those institutions.

Thank you.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you. I really appreciate the question from my colleague from Edmonton-West Henday. I'm pleased to speak about some of the actions that we took to deal with the issue of climate change in the postsecondary sector.

Now, in my time as Advanced Education minister we approved a number of loans to the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary, in particular, to undertake a number of initiatives to improve energy efficiency and to develop renewable energy capacity on those campuses. These are long-term programs, and the actions that both universities have taken have increased the sustainability of the activities of those institutions significantly as well as saved significant numbers of operational dollars, that can be better used for supporting students in classrooms and not being spent on things like electricity and heat. Saving that money on electricity and heat is particularly important given the fact that we've got members opposite who are keen to take a giant axe to the budgets of postsecondary education institutions, so they'll need every dollar that they can get to support students in classrooms. I'm very pleased that we've been able to support them in reducing their energy costs over the last three years.

In addition to that, Madam Speaker, of course, the Member for Edmonton-West Henday would be interested in knowing that we supported the development of a number of renewable energy programs at institutions all across the province. I think of the alternative energy program at the institution of NAIT. I've toured that facility a number of times. Students there learn about solar power, wind power in particular and about other forms of renewable energy.

I was down at Lethbridge College a year or so ago, and I got to talk to students who were in the windmill technician program, Madam Speaker. It was interesting because a number of those students in the windmill technician program were people who had lost their jobs in the oil and gas sector and were looking to the wind sector for employment. Up until April 16 it looked like employment in the wind sector was going to be a burgeoning sector, a promising sector, but of course now the Member for Lethbridge-East has to go back to those students at Lethbridge College and tell them that he's intent on throwing them out of work. I certainly don't envy him the task although he was quite open about wanting to throw those people out of work. My thoughts are with those students who thought that they were going into an area that was going to provide them a good job that would be able to support them and their families. I'm sorry that the Member for Lethbridge-East is so intent on throwing them back on the unemployment line after our government had thrown them a line of help.

Madam Speaker, certainly there were others. I just went to Red Deer College a couple of weeks ago. We had lent Red Deer College millions of dollars to build their new student residence. The interesting thing about that student residence is that it's net zero ready. It's covered with thousands of solar panels that will provide a continuous supply of renewable energy. Red Deer College is probably the most advanced postsecondary institution in this province in terms of supporting renewable energy development on its campus. When I talked to the president of Red Deer College just a couple of weeks ago, he was saying that their investment in renewable energy will provide millions of dollars a year in savings. In fact, they were able to pay off their investments in renewable energy in just three years, which is a remarkable payoff time for renewable energy. It was very good that Red Deer College was able to . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, are there any more speakers on the referral amendment? The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure for me to rise to be able to speak to why it is that this bill should be referred to committee in order for us to ensure that it is the subject of considerable levels of second thought. It is primarily because this bill does the wrong thing. It represents the wrong decision, and it is the crystallization of a path backwards for the people of Alberta.

4:10

I do appreciate that the path forward is not an easy one, that it's not paved with gold. It's not paved with asphalt. It is a path that is challenging, but sometimes that's what you get. Leadership is defined by whether you continue to forge forward or whether you just pack everything up and you put your hands over your ears and you close your eyes and you just sort of start stamping your feet and you say: "I don't want to go down any path anymore. I just want to go back the way I came." If you do that, Madam Speaker, that's not leadership. That is a profound failure of leadership. Unfortunately, that is exactly what this bill represents.

Now, as you know, it was a significant element of the record of our government that we committed time, effort, and, frankly, political capital, quite a good deal of political capital – arguably too much political capital, but what are you going to do? – to the matter of standing up for Alberta's future, standing up for Alberta's youth, standing up for the health of all Albertans, standing up for the ability of our economy to innovate and adjust to a new reality, standing up for our energy industry and supporting their work to be able to transition to a more sustainable production model that would ensure that markets for their product remained robust for decades to come. Sometimes that kind of work isn't easy. Sometimes just sort of fiddling and hoping that the status quo delivers what you need is not enough, and sometimes you have to dig in. That's exactly what our government did. Many speakers have spoken already about the fact that our climate leadership plan was the product of extensive research by experts and also extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders who came to the table with high levels of knowledge and competing interests in order to establish the best path forward.

Right from the very outset, Madam Speaker, I certainly took the position and I believe most other members of our then government took the position that if we continue to address this debate as though every effort taken to protect the environment is somehow an attack on another person's job or, conversely, if we approach it where we assume that every effort to create a job is somehow an attack on the

environment, then what we will do is continue to do the things that we have been doing in the past, which amount to failure, which amount to getting to that place in the road where we can't go forward with the same vehicles that brought us to this point in the road. We would fail on creating jobs. We would fail on protecting current jobs. We would fail on laying out a path for new jobs that would last decades and decades to come, and we would also fail on protecting our forests, protecting our air, protecting our water, and protecting, quite frankly, the future of our world.

So what we set about to do was to begin to lay out the first steps in a path to try to bring these two interests together, to say: we are going to stand up and protect the environment, and we are going to do so in a pragmatic way that allows us to also ensure that we continue to promote economic growth and that we continue to promote the kind of innovation and forward-thinking that actually lays a foundational path for generations to come so that our children and our children's children and our great-great-grandchildren could look back to what we were doing and say: "Right there – right there – was where the right decisions were made. We turned the corner, and we started on the right path, and we stopped being a bunch of climate-denying people who were making the problem worse."

So that's what we were trying to do, and I delivered that message across the country. I delivered that message to environmentalists. I delivered that message to members of my own political party. I delivered that message not just in, you know, rural Saskatchewan, but I also delivered that message on Bay Street. I delivered that message in Montreal. I delivered that message in Quebec City. I delivered that message in Vancouver. I delivered that message to everyone because the fact of the matter is that as a nation we need to be more strategic not only in terms of supporting our energy, our oil and gas resources in order to get the most value for these incredible resources that we have in our province and in our country but also to be strategic about how we reposition our economy to be ready for the inevitable pressures that are going to come to bear upon all of us if we fail to act to combat climate change. That is what underlines our efforts with respect to putting in place the climate leadership plan.

Now, we were not alone in the efforts that we put into this. We were joined by forward-looking energy executives and industry players. We were joined – heaven forbid – by scientists, multiple scientists who had done a lot of research on this. We were joined by First Nations people. We were joined by community members who were concerned about the future of their community. We were also joined, interestingly, by fairly forward-thinking members of the Conservative Party who also understood that pricing carbon in the long run was the path forward for any government to make significant progress on fighting climate change.

Now, members opposite like to say things like, "Oh, well, it never had any effect at all" and "The Premier didn't know what the impact was of her plan." In fact, that is not true. What we know, to roughly this point, is that just over the last two and a half years we've been able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the province of Alberta by about seven megatonnes, which is about the same as the overall emissions of the whole province of Manitoba. We've had at least a couple of studies which have talked about how our air quality has improved considerably in and around Edmonton and in other parts of the province because of the accelerated reduction in the burning of coal. So, in fact, in a very short time what we've actually seen is progress.

Let me just say, Madam Speaker, that on the matters of accelerating the coal phase-out, even though some of the members opposite, probably not a lot of them – they don't even necessarily

agree because it's really quite an interesting collection of disparate humans over there – will look to the federal Conservative efforts to reduce coal emissions, when they did that, they didn't give a second thought to the people whose jobs would be displaced as a result of that coal reduction. We, however, did, so one of the things that our climate leadership plan paid for was a just transition program for people employed in the coal industry to make sure that they had a just transition to other forms of work. That was not something that the federal Conservatives ever gave the slightest little second thought to.

One of the other things that we were also very proud to be able to do with the funds from the climate leadership program goes to the matter of jobs. Members opposite suggest that this bill will create 6,000 jobs. Well, that's just great. The climate leadership plan has already created over 7,000 and actually planned to create tens of thousands more than that, so that looks to me like a net loss. If you're keeping track on your old jobs-pipeline-economy chart there, you might want to just go: "Oops, I guess we're starting by going back a couple of thousand. But, hey, who's counting?" We are, just to be clear.

4:20

Nonetheless, our plan was creating jobs. One of the places we were creating jobs was in the renewable energy sector. Here we are in Alberta, one of the sunniest places in the world. Unfortunately, for the people around Lethbridge it's also one of the windiest places in the world. Yet for decades we were way behind the rest of the world, way behind the rest of the continent in terms of investing in renewable energy. It was just ridiculous. You know, renewable energy: this is a great sector. Why do people have to feel threatened? It's, like: oh, well, if we invest in renewable energy, then somehow our friends in oil and gas are going to not do as well. Well, no. Everybody does well if you diversify your energy economy. Certainly, our climate does well if you diversify your energy economy, particularly to bring along more renewables. Certainly, people who are breathing our air do well, and ultimately renewable energy will be less expensive in the long term.

But it won't be if you do nothing – if you do nothing – if you do everything you can to stop it from growing, which was the principle and the primary policy directive of the previous government. But we didn't do that. We put in place an innovative plan to incent renewable energy. So when we introduced the auctions for renewable energy, we found that in the province of Alberta we were able to buy renewable energy at absolutely the lowest price anywhere in Canada and in one case the lowest price anywhere in North America and in another case the second-lowest price anywhere in North America. It was an incredible success.

While we were doing this, do you know what else was happening, Madam Speaker? Here's the thing. We were creating jobs. We were creating jobs, and we were attracting investors in high tech, attracting investors in innovative renewable energy technologies right here to the province of Alberta. Most Albertans will tell you that they want to see job creation, but they also want to see economic diversification. They want to see forward-looking plans that will actually ensure that their kids are working 20 years from now as well, and that's what our plan did.

Our plan also, of course, invested in public transit, something that, again, the previous government was quite hostile or at the very least resistant to investing in, and it was a significant investment in public transit. That's all up in the air now. We don't know what's going to happen with that.

We also invested in rebates for two-thirds of Albertans. Two-thirds of Alberta households received rebates from the climate leadership plan. Low-income households received the most.

Indeed, low-income households probably received more than they paid, and that's not unreasonable because those are the folks who were struggling the most with the increased costs.

That was a good thing because the folks who actually burned the most emissions, not in terms of business or industry but in terms of regular folks, are folks with more money. You know, you buy that third truck to pull the camper, and then you've got the boat, and you've got the this and you've got the that, and you've got the 4,000-square-foot house. Yeah, you are paying more in carbon tax. So be it. If that's the choice you made, well, then, pay your carbon tax, and we'll use that money to reduce emissions elsewhere. If you don't want to pay the carbon tax, then reduce your footprint. For people who couldn't afford to make those kinds of adjustments, who couldn't afford to make those kinds of choices, we were providing a rebate so that they weren't actually losing. That's, of course, all gone as well. We're losing the ability to act to protect us from the consequences of climate change or to reduce climate change.

Before I finish, I want to talk a little bit about the consequences of climate change. Another big piece of what our climate leadership plan was dedicated to addressing was the matter of adaptation, something that is incredibly underconsidered in public policy in all provinces and also nationally. The costs of adaptation are growing every day. Of course, we can all look at what's happening in northern Alberta right now and know that this is a problem that's not going away any time soon.

Fire is not the only hazard. Flooding is also a hazard. Melting is a hazard. Rising sea levels are a hazard. Whatever pests and things which are attacking our forests are a hazard. All these things happen because of climate change. So if we fail to act to reduce our emissions, which, it is pretty clear, we're already on track to – if we do manage to reduce our emissions enough, we're not going to do it fast enough to completely mitigate the effects of climate change, so we're already in a position where we need to start planning for funding the cost of adaptation.

How are we going to do that? Are we just going to do like the Premier apparently did? I don't know – I stand to be corrected if I'm incorrect – but I had a person in the street tell me the other day that he made some comment about: well, if you're living up around High Level, it's on the frontier; you need to expect fires to some degree. Now, maybe that's not correct – and I apologize if it is not – but it was out there in the world of people talking to each other. Either way, the reality is that where there are forests, there are fires, and where there are communities that are surrounded by forests, there is risk, and where there is risk, there is cost. There is cost to the economy.

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar: I walked in to hear him talking about insurance costs. We know that insurance costs are out of control. I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker. That kills jobs. If the cost of insuring activity becomes prohibitive, so too does investment in things that create jobs. So that's another thing that we are no longer dealing with here in Alberta.

We were leading the country in terms of taking action. We were setting a framework for how we could preserve and protect jobs while beginning the good work of protecting Albertans from the impact of climate change and also combatting the forces that actually cause climate change. We were balancing that with our work to get access to tidewater and to build national support for access to tidewater. We have to understand that we are Canadians, and lots of Canadians care about climate change. We can stomp our feet and say, "Oh, you shouldn't care about climate change because

that's inconvenient for us," but – you know what? – we're not going to win that argument.

The way we're going to get a national consensus on the future of our energy industry and the need for national infrastructure is by listening to other Canadians and finding forward-looking solutions, and this bill represents the opposite of that. This bill represents pandering to folks over a series of costs which, quite frankly, will pale in comparison to the actual costs which are about to hit many Albertans through a whole range of plans that these guys have in their back pocket. That's a whole other thing.

Of course, one of the other things that we did with the climate leadership plan was that it allowed us to pay the cost of dropping the small-business tax by a third, further supporting their efforts as we move forward.

At the end of the day, we can go forward, or we can either try to balance or not balance. In fact, I reject this idea of balancing. What we have to do is align. We have to align environmental, responsible, thoughtful, evidence-based, pragmatic, well-consulted-on action to protect our environment with ongoing work to develop a sustainable, job-creating economy for the future, not only in the nonrenewable energy sector but in the renewable energy sector and in many, many, many other sectors. That is what this plan was designed to do. Now we are going back on the future, going back by a decade.

As members opposite have already heard, I'm sure, from folks in our caucus, what we are doing is that we are walking back a made-in-Alberta plan that was created through months and months and months of consultation, actually years, because many elements of it came into effect even after we introduced the climate leadership plan, and then we went off to work with different sectors who were impacted by it. So our plan was developed through at least three and a half years of consultation with Albertans to find a plan that was made in Alberta and that worked for Albertans, that worked with Alberta's trade-exposed industries, that worked with Albertan communities that were inappropriately or disproportionately negatively impacted by the plan. That's what it was, and it's now going to be replaced by a made-in-Ottawa plan.

4:30

You know, it's all great. As I've said before, the members opposite are all interested in creating new jobs for lawyers. As you've all heard, one particular new job that they ought to be creating is that for a special prosecutor and people to work with that special prosecutor to save the justice system from the imminent demise that it is facing under the current leadership. But separate and apart from that, I'm not really keen to create jobs for lawyers, which is all the whole, you know: I'm going to tilt at this judicial windmill, I'm going to tilt at that judicial windmill, and I'm going to rant and I'm going to rave and I'm going to rage about all that is unfair. That's what the plan is, but what we know is that the courts have said that by replacing a made-in-Alberta plan, it is very likely that Albertans will be faced with a made-in-Ottawa plan.

Now, maybe the Premier is super pumped and actually happy about that because I feel that he probably thinks he has a great deal of agency in Ottawa. It's kind of his home away from home or his home away from where he visits over here in Alberta. I don't know. But most Albertans are quite keen . . .

Mr. Schmidt: Does his mom have a basement in Ottawa, too?

Ms Notley: I don't know. There may be additional basements in Ottawa. Perhaps it feels very comfortable there.

The reality is that Albertans would like a plan that was developed in Alberta so that they had access to the decision-makers in order to

engage and to do the appropriate back and forth and responsive policy-making that happens when you have an engaged government that actually cares about the province and lives in the province and actually works with people in the province.

That's a better way to develop a climate leadership plan than to say to the federal government: here; you do it, and then that will give us a convenient political target for us to rage against because, at the end of the day, for us it's not really about good public policy, it's not really about protecting the province and the people of this province from the consequences of climate change, it's not really about diversifying and innovating our economy for now and for the future; it's just about politics and game playing and clickbait and all the things that happen these days in the new political world.

The problem is that we are then left with the collateral damage of that approach, and that collateral damage: we're seeing it in northern Alberta right now. We're seeing it in the thousands of Alberta students who expressed their concern about the jaw-dropping levels of frustration that they feel because people keep saying things that are disconnected from science and facts and real news and, you know, just come up with empty contradictory talking points to justify doing nothing to protect their future, doing nothing to protect our climate, and doing nothing to prepare our economy for the consequences of climate change. We have folks like that who are very, very concerned, and they're not hearing their voice represented at all by the members opposite.

I appreciate that, again, these folks aren't voters, and if your only job is to get re-elected or get elected here in Alberta so that you can fund your campaign to run for office in Ottawa and use taxpayers' dollars to do that, well, then, why worry about the facts? Why worry about the science? Why worry about the public policy consequences of this profoundly irresponsible decision that you're making?

At the end of the day, you know, we've talked about the 4 and a half billion dollar hole that's being built into the budget through the corporate tax cuts, but, in fact, this also is creating a hole in the provincial budget. Many of the important infrastructure projects which were funded through the climate leadership plan – the members opposite suggest that they may still fund some of them, probably not all of them but some of them.

But the funding of those projects: that's transfers to municipalities to get those projects funded, which means it's not even part of your capital budget, my friends; it's coming out of your operating budget each and every year. Now you've just shut off another revenue stream that would have been dedicated to supporting the cost of building the green line, the cost of building the Edmonton west LRT – all those kinds of things – the cost, actually, of the Springbank protection because, of course, that too was an adaptation measure. All those things now are going to be coming out of that budget, which apparently – anyway, math is a thing that, though hard, people should really dig into, and it's not working for you right now. Bill 1 is going to be another challenge to your math.

Ultimately, I believe that all Canadians do want to see us take the responsible path towards being a leading country, internationally, on combating climate change. This whole, "Oh, these other guys over there are burning more carbon than us, so why should I do anything?", honest to God, sounds like a conversation between three-year-olds on a playground. The fact of the matter is that the consequences of climate change are profound to humans all across this globe. We are public policy-makers. We are leaders. We are decision-makers, and the matter of environmental stewardship is squarely within our set of responsibilities.

So in making your first decision, a decision to take that responsibility, wrap it up in, you know, a garbage bag and hide it in

the bottom of grandma's closet somewhere and hope nobody ever remembers to ask you about it: that, my friends, is the opposite of leadership. It is the kind of act that you will actually have as part of your legacy. You will. I'm sure right now as you're sort of running your polling and you're thinking: "Oh, yay, look at us. We got 55 per cent in the election. Aren't we the smartest people in the world?" Let me just say that 20 years from now I hope each and every one of you will feel super good about talking to your grandkids about your legacy: a legacy of walking away from your responsibility to protect our environment, to reposition our energy industry, to invest in innovation, to improve and enhance renewable energy, to build public transit, and to protect our air and our land and our water. All of these things that you are doing now are not that.

Then on top of it all – I mean, I know Bill 1 doesn't speak to the emissions cap, but of course that is a critical part of our climate leadership plan. Should this government proceed with a plan to remove the emissions cap and pretty much start campaigning against our pipeline in jurisdictions where we really need to continue to build support, well, then I think that that, too, would be a betrayal to the very people you spoke to in the last election: the people of Alberta who need jobs, who need a strong energy industry, who are looking for leadership on getting market access secured. So I will say that if you don't keep that emissions cap, you are effectively beginning the campaign against the pipeline.

I will also say that this idea of a war room where you choose to rather than adopting the approach that I was talking about earlier of aligning environmental action with economic growth and instead demonizing anybody who speaks about the real science and the real concerns about climate change, that too will be seen as the kind of action that will polarize people in Canada and push them away from supporting our efforts to get our products to tidewater. That's what Canada is built on. Polarizing for political gain, again: lovely short-term wins for folks, but that also represents some profound long-term losses.

4:40

I look forward to having conversations with folks about how we can amend Bill 1 to minimize and mitigate the worst of what it contains. I certainly look forward to hearing from members opposite if they have any actual plans to combat climate change. I get that they talked about cancelling our plan to carbon price. I get that the people of Alberta voted for that. It is what it is. But I don't believe that the people of Alberta ever voted for the government to walk away from their responsibility, and so far I have heard absolutely nothing from this government other than a commitment to going back roughly 10 years and essentially walking away from their responsibilities. That, Mr. Speaker, is a very disappointing thing to many, many Albertans.

That is why of course I think that this referral should succeed. Time should be taken to think about how it is that the many, many elements of our climate leadership plan can be preserved, if not through carbon pricing then through other mechanisms, or whether we're simply throwing those away along with the carbon-pricing mechanism which we, as I've said before, know many, many people, Nobel prize winning economists – I know, they're just a bunch of eggheads, those guys. But you know what? They are Nobel prize winning economists – and then a bunch of folks who are actually Conservatives, too, who all see carbon pricing as something valuable in and of itself, as a means of reducing emissions separate and apart from the other initiatives that I've just spoken about that we in Alberta need support for because we are a province that has had tremendous wealth and tremendous prosperity as a result of our nonrenewable energy sector.

But if we are going to maintain that wealth and maintain that prosperity, we are going to have to pull together through the resources that one would have otherwise had through the climate leadership plan to support that transition to other, more innovative ways of doing things, including support of the nonrenewable sector itself to finding more innovative ways of doing things. In failing to do that, what we likely are doing is just setting up a whole bunch of different sectors' failures, and that is unfortunate for the people in this province.

So I hope that folks will vote in favour of this motion for referral. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar rising on 29(2)(a).

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I certainly listened very intently to what the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona had to say. Of course, it should be no surprise that I hang on her every word. I only wish that we could amend the standing orders to allow her to speak for longer on all of these bills that come forward. Perhaps I will bring forward some kind of amendment to allow her to do just that when the government motions come up for debate.

The Speaker: Just to add as a point of clarification, the member did have an additional 60 minutes remaining in her time to speak.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, of course, she was asked to keep her remarks brief. In her defence, this is probably the least amount of time she has spoken in one go. So I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona for keeping things as succinct as she did.

But, you know, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona ended her remarks with some comments that she made about Conservative thought leaders and their stance on climate change and carbon pricing. It's interesting to me. I wonder if the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has some comments to make as well because she has been a long-time observer of Conservative politics and politicians here in Alberta, and if she ever thought she would live to see the day where Conservative politicians in this province are out of line with people like Margaret Thatcher, who spoke at length in 1989 at the United Nations about the dangers that global warming posed to the world.

Of course, Margaret Thatcher was even better than Stephen Harper at throwing coal workers out of work although that was more of an ideological assault on unions than any concern for climate change at the time. In fact, the British Conservative Party has been very successful at transitioning Great Britain off coal-fired power. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, the country of Great Britain went for eight days without generating a single kilowatt hour of electricity from coal, which is remarkable given that the entire country of Great Britain is essentially one giant lump of coal floating in the North Sea.

The members opposite are out of step with their Conservative brethren in the U.K., both past and current. They're certainly out of step with their forefather Preston Manning, who of course has been a long-time proponent of carbon pricing here in Canada. They are certainly out of line even with Republican lawmakers like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who implemented very proactive renewable energy efficiency policies in the state of California, things that have been continued by his successors. Of course, Arnold Schwarzenegger has taken President Trump, the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake's favourite President, to task for his inaction on climate change.

I'd like the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona's thoughts on why this group of Conservatives is so far out of line with what

conservatives in the United States and world-wide have been saying on carbon pricing and the need to take action on climate change.

Ms Notley: Well, that was entertaining. You know, to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, I think it really comes down to this. It comes down to the degree to which one is going to abandon hard-evidence-based, good-for-folks public policy-making because that's what government does in order to pursue very short-term, crass, uninformed political objectives. There's no question that these folks here decided that running against the carbon tax was going to be the best way to get themselves back here so that they could then fund their leader's inevitable attempt to run a campaign in Ottawa, whether for himself or for his colleagues. What we do know is that it will probably be using taxpayers' dollars through the energy war room.

That being said, all I would say is that I would urge the members opposite to learn as much about . . . [Ms Notley's speaking time expired]

The Speaker: I see the hon. Government House Leader rising.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to be able to rise on this referral motion. First off, I enjoyed the comments – well, I don't know if "enjoyed" is the right word, but I listened with interest to the comments from the Leader of the Official Opposition. Just on her closing remarks in her question in regard to campaigning with our federal colleagues in Ottawa, let me be very clear to the House. This side of the House, this government, will not be like the NDP when they were in power, spending their time trying to shore up Justin Trudeau, who has spent his time actively attacking our province. Instead, we will stand with Albertans, and we will work very hard to get Andrew Scheer elected the next Prime Minister of this country. We will not be ashamed of that at any time.

Now, what was interesting to me as we listened to the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition's comments in this place – I respect the leader of that party. She shares an office that both you and I held at one time, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure she's excited that our pictures will hang together on the wall. I think that probably is maybe not something that excites her, but I think it's an interesting fact.

I'd like to recap some other facts maybe for the benefit of my little brother, the hon. Member for Calgary-Klein, and some of our other colleagues who have joined us here that weren't here in the 29th Legislature and did not get to experience the long and sad story of the Alberta carbon tax that was brought in under the NDP and the history of what the NDP did with the carbon tax, which takes us to the decision that Albertans made on April 16, quite frankly, and what this government is now doing on their behalf as per their instructions. Your constituents and my constituents' instructions, without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, were to bring forward this bill and make sure that we defeat the carbon tax.

4:50

Now, what happened . . . [interjection] I see that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has lots of stuff to say. He likes to heckle in the House, Mr. Speaker, and that's where he goes.

What he doesn't like to talk about is the fact that he belonged to a government that campaigned in 2015 and never once mentioned the carbon tax and then came to this place and sat on this side of the House and then brought in the largest tax increase in the history of this province without even telling Albertans. This side of the House, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this bill that is before this House, without a doubt, was very clear with Albertans what our intention was, and they overwhelmingly voted in support of removing that

carbon tax. That's a big difference. That's just one fact. I've got a few more I want to talk about. But that's a big difference between us and the NDP. We said that we were going to bring it . . . [interjection] I know the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar loves to do this. You see him heckling away, Mr. Speaker, through you to him. He should probably start to re-examine the fact that his party was absolutely decimated as a result of some decisions that he was a part of, which include the carbon tax.

This side of the House made a commitment; we're going to follow through on that commitment.

You know, when you look at the carbon tax as a whole which was brought in by the NDP government and we listen to the Leader of the Opposition talk about all the things that she thinks will go wrong as a result of the carbon tax being repealed, it's disappointing for her to even make that argument when she herself as Premier of Alberta has said – and she said it on TV and said it elsewhere – that she has no evidence that the carbon tax was even working. That's what she said. She could not bring forward any facts. You can watch. It was a New Year's or a Christmas interview, either just before Christmas or for year-enders, in which she makes clear that she could not back up that the carbon tax had any positive impact.

Well, what I can tell you, though, is that the carbon tax had a significant negative impact, which that party across from us ignored when they sat on these benches. My colleagues and myself, when we sat in opposition, continued to raise those negative concerns that were happening to our constituents, and they ignored it. They ignored the fact that our homeless shelters were struggling under their carbon tax. They ignored the fact that our food banks were struggling. They ignored the fact that our K to 12 education system was struggling as a result of it. They ignored the fact that our municipalities were struggling, that our nonprofit sector, which is the social safety net of our communities, was struggling.

They hate it when I bring this up, Mr. Speaker, but it's so appalling what they did. They told seniors in Sundre to go have a fundraiser to pay for the carbon tax. That's what their focus is on. The opposition wants us to forget about that. Well, Albertans didn't forget about that on April 16. They didn't forget about that.

What's interesting to me is that when the hon. Leader of the Opposition rises on this referral amendment and goes on her version of the history of the carbon tax and how great it is for this province, she just glosses over the fact that Albertans were hurt by her decision to bring in this carbon tax. Albertans were hurt by that opposition's decision when they were in power to bring a carbon tax that caused significant trouble for your constituents, my constituents, and their constituents, and they passed judgment on April 16. My colleagues that were here in the 29th Legislature will recall that we often said that to the government. We warned the then government of the day that if they continued down this track with the carbon tax, when Albertans finally made the decision, when the boss finally made a decision, they were going to cast a judgment that was not going to be very good for the NDP because they ignored what the people of Alberta wanted.

Further to that, they made it worse for them at the very time, Mr. Speaker, that we were in a recession. We were bleeding jobs all over under the NDP at the very time that we would go home to our constituents and have to sit in our offices with people that were losing their homes, unable to pay their bills as a result of other economic decisions that the NDP were making. They would come to this place and sit in these very benches that we have the privilege of sitting in now and completely ignore that and sometimes even belittle it. They called Albertans Chicken Little for bringing up their concerns with the carbon tax and other names, including sewers rats, which is another story for a different day. That's the history that they just want to gloss over. They don't want to talk about the

history of what the carbon tax did to our constituents, and that's an important thing to talk about.

What's maybe even worse, though, is that the NDP decided that that was the direction that they wanted to go. No different from us: we've decided we want to go in a different direction as per the instructions we received from the majority of Albertans. But when they went for it – that was their plan – they told Albertans that they would gain social licence, that we would get our pipelines built, other provinces would stop blocking our energy products from getting to market, and we'd be able to overcome one of the biggest hurdles that we have in this province right now, getting our energy products to tidewater. They made a promise to Albertans that they would do that. They celebrated just outside these doors, promising that two pipelines would be built, that have not been built now.

My point is this. At the very least, if they were going to force this carbon tax on the people of Alberta and the consequences of that carbon tax on the people of Alberta, they should have been able to follow through on their commitment that we would have got the social licence, that we would have got pipelines built. I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the fact that that did not happen shows the failure of this policy. For the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition to continue to stand up and say that the carbon tax is about the environment but, at the same time, can't show how it has even helped the environment, that's a ridiculous argument. The NDP carbon tax was all about taxing Albertans, causing trouble for fixed-income seniors, causing trouble for the less fortunate in our community, the most vulnerable people inside our province. That's all the carbon tax did. The Leader of the Opposition should recognize that.

She should also recognize that it's time for her party to apologize for their behaviour. It's time for their party to apologize for not campaigning on a carbon tax, keeping it hidden from the people of Alberta and then coming here and going through with a tax that was widely unpopular. It's time for them to apologize that they did not get those pipelines built and that they did not get us social licence as a result of that even though we paid the ridiculous carbon tax for years. They should apologize to the nonprofits and the fixed-income seniors and the swimming pools that struggled under that. They should apologize for that, but they won't. Instead they'll try to stand up and double down on a policy that was overwhelmingly rejected by the majority of Albertans.

What I can tell you, though, Mr. Speaker, is that that's the difference between them and us. We campaigned for several years on the promise that we would get rid of the job-killing carbon tax. We campaigned on the promise that that carbon tax would be gone if we were given the privilege of forming government in this House. We made it very, very clear. We made it very, very clear what we would do here. Unlike the last government, who hid it from Albertans, we told Albertans what we wanted to do, and we gave them a chance to cast judgment. They cast judgment on April 16, and this opposition now trying to bring referral amendments to block the will of the majority of Albertans is ridiculous.

The majority of Albertans weighed in on April 16. I know that your constituents, Mr. Speaker, voted in the same volume as the great constituency of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I think it was about 60 votes behind the people of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I don't know, but it was close. They made it very, very clear, just as the constituents of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre made it clear, that we were to come here and we were to follow through on our promise and repeal the carbon tax. That is what's going to happen here despite what the opposition wants to do. They can continue to try to filibuster and send things to committee and play procedural games to try to block this bill.

But the reality is that Alberta now has a government that will keep their promises, that will stand up for what they said they would do. I suspect that once they finally give up, we'll be able to finally repeal the NDP's carbon tax, and we'll be able to move this province forward. I, for one, can't wait to go back to Sundre and tell them that we did, and I suspect that you can't wait to go back to Olds and do the same.

The Speaker: Members, 29(2)(a) is available for questions and comments. I see the Member for Central Peace-Notley.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I was really enjoying the comments from the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I just want him to maybe further comment, if he has a chance here, about how many bills the NDP government actually sent to committees in their four years on this side of the House as government. I think that would be an interesting number to calculate because you wouldn't need very many fingers to do that. I don't know if it ever happened on a government bill, that it actually went to committee. I think the irony is astounding, and I would say the hypocrisy is astounding that the opposition, in fact the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, would get up here and stand for a half-hour and talk about the importance of sending this bill to committee. When they had the chance to send bills to committee, they never did.

Now, of course, there's an importance to committee work and reviewing bills at times, but we have just had an election, an election that we on this side of the House campaigned on getting rid of the carbon tax. In this election we, of course, received 55 per cent of the votes, more votes than ever cast in Alberta's history, and clearly the number one thing on the ballot question was getting rid of the carbon tax. I would actually challenge the members opposite to try to find one piece of literature, one website, anything where it was not mentioned that we were committed to getting rid of the carbon tax. I'd challenge them to do that. If there's anything, there would be very little.

5:00

Now, it was also interesting to talk about the jobs. Of course, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona got talking about how many jobs the carbon tax created, and we talk about how many jobs were lost. Of course, this doesn't take into account the tens of billions of dollars of investment that left Alberta because of this government and their policies. We can't even calculate all those job losses that this government has caused. Now, the carbon tax was one of those things that led to that investment being lost, because when corporations have an opportunity to invest, they look at all the factors involved, and obviously taxes are one of those things that they look at.

Now, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona also talked about the investments that are taking place because of the carbon tax. It's like there was no investment happening before the carbon tax came along, so up until four years ago there was never any investment happening, according to how they're talking now. That's absolutely untrue. Investment will continue in Alberta as far as the tax money being invested on behalf of Albertans here in Alberta. That will continue. To suggest that the sky is going to fall because we don't have the carbon tax and that no investment will happen on any projects is absolutely crazy.

Again I just want to point out the hypocrisy of this government talking now about having this go to committee. Now, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, when he spoke yesterday, said that everyone in Alberta is unhappy with this, and he said that no one

that voted for us expected us to do this. I mean, that's absolutely unbelievable, that those words could come out of his mouth.

Well, maybe it's not unbelievable knowing some of the other things he said, because he did say today, on the Ottawa carbon tax, that Ottawa did not consult with Albertans. Well, it just so happens that the NDP didn't consult with Albertans either, so to suggest that Ottawa is any different than the NDP is also bizarre. The previous government, the NDP opposition, did not campaign on the carbon tax. They did not tell Albertans what they were going to do until they rammed it down their throats. In fact, I think it was the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview that said: Ottawa will ram the carbon tax down their throats. Well, we've seen that happen. The previous NDP government rammed the carbon tax down Albertans' throats, so we have this situation . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

I see the Member for Edmonton-West Henday rising to speak to the referral motion.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to speak to the motion for referral of Bill 1. I have to say that I'm gravely concerned. That we're having this discussion in terms of talking about repealing the price on carbon or moving towards the Trudeau carbon tax implementation is really a big concern for us. You know, we say: we're going to fight them in the courts. I don't think that's the right decision, but of course we're on this side of the House and not on that side.

I do believe at this point that the best-case scenario for this piece of legislation and, frankly, the future of our province is to move this to committee. I think it would serve us all well to have further discussions on this bill. I, of course, understand that the government has been given a mandate by the people to get rid of the price on carbon, I suppose, but I don't think that by any means the people of Alberta have given you a mandate to stop caring about climate change altogether. I think that's really my biggest concern here, that you're throwing the baby away with the bathwater, for lack of a better saying.

Further to that, I think that another big concern for me is not only throwing away the climate policy that comes with the leadership plan but also the energy efficiency policy, that I have seen used extensively through my community. Though I haven't had somebody come out to my property, I know that many people in my community have, so I think that it's a program that we should continue with. Not only is it creating jobs within our community; I think there's even further opportunity for manufacturing of these products, whether it be solar panels or perhaps light bulbs, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to point out that I do have concerns with the lack of debate that is happening here. Of course, the government wants to push this through as fast as they can, and with that, we have the opposition members speaking to why this legislation or the climate leadership plan is important, and then in turn the government stands up and says: we won by this many votes; like, we had the greatest mandate of any government ever. It sounds quite like the fellow down south. I think it would do us all well if we could take a moment and actually discuss the legislation in front of us and not how big a mandate you have, because I'm not interested in comparing.

Of course, there's also a tradition in this House where government takes the opportunity to answer questions that the members of the opposition have, and I haven't really heard much rebuttal from the government on the questions that we do have. I think, once again, the most important question that I have is: if you're going to throw away all of this progress over the last four

years, progress from economists, scientists, industry leaders, CEOs of oil and gas companies and solar companies, and all renewable energy, what are you giving us in return to show that you actually care at all? I mean, this isn't just about the future of the renewable industry; this is about the future of the oil and gas industry as well. You know, just because you have an I Love Oil & Gas sticker wrapped around your vehicle doesn't mean you actually understand that the future of the oil and gas sector is dependent on the strength of renewables as well, and we have to work together to co-ordinate both of those industries for the future of the province.

Not only is this government signalling that they don't take climate change seriously – and I would be happy to hear any of you stand up and actually agree that climate change is real and that humans are accelerating it and that it is human caused. I would love to hear some of you do that. I have some doubts about some of the members and some of the comments that I've seen before, but please prove me wrong.

Of course, this industry, the renewable industry, under the climate leadership plan was poised to bring in tens of billions to our economy over the next 10 years, and we've already seen that money moving forward. The solar industry, for instance, has grown by 500 per cent in the last four years alone. But without strong public policy and without a government that is willing to incentivize these industries, much like we do with most of our other industries, the oil and gas industry included, investment in renewables will be stunted, and with that, thousands of good-paying jobs will move elsewhere.

We've seen it and have had the discussion already about the job loss in Ontario. I believe that close to 700 if not more projects were cancelled under the Doug Ford government. Of course, we know that our new Premier and he finish each other's sentences, so we can only imagine that that same thing is going to happen in our solar industry here. An even bigger concern is what it means for social policies and what it means for people with disabilities and people that are often falling through the cracks, seniors. I mean, we had questions answered today by a seniors minister that were just not acceptable at all in terms of where we're going to see that funding.

Of course, there was actually an article, which I will be happy to table tomorrow. I don't think it's been tabled yet. It was put forward by the *Edmonton Journal*. I'm sorry. Let me just pull it up. It's a long article, from March 7, 2019 – and I think it has been discussed in the House already – about where the funding for these projects has gone. I would like to point out – and it has been mentioned – that rural communities are getting a large portion of this funding, communities that need it most right now, like Hinton. Their pulp mill received \$3.7 million to continue or strengthen their bioenergy generation. The Mercer international pulp mill in Peace River received \$3.7 million also to continue with bioenergy programs. Whitecourt Power biomass facility: \$3.7 million. Boyle also had a bioenergy producer program. This is a tiny portion of that funding that went out.

So, members of this House who are almost entirely represented by the government, you're saying that you don't see an issue with that funding being taken away from your communities. It's very concerning to me. I mean, those are your constituents that you're going to have to go back to. Mine know where I stand. I support climate leadership. I understand the implications of climate change, and I understand that we need to do something about it.

5:10

Now, in my own community of Edmonton-West Henday the biggest concern when we talk about repealing the climate leadership plan is what it means for public transit, what it means for the LRT, which our government committed to. I believe that April

last year was the final announcement: \$1.03 billion was committed to the valley line LRT. Of course, the government of the day now is saying that they are going to keep that commitment to the city of Edmonton, but talk is cheap. If somebody wants to stand up and say where that money is going to come from now, because that \$1.03 billion was being funded entirely through the climate leadership plan, if somebody could tell me or, well, more importantly, tell the city of Edmonton or the city of Calgary, with their green line, where that money is going to come from now, that would be greatly appreciated because it's not an answer that we can afford to get even a month from now. The cities need to find out where their funding is coming from, and you need to tell them.

Just further on that point, it's been brought up that, first, you're going to blow a \$4 billion hole, I believe . . .

An Hon. Member: Four point five.

Mr. Carson: . . . a \$4.5 billion hole in the budget for a corporate tax handout. You're going to further cut your revenue stream with the repeal of the climate leadership plan. I mean, we're looking at, you know, \$5 billion to \$7 billion that you're going to pull out of government revenue and say: we'll figure it out. You'll figure it out on the backs of seniors, on the backs of people with disabilities, on the backs of people with mental health . . .

An Hon. Member: Minimum wage earners.

Mr. Carson: . . . minimum wage earners, which we'll even have a chance to get into much further later today, I think, so I look forward to that.

Once again, the problem is that when it comes to having these discussions with the municipalities, we went through this process. We had big-city charter deals move forward at the end of our term, and we made a commitment to the city of Edmonton and the city of Calgary about where their funding was going to come from, so I wait with anticipation to see where your money is going to come from.

Mr. Schmidt: So do 2 million people in those cities.

Mr. Carson: That's right. Two million people are waiting for that answer.

Now, the quote has been used already, but Canada is warming up at twice the rate of the rest of the world, and the effects are irreversible, Mr. Speaker. Irreversible. I'm hoping that alarms someone in this House on the opposite side. We know that our side is alarmed by that; I don't know about the other side.

The fact is that the people that are voting today in this Legislature to dismantle Alberta's only viable plan to reduce emissions are the members that represent the communities that are going to be hit hardest by the changing climate. Floods and droughts, as has been mentioned, will continue to slam our farmers and only get worse and, in turn, will bring massive costs to the government and increased food costs for our own communities. Further, experts are telling us that there will soon come a time when insurance companies will not even be willing to insure our crops. They will not insure our property as drought continues for our farmers and ranchers, as floods continue in our municipalities and in the province as a whole. What are we going to tell the people of Alberta when we can no longer insure them, and what costs will that have on our communities? You want to sell that problem down the road for \$300 a year for people in our communities. The cost is going to probably be 10 times that if we do nothing.

Now, I do know that I'm standing in an Assembly full of people who have already made up their minds on this issue – that is quite

clear – but I want to take a moment to speak to the people outside of this Assembly who will inhabit our planet when all of us are gone, even me. I'm kind of young still, but even me. I just want to say that I'm sorry. I'm sorry that today your leaders did not have the will to work in your best interests, I'm sorry that tomorrow you will be left with the implications of doing nothing and with no tools to do more, and I'm sorry that campaign slogans do more to get politicians elected than real public policy.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I think that the least that we can do is send this bill to committee. I think that there's a much larger discussion that we need to have beyond what we've seen so far in this House, a one-sided conversation. I think that there are important conversations to have about the real emissions reductions that we've seen – I think that they've been brought up a few times here – and also the economic impact that these policies have had on our communities, whether good or bad. We need to sit down and talk about the real implications that these policies have had and what it is going to cost if your government decides to go back on the valley line LRT, not only in job losses but the cost of emissions increasing.

Once again, if somebody is willing to promise me today that you will find a way to fund the valley line LRT without this funding while also not touching the MSI funding or the agreement that has been made through the big-city charter deals, then please do.

I do want to once again highlight a couple of quotes, this one coming not from a social justice warrior, an extreme radical environmentalist, but from the CEO of Suncor, which may surprise you. "We think climate change is happening. We believe a broad-based carbon price is the right answer and we're pleased to see the Alberta government is taking steps to implement the climate leadership framework." I'd be interested to hear what the members of this House think of that quote, why they don't believe the CEOs of these major oil and gas companies when they're talking about the implications of climate change, when they're talking about the opportunities that we have working together hand in hand between the oil and gas industry, between the renewable energy industry, because often in many situations it is the oil and gas companies that are moving into renewables. Of course, not entirely. But they're working because they understand that the investment community is looking to green up their funds often.

I do have other questions about how repealing the price on carbon is going to affect other legislation: for instance, we brought forward a piece giving opportunities to homeowners to put solar panels on their rooftops and in some instances get incentives; also, just the policy about being able to defer that cost to your property tax. I know that the opposition at the time had concerns with it, about something in California not working with that legislation – I think it was mostly made up – that they heard on the street, like many of the things that they legislate on. But I would like to know how that policy is going to change. Is this just simply getting rid of the price on carbon? Are you going to start putting all of the expert work that's been studied over the last four years through the shredder? I think we saw that under the Stephen Harper government, shutting down scientists, shredding that information. That is of massive concern to me. If somebody could reassure us of that, that would be wonderful.

Mr. Speaker, I think that at this point that is all I have to say to the referral amendment, but I really do hope that the Assembly will consider this.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member, for your comments.

I know it's slightly unconventional, but I'd just like to briefly ask if the House wouldn't mind, prior to their departure, a very brief

return to introductions. I'll be asking for unanimous consent to return to introductions.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

(reversion)

The Speaker: Hon. members, I'd just like to bring to your attention, albeit very briefly as we're in the middle of a very important debate, the presence of a number of ladies who have joined us in the gallery today. I understand that they are a group of individuals who have joined us from British Columbia today. They are from the Vancouver Art Gallery, and they are here touring the Legislature, observing the wonderful pieces of art that hang around our building, including the ones here in the Chamber. I invite all members to welcome them here to our Chamber.

Just a brief reminder to the Member for Calgary-Klein that when the Speaker is on his feet, it would be reasonable for you to pause and wait for him to take his sedentary position. It's okay; you don't need to apologize.

5:20 Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 1

An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax (continued)

The Speaker: I saw the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore rising on Standing Order 29(2)(a).

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very intrigued by the statements that the Member for Edmonton-West Henday had. I've heard a lot of discussion this afternoon around the economic implications of removing the carbon levy and about taking climate very, very seriously. I can certainly tell you that I do take climate change very, very seriously.

One of the things about Edmonton-Decore that I'm so very proud of, especially now with the boundaries that have been redrawn, is that I'm now up to 26 schools in my area, which creates quite a challenge to visit them on a regular basis. Three of the high schools, all of them in north Edmonton, reside now in Edmonton-Decore. The chance to interact with the students on a regular basis is something that I enjoy very, very much, and they do provide a lot of insight into things, including things like climate change.

When we talk about our students, our young emerging leaders, these are the individuals that are going to be taking over after we have all moved on to other things. I know that the Member for Edmonton-West Henday has attended several new school openings on top of maybe the schools that he's had at this time. As we start to consider moving this bill to committee and the referral that is before us, I think it's very, very incumbent upon us to ensure that those voices of those future emerging leaders are included in that conversation. I know the students that are at Queen Elizabeth high school put in a lot of work in terms of their own climate plan when our government first formed in 2015 such that they intended to show that in Paris. Unfortunately, due to circumstances there that trip was cancelled, and luckily our leader, then Premier, took that paper there on their behalf.

As our students move forward and should be included this, I'm wondering if the member might have any thoughts around some of the things that his students have around climate, around carbon pricing and if he might be willing to share some of those thoughts with the House because I think it's very, very important. It's

incumbent upon us to have all of the information so that we can make informed decisions as legislators. I don't want us to be, hopefully, dismissing that because, well, you know, it's just the youth. Hopefully, the Member for Edmonton-West Henday might provide some insight for us as legislators to be able to move forward on this referral motion.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you very much to the member for the question. I have indeed had the opportunity to go to several of my schools, and early on when I was elected in 2015, I also had the opportunity to go to a climate change presentation, I believe, for grade 6ers. That program is definitely going to be eliminated. That's social engineering to this government. I think it's very important to have discussions about climate change, about ways to mitigate the effects of climate change, whether it be through energy efficiency or a price on carbon. Any time that kids of any age are having that conversation, I think it's important. In that instance, it was as simple as having a conversation about the cost not only in physical dollars but to the environment of leaving a tap on when you brush your teeth. This is a conversation that has happened through the young years of my life as well, I believe, but now it's getting a bit more serious as we are able to better understand the impact of the price on carbon.

There are also opportunities, that have been discussed at length, from the previous Minister of Education in schools for children to learn about solar systems, solar arrays because at that time we were investing and putting those on certain new builds if they were interested in getting involved. There not only are you getting the opportunity to reduce energy consumption or reduce the cost of energy consumption but also to involve the students in learning about solar arrays, wind power, and such other things. So I think it's very important that we involve students of all ages in this conversation. It's going to be their planet that they have to take over from us, and frankly we haven't done a very good job.

The Speaker: Are there others? I see the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood rising to debate.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. You know, I want to talk about the fact that Albertans are rightly proud of our world-class oil and gas industry. My own father actually worked in oil and gas for nearly 40 years, and even he, out in rural Alberta, acknowledges that climate change is a real crisis, and so do I. This is why Albertans and many leaders across the province told us that we needed to take action on climate change, and we did.

We've talked a lot about the fact that this plan that we brought in, the climate leadership plan, was supported by countless stakeholders, and we've talked as well about what we did with the revenue from the carbon levy. I want to focus on some of those things today and talk about some personal examples as well. We know revenues from the carbon levy helped our province invest in new infrastructure, diversify our economy, support everyday families who built this province. I was just so proud to see this introduced. As I said, I heard a lot of stories from constituents in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood about the impact that it made on their lives, the positive impact, and this is why I feel we need to move this to committee for further discussion.

Some of those investments that were paid by the carbon tax include the carbon rebates, equalling more than \$533 million per year. As I said, you know, my riding of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood has some of the highest rates of poverty in the province and, in fact, in Canada. I heard day in and day out – I knocked on every door in that riding – from folks that they were so happy to be

getting that rebate. It made a tangible impact on their lives: seniors, young people, people with disabilities.

Building new transit. Again, I've got in my riding a few of the LRT stops, Coliseum and Stadium. We know how important a strong public transit system is in our community, and it's so good to be able to invest the revenue there.

Energy efficiency. We had the Member for Edmonton-West Henday talk a little bit about this, and I want to talk about it as well. You know, again, growing up in rural Alberta, seeing folks that I grew up with looking at energy efficiency in their own homes: huge. In every corner of Alberta – right? – folks being able to sort of reap the benefits of that carbon levy and the climate leadership plan.

But what I want to talk about is solar in particular. We were able to diversify our economy so strongly under the climate leadership plan, create so many jobs in solar and wind. I had the opportunity actually to learn a lot about solar. I was invited to participate in a panel on solar energy during the election, and I got to talk to a lot of folks, a lot of stakeholders about just how sort of, you know, monumental the changes were that we were able to help bring in under the climate leadership plan.

The numbers tell the story. I mean, I want to talk a lot about personal stories, but we've also got numbers. We've got facts and figures to support just how much success we had in the area of solar. Alberta's solar capacity has increased from six megawatts in 2015 to 500 megawatts in 2018. As someone else said earlier, that's a 500 per cent increase. That's huge. That's huge. And 3,100 solar installations: again, in every corner of this province we see solar installations happening. Just the enormous reduction in greenhouse gases: new solar reducing more than 36,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas, which is the equivalent to removing 7,000 cars from our roads.

And the jobs. I mean, we've had people ask: what's going to happen, you know, to the 7,000 jobs that have been created and that are being created right now because of some of those investments? One fellow I spoke with in my riding has invested a lot of his own personal money in solar. He talked to me at the doors about just how happy he was that we've started to move in that direction – I heard that a lot – and I'm afraid I'm going to have to be meeting with him here soon and talking. But I don't know what the next steps are. I don't know what's going to be happening. He's fearful, right? He's raising a family. He's fearful for his own livelihood, and of course he's fearful about the future of this province.

5:30

The Leader of the Official Opposition spoke earlier about the price that we were able to secure, and this is something that is absolutely huge. We became the first province in Canada to buy 50 per cent of the government's own electricity from solar, the result of which was the lowest cost solar photovoltaic contract ever in Canada, 4.9 cents per kilowatt hour. When I talked to an expert as I was preparing, you know, for the solar forum that I attended earlier in the year, he just said that this was a game changer, that this was an absolute game changer in the area of solar energy, lower than the average price of electricity for the last 10 years, in fact.

You know, we committed in our platform that we would continue to meet the renewable energy act and ensure that 30 per cent of all electricity would continue to be coming from renewable sources, including solar. So I worry, right? I worry about the future, not just of the constituents that I spoke with who've invested so much in moving forward in the area of solar. Again, a number of members have talked about this already today. We're talking about the future not just of the province but of – we've seen other jurisdictions moving forward.

I want to talk a little bit about – the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford shared a number of indigenous examples, and I know,

as someone else said earlier today, he knows a lot about this. But I also talked with a number of indigenous folks who have benefited directly from some of those programs, and these are huge. So let me just share a few of those details.

As I said, we made it clear that indigenous communities must be a part of our plans for renewable energy. They must be partners – it can't be the government of the time dictating – working together. We know that the Maskwacis First Nations shared in the media earlier in the year that they're quite concerned about a possible UCP government and what would happen to their projects because those projects, again, have been life changing to those First Nations. Maskwacis Mall, for instance, has a solar power system, reducing emissions, saving money, saving \$8,000 a year – and those numbers are rising – in utility costs.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Louis Bull tribe, another nation on Maskwacis, directly west of Ermineskin, if you don't know where it is, have invested heavily in solar energy as well with the help of the grants that we've provided under the climate leadership plan. Almost every building of the Louis Bull tribe is retrofitted with solar panels. That's huge. Almost every building. This system is generating 188 kilowatt hours, which enables the First Nation to save up to \$18,000 a year on energy costs.

So I'd be curious – I know he's not here today – if the Member for Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin has heard about these programs and has heard those concerns because I know they were sharing their concerns in the media earlier. Again, it's changing. It's not just bringing jobs to the communities. It's bringing the communities together, and in a really exciting way, to move forward.

I know the Member for Edmonton-West Henday also talked about some of the rural examples, and I was really proud to hear about my hometown of Barrhead having a hundred thousand dollars in solar panels on their new aquatic centre. You know, I think that if the Conservative bastion of my hometown of Barrhead can get onboard and benefit from the carbon levy, we all can, for sure.

I mean, we know that by scrapping the carbon tax, by scrapping the climate leadership plan, the future of these monumental programs is certainly in jeopardy. Not only that, I mean, we heard the Member for Edmonton-Decore talk about the schools as well. You know, I shared this morning that I was a teacher, a social studies teacher, and I was so proud to see students banding together across this province to acknowledge that the climate crisis is real and that we need to take action.

This morning the Member for Edmonton-Glenora introduced a grade 6 student, and I have to say that the former teacher in me was so happy to see this young person up there. She had written the Member for Edmonton-Glenora, sharing her own concerns about climate change and about the lack of action taken on climate change. You know, as I said earlier, it's not only good to see her engaging in active citizenship; she's also a model for other students.

I also visited a school, Victoria school of the arts, and they asked about that as well in their grade 6 class. So it's on kids' minds, and it's not going away, whether we want to accept that or not. We're seeing a movement led by young people who are fearful about the future, and they're not willing to sit back and let the climate crisis worsen.

You know, we talked a lot about the importance of having so many stakeholders onboard, the widespread support that the previous government had for the climate leadership plan, not just from industry but also from folks of all ages and backgrounds. As I said, I've heard in my own riding of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood just how important it is that we not only address the

climate crisis but that we protect our most vulnerable citizens, and having rebates and having folks having a way to access funds so that they can adjust their lifestyle is just a really critical thing that we need to consider as we move forward.

I think these examples that I outlined show just how important it is that we move this to committee and that we do take another look at it and apply some, you know, critical thinking, as we'd say in my social studies classroom.

I know we heard the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar as well talk a lot about some of the economic risks, talk about the large number of, you know, Conservative politicians who know that carbon pricing is good economic policy, and the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona echoed some of that. So I think we need to think about this a little bit. If the moral imperative and the environmental impacts aren't enough for some folks across the aisle to give them pause, well, perhaps the economic ones will be.

I think that's about all I'll say today on this, but again I urge the members opposite to think about moving this to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate some of the comments from the member opposite for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, but there were a couple of things I wanted to address from her remarks specifically. I appreciate that she had mentioned that she's been out knocking on doors. That's obviously our job during the campaign. She's consulting constituents, like everyone else in this House has done, hopefully.

She mentioned specifically about the youth getting rebates. Now, I take specific issue about this because getting rebates is effectively paying constituents with their own money or, worse, with someone else's money. Now, when I was in high school, I used to go visit my brother, who was in university. I'd earn some money, and I'd bring that up there. He would somehow convince me to order some pizza, and we'd hang out. He would make me feel grateful that I even got a couple of slices of the pizza that I bought. Now, we get along great, of course, and I'm much bigger than he is now, so that wouldn't happen. But this idea that we're supposed to feel grateful that the government is paying us with our own money is, frankly, absurd.

I talk to constituents in my constituency. I've knocked on thousands of doors, as, again, I hope many of you have over your political term, not just recently. I tell you that what I'm hearing from the parents, what I'm hearing from the students is that they're worried about getting jobs, they're worried about keeping their jobs, and they're worried about the financial stability of their own bank accounts. The carbon tax has hit everybody.

Now, I'm happy to say that I believe that climate change is real – I do – and I want to make sure that we leave a planet that is much better for our children than we have now. There's also no question there. But there are other ways to do it, and I tell you, the carbon tax is not the way.

Referring it to committee is a poor idea for one very simple reason: it's already been there. It's already been in committee, in a historic election that happened about a month ago. [interjection] The members opposite clearly have a short memory of this. I hope that their place in this House will remind them on a daily basis of the decision that electors made not that long ago. That is the only committee that we need. We campaigned very clearly on that principle of repealing the job-killing carbon tax. It's not a levy; it's a tax.

Madam Speaker, by repealing this carbon tax, the members opposite have also insinuated that we somehow support the Liberal carbon tax, which is also false. We don't support the carbon tax at

all because it appears to us to be simply paying constituents with their own money.

5:40

Now, I have had countless conversations with constituents, not just with the wonderful constituents in Cardston-Siksika but across this province. You know, when you're being a proactive candidate and MLA and you're asking the questions, people will tell you things that they would never tell you of their own volition. Oftentimes people will contact an MLA office when circumstances are dire, when it's more reactive. But when you'd go to the people and ask them the very basic questions, "How can I help you, and how can I support you as your representative?" in Cardston-Siksika the resounding answer was: "Please repeal the job-killing carbon tax. Please get our economy back on track. Please help us make sure that our kids have a stable future."

This government is planning to do just that, to balance the books and to get the province back to work, because that's what responsible governments do. They don't just think about themselves; they think about the province as whole, what's best for everyone. As Conservatives we believe in an equal playing field, equality of opportunity, not some contrived equality of outcome. Our job in this House isn't to pick winners or losers. It's to do what's best for the province. That's what we campaigned on: a robust policy document over 100 pages long, line by line, pieces of legislation that we plan on implementing for the benefit of the entire province.

I'll tell you, Madam Speaker, that I am proud to stand on this side of the House. I am proud to be here and support the hon. Premier.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, I'll recognize the hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to the referral amendment today. Before I get going, I just wanted to say a couple of things. Just to clarify, a committee is not the same as an election. They are two very different things, just so we're clear about that. I know it's your first week, but you'll find out soon enough. I'm sure you'll be assigned to a committee. They are two very different things.

So let's move on to carbon pricing. For those of you that might not know, I'm just going to give you some information.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, could you speak through the chair, please.

Ms Renaud: I will speak through the chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Ms Renaud: A price on carbon exists currently in 40 countries and 20 subnational jurisdictions, including California and New York, Washington State, and Mexico. Why? Because it works. I try to explain it to constituents that maybe have questions about it. Yes, they do call our office, Madam Speaker, as you would know because you've been doing the job for about four years, like a lot of us here. Sometimes they're not really clear on what it is, so I explain it to them. It is essentially a tax on pollution.

Being a parent, I understand that sometimes you have to establish some structures to teach our kids. This is how I explain it. I taught my kids, and they changed their behaviours based on consequences. So if you choose to do A, this will happen. If you choose to do B, this will happen. It's very simple. This is the premise of a price on carbon. It's a tax on pollution, that's how it's simply put.

Certainly, the opposition will argue that taxing large emitters is the way to go. You know what? I think the fellow who won a Nobel prize for this theory, this carbon pricing, has got something here – I really do – because it works.

I want to tell you a little bit about what has happened in St. Albert. Of course, my computer died, which I always knew would happen, so let me just go from memory here. Over the last few years we've seen quite a bit of investment in St. Albert, and I think the Member for Morinville-St. Albert probably knows about this. If not, I'm happy to share information about that. There's been quite a bit of investment, specifically in St. Albert.

For people watching – I'm sure there are people watching at home – there is a way for you to search what the investment has been on the climate leadership plan revenues, climate leadership plan spending based on your postal code. There is a place you can actually go to on Energy Efficiency Alberta, and it will tell you what the total spending has been in that particular postal code.

In St. Albert we actually were one of the top five areas for uptake of the Energy Efficiency Alberta programs in the province. Our postal code is T8N, and our total was over \$3 million since January 2017 alone. Those are huge investments. One of those was the Dez Liggett Transit Facility. It was a solar project, and it was valued at \$125,000. It was one of 20 projects in nine municipalities funded through the Alberta municipal solar program.

Now, I haven't heard the details of the plans from the opposition, but I'm sure we will soon, when we see their budget and what exactly they're going to slash and burn so they can give the corporate tax giveaways to whomever they see fit.

These are some of the things that might not seem like a lot of money and might not be on a line, but these are the things that change people's lives. These are the things that form the foundation of healthy communities. These are some of those things. I can tell you that the total GHG reduction is 206 tonnes per year. Sure, it's not a megatonne. It is not the kind of megatonne reduction that our leader talked about earlier today, but it is something, and it's about St. Albert, the community that I represent, doing their part.

Another project – and this was through GreenTRIP – predates the climate leadership plan, from 2008. In 2017-18 the climate leadership plan helped fund – hang on a second. Okay. Those were just some notes that I have about some of the vague language, the difference between GreenTRIP and climate leadership.

But we fast-forward a little bit. We have a project in St. Albert. It's called the Campbell Road park-and-ride project. It actually was a project worth \$20 million. The city of St. Albert estimated that the reduction as a result of this project would be 23,000 tonnes per year of greenhouse gases due to the increased transit ridership.

Basically, what it is is a new park-and-ride for the city of St. Albert. It moved it from the congested area where it was in the Tudor Glen area to a site on Campbell Road that sort of faces onto St. Albert Trail. I'm sure that if you've been through that area, you'll know where it is. This facility includes a transit transfer station and parking for 800 vehicles. We were hoping that it would be a future terminal for the Edmonton metro line, but again, as my colleague from Edmonton-West Henday said, we're not sure, because we had some agreements in place with the big cities. There were funding commitments announced and made about transit, but now we just don't know, so we're waiting to find out what will happen.

Actually, St. Albert was the first municipality in I think it was western Canada to operate electric buses year-round. We had three electric buses that operated year-round. I think we're in our second year now, and I'm happy to report that other municipalities have come out and had a look and will also look at expanding. Our fund contributed two-thirds of the cost of the purchase of those three

electric buses in 2016, for a total cost of \$2.1 million. In 2018 the province contributed one-third of the total \$3.75 million cost to purchase four more electric buses, for an estimated total contribution of just over \$3.35 million. The electric buses cost approximately \$0.09 per kilometre for fuel. Diesel buses cost approximately \$0.45 per kilometre. Why is that important? Because it's just one little piece. It's a reduction in carbon emissions in one place, and it's also a reduction of costs for the city of St. Albert, for the municipality. So you can see that all of these little pieces add up.

We hear this all the time from the government when we say something about doing our part, our part for responsible leadership in this area. We hear: "Yeah. Well, China. What are we going to do about China? I mean, they're way worse than us. They're building coal plants." Well, they're actually closing coal-fired electricity plants, and they're actually investing heavily – here's one example – in electric buses. I think I read somewhere that their fleet was over, like, 4,000 electric buses already, and I'm sure that will continue to grow.

5:50

All of these things are little pieces, but it's about doing your part.

We also have a smart fare system, which is worth about \$28 million. It was also through the GreenTRIP fund to implement the smart fare project. So the total GreenTRIP funding spent – I'm not going to get into that, but I am going to go back to another piece.

I think I'll never be able to speak to the importance of carbon pricing the way that the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona did, because she has been working on this for a very, very long time. You know, in my opinion, she is the expert because she has walked this walk with people from all different walks of life. As she told you, she met with industry leaders, with indigenous leaders, with municipal leaders, with people from nonprofit organizations, people from rural communities, people from urban communities, and she listened because that's what she does. She found a path forward to do this, and it wasn't easy. If you think that it was easy sitting in this place and talking about this and doing this – it took a lot of courage to do what she did, just like it's taking a lot of courage for people all over this world to stand up and say that this is a crisis.

You can talk all you like. We can have people talking about: "Well, you know, we're not sure about the science" and "It's not really a crisis" and "Maybe we can find another way of doing it." But it is a crisis, and people all over the world understand this.

I don't know why there are members in this place that don't get it, unless they are scientists and unless they have researched this area and have proof and can demonstrate that this is not a crisis and that we don't have the timeline that we've been given by scientists all around the world that have told us that we have 12 years. You can disagree with me all you like. That's fine. You can disagree with me all you like, but you cannot disagree with leading scientists from around the world who have spent their adult lives studying this.

Again, I know that I embarrass the heck out of my son when I talk about him. My son is one of those scientists. He's a paleontologist, actually. You might not think that it has much to do with climate change in that particular science, but it does because he studies things that are millions and millions and millions of years old. I don't understand half of what he says when he talks about the science that he does, but he is an expert. Now, I think he's at – what? – 14 years of university. He's a fellow at the university right now, and he has spent his adult life dedicated to the very fine point of the science that he chose to pursue.

That's what these scientists have done. They have told us that our world is warming too quickly and that the results will continue to

be catastrophic. So you can sit there and you can shake your head and say, "Well, a job-killing carbon tax: we can't do that." But the reality is that it is a climate crisis, and this was a strategy to start moving us forward, to start addressing this crisis in a way that could actually fund a transition, an energy transition that could also support people that are low income that cannot afford the rising cost of energy. This was a way to start to move this forward.

We have now come to a screeching halt because of a platform, because of political opportunism. I don't know what the answer is. But when we have leaders from oil and gas, Madam Speaker, telling us that this is what they want, this is what they wanted. This was one of the things that they wanted, stability to understand what the cost was going forward. I don't really understand why people that don't have that background in science, that don't have that background even in leadership in that particular industry think they know better. Because they're politicians and they know how to win elections? I'm not entirely sure.

I want to go back to the place where I found it very sad. And I get it. You know, we're opposition, and it's our job to talk about this, to bring up all of the things that we need to think about, that we need the government to think about before they rush headlong into making decisions that will have huge implications for us, for our children, and for their children.

I want the members to stop and think about it. I get it. You're part of a caucus or a government that has essentially told you what you need to do: this is our goal; here is our plan; this is how we go forward. In fact, I think the minister for the environment had a little video about – I think it was related to floor crossing – that when you're elected, you kind of belong to this party. Well, no, you do not. The bottom line is that you were elected by the people in your constituency to represent them, all of them: the children, the adults, the seniors, the people with disabilities, the people that have no money, the people that have a lot of money. You represent all of them. You don't represent a political party.

I would hope that there are members there on the other side that perhaps have the courage, maybe not in this place but when you are in a debate or in a discussion with your caucus, to ask the hard questions. "Okay. I get it. You know, we campaigned on axing the tax or whatever the heck our bumper sticker said, but do we have a plan? What is our plan? Do we recognize that we have a climate change crisis? It is a crisis."

I think that when the United Nations are telling us that we have 12 years before we can – actually, we have 12 years to start to mitigate before it's too late. I look at my kids and their kids. Well, they don't have kids yet, but I imagine that one day they'll have kids, and I think about 12 years. That's not so long in the distant future.

It was really sad, actually. The Member for Edmonton-West Henday wanted to be on the record saying to the future generations that he's sorry that at this point today in this place, in this province, in this country we didn't recognize that this was a crisis, that we had a chance to make a difference, to change things, to introduce

public policy, not just for a bumper sticker or a re-election campaign but to make real change.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments or questions under Standing Order 29(2)(a)? I'll recognize the Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that. I was very intrigued by the statements by the Member for St. Albert. I know that she was probably trying to wrap up some thoughts. If we don't have those thoughts wrapped up, we as legislators are not going to be able to make an informed decision about why it is so important to move this bill into committee. I was hoping that the Member for St. Albert might finish off those thoughts so we can ensure that we have all the information at our fingertips.

The Deputy Speaker: The Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to just say a few more things about the referral amendment. You know, I think I've heard it multiple times today, but it bears repeating, probably about a thousand more times, that Canada is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world. Twice. That's a crisis. That's alarming. That is a crisis. It's a grim picture for our future, and I wish that it wasn't. I wish that I could say: "This is all good. This is really just a bottom-line issue about money. It's about carbon tax versus tax on large emitters." But it's not. It's about our future. It's grim for Canada's future, and if we don't do something, we are part of the problem.

We can expect deadly heatwaves, heavy rainstorms. These will be common occurrences. You know what? When the day comes when we say or scientists say or other people say, "I told you so," that will be the worst day ever because we should have listened before it was too late. We should have taken action and developed public policy together to change this, because it is possible. That's what we were sent here to do, not to represent our leaders or our political parties or to get great bumper stickers or, you know, a little splice to put on Facebook. It was to be in this place to make good policy, to make good decisions for our children and their children.

Again, I hope that when you are sitting in committees, which are different from elections, and with your caucus, you take a sober second thought and think. Ask those hard questions that might not make you very popular. Ask those hard questions: "What are we doing? What are we doing to address the climate crisis? What are we doing? What are we really doing?" These are hard questions, and that's what people sent us here to do, to ask those hard questions and get those answers, move us forward, develop policy that is right for all Albertans, not just some, not just people on one side, not just people on this side.

I want to say one more thing. Global temperatures have increased 0.8 degrees Celsius since 1948.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt you, but the House will stand adjourned until 7:30 this evening.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]

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