



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Monday evening, June 10, 2019

Day 10

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

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

First Session

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Williams, Dan D.A., Peace River (UCP)  
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)  
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

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United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Muhammad Yaseen	Parliamentary Secretary of Immigration
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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Monday, June 10, 2019

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Good evening, members. Please be seated.

### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

**The Chair:** Members, I'd like to call this committee to order.

#### Bill 4 Red Tape Reduction Act

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate you recognizing me this evening to talk about Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act, which on the surface looks a little bit light on some details. I suppose that maybe some of the details that could have possibly made it into this bill were reduced through some red tape. I'm not really sure.

I guess that to start with, I'd like to talk a little bit about what we see here in Bill 4 or maybe, more appropriately, what we don't see. We don't see things around, say, for instance, a definition of what kind of red tape the government is going to be looking at. Are they looking to reduce, you know, things that might put people at risk? Are they looking to possibly reduce regulations that might protect our environment? We don't have any details around that. I guess, as I was quoted a while back, it kind of seems like this is a bill that will create a big ball of red tape. The bill allows the minister to create regulations, it allows the minister to amend regulations, but we're a little light on the details past that.

I know that, you know, there have been some interesting statements going forward. When this bill was first introduced, the Premier made some comments about how over the first 21 days of this government they'd already reduced 17 regulations. The problem is that we don't know what those were, where they were posted. The ability for people to look at what it is that may have been reduced and how it might have affected them: again, we're still waiting a little bit on details around this.

When we talk about reducing red tape, you know, some of my friends across the way use this a lot around the unintended consequences of what might be removed. The government is creating a new process here in Alberta, which, in essence, kind of creates some red tape of its own through the ministry. I'm a little worried that this bill has no teeth, which means that if we are doing some things, we don't have any kind of accountability around there. I believe there is a bit of a threat to some of the fundamental protections: consumer, environmental, health and safety.

One of the things that kind of concerned me a little bit is around one of the validators of this bill. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which is one of the Premier's key validators, has said, "In Alberta's case, new rules on health and safety have only made the burden on business owners worse." I'm a little concerned about that phrase. When we're talking about people's health and safety, I think that as they go to work, they have every reason to believe that they can work safely and come home to their families safely. To say that health and safety is a bit of a burden, I

kind of tend to disagree. From my experience sitting on my own workplace health and safety committee as a co-chair, as part of the joint management-workers committee, and having sat on my union's provincial health and safety committee, one of the things, you know, that I can't help but brag a little bit about is my former employer.

When I first left to become an MLA in this House, we had quite the record, I guess, to brag about. When I left, Lucerne ice cream had over 1,650 days accident free, and that was because our workplace decided to take health and safety very, very seriously. Yes, I suppose that maybe in the very beginning there were a few people that thought things were a little bit burdensome, but in the long run what it was was that nobody was sitting at home hurt. They were being very productive at work because they were healthy, and it actually lessened the cost on the employer. Their WCB premiums that they were paying shot down dramatically over that course. Again, when I hear things that health and safety might be getting in the way a little bit, maybe as another way to look at it, that sends a bit of a signal to me that I'm a little bit concerned about.

I also noticed, you know, that through the consultations with Albertans from 2019, the Red Tape Reduction Act will be amended by the end of the year to include legislated timelines for regulatory approval for various departments, agencies, including the Alberta Energy Regulator, the goal of which will be to achieve the fastest approval process in North America. Well, the problem is that when I look through the bill in terms of this, to say that we're going to amend the timelines, unfortunately, is a little bit of a stretch, Madam Chair, because there are no timelines in the bill right now for anything.

Well, maybe I'm not completely fair there. There is one timeline saying that "beginning in 2020" – it doesn't say whether it's January 2020 or anywhere between then and December 2020 – the minister will report one time through a report that will be brought here to the House. But, of course, that's always after the fact. I think there's maybe some ability that the government could look at for reporting a little bit more in real time in terms of what they're looking at, how they're looking at it, and what they're considering to potentially reduce.

When we were talking about this a little bit earlier, I did mention the fact that I was a little bit concerned. We don't want to get onto this tunnel-vision quest in order to get rid of regulations. I mean, my gosh, I heard the labour minister in the last debate talking about: well, you know, maybe it's okay if we create "a little bit of red tape." Okay. Well, that's all right. But then are you going to be racing to get rid of some other ones because they just committed to creating a little bit more red tape? I don't want this blind effort moving forward: well, we've already brought in a few of these; we've got to quickly get rid of something. There was a commitment on a one-to-one basis, that for every regulatory burden that comes in, they want to get rid of another regulatory burden. Every new regulatory burden proposed must be matched with a cut of an equivalent burden somewhere else.

Now, I can't help but wonder, Madam Chair: how are we balancing that? What are the criteria around saying, "We've taken this regulation and put it in; this is something that's of equal value"? Well, just because it's of equal value doesn't necessarily make it a good idea to get rid of it. I wonder how that mechanism is going to work going forward. How do we measure what's equivalent? How do we balance that out? It'd be nice to maybe see a process around that.

When we look around in terms of what kind of efforts have been done around red tape reduction, there are several instances that we can look at. Of course, Mr. Harper in 2011 announced the launch of the Red Tape Reduction Commission, which called on the

government to take action to reduce burden on business, making it easier to do business with regulators and improving service and predictability. They had made a goal to establish a 20 per cent red tape cut and a one-to-one rule. Again, as I was just talking about earlier, how do we balance that out? Hopefully, maybe there are some things that we might be able to learn from.

7:40

A couple of failures that I would like to highlight are around clean water protections. In the regulatory framework that protected lakes, rivers, and groundwater there was a loophole in the metal mining effluent regulation of the Fisheries Act. This allowed mining companies to dump toxic waste into lakes and reclassified healthy lakes as tailing impoundment areas. Now, I don't know about a lot of people out here, but I know I certainly like to go out camping, and I don't know if I'd be very excited if I was, say, water skiing in one lake that I like to go to, just to find out that it's being used as a tailings pond.

Sandy Pond in Newfoundland had been destroyed under this loophole, and Environment Canada released the names of 29 natural bodies that mining companies had applied to use as toxic waste dumps. Maybe a little bit of a failure there that we might want to be considering as we move forward looking at this bill.

Talking about food inspections, there were cuts of \$56 million to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, resulting in 100 fewer inspectors. Now, as somebody who worked in the food industry – albeit it was only ice cream – there were still some very, very strict regulations about how we conducted the work that we did in there, being careful in terms of sanitation, cross-contamination. I mean, my gosh, we even got to the point where we weren't allowed to stage certain products within a certain distance from others because of cross-contamination issues.

These 100 fewer inspectors resulted from reverse staffing measures put in place in response to the deadly listeriosis outbreak in 2008, in which 22 Canadians died. That concerns me. Again, I don't want to see us getting this tunnel vision: well, you know, we brought in some slightly necessary red tape burdens on business, but then we've got to quickly get rid of some other ones.

If we look at British Columbia, they promised to reduce regulation by one-third in three years, which is about, roughly, what is being suggested here in Alberta. They eliminated 157,000 regulations for citizens and small businesses and reduced regulation by 47 per cent. That is a fantastic number. They also introduced a net zero increase commitment in 2004: for every regulation that's introduced, one was required to be removed, again sort of what's being suggested here. Again, Madam Chair, we probably want to look at the failures that occurred so that, hopefully, when we are looking at those things and we're reducing regulations here, we don't fall into those same traps.

One of the big things I noted there was around money laundering. Reports indicated that \$7 billion in dirty money has flowed through the British Columbia economy, \$5 billion of which is in real estate, which inflated prices and hurt consumers. I think there was a bit of a failure to take action and properly regulate the industry to protect its citizens.

We had some struggles there around child labour, where government lowered the working age to 12 and removed the permit system, effectively deregulating child labour in the province. Madam Chair, I don't think any of us in this House want to be responsible for something like that because this puts the health and safety of children at risk. There was a dramatic increase in the annual payments for accepted disability claims related to children ages 12 to 14 injured on the job. Since 2004 nine were designated long-term disability. I can't imagine being at the age of 12 to 14 and

you're permanently almost disabled from working for the rest of your life. I think those people have to have something a little bit better to look forward to.

In total, WorkSafeBC has paid out over \$1.1 million in disability claims for 179 children injured on the job between 2003 and 2013. When I look at those numbers, it sounds to me like there was a bit of tunnel vision, where we were saying, "One in, so one has got to come out; we've got to hit that number because that's what we promised," a famous slogan there that we've already heard in this House over and over and over again: promise made, promise kept. Well, let's be careful about some of the promises that we are keeping because it can hurt people.

Environmental deregulation. The government oversight had relinquished the province's responsibility for environmental monitoring. This impacted projects like dam construction, forestry management, and hazardous waste disposal, which was likely the key factor in the failure of a 40-metre high tailings dam at the Mount Polley copper mine in B.C.'s interior, which caused widespread environmental damage, illuminated other problems with professional reliance, and in 2016 in the report on regulation of the province's mining sector following the disaster, the B.C. Auditor General found that "almost every one of our expectations for a robust compliance and enforcement program within [the ministries] were not met." Again, another example of us kind of plowing forward because we had committed to reducing this red tape – we brought one in; we're going to take one out – and you don't necessarily look at the consequences that some of those decisions might have.

I know some of those examples were a little bit further in the past, so maybe we can look quickly at something a little bit more recent. In December of 2018 Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, which sets a target of 25 per cent reduction in regulations over four years, requires the provincial approvals for job-creating projects to occur within a year. On paper I think that sounds fantastic. It gets people working, sounds great. Again, what are the unintended consequences of our decisions in possibly going at this blindly to reduce something because we committed to it? Again, we want to keep saying that tag line over and over again: well, promise made; promise kept.

Some of the failures that we've already seen: loosening ratios for children in daycare. These restrictions were put in place after a number of tragic deaths of children, which, of course, means we're putting them at risk.

Economists, advocates, and researchers have argued that deregulation under the guise of reducing red tape hurts workers and doesn't lead to job creation and improved wages, which I think is something that this government has very clearly said they are moving forward to try to improve. I think, again, we're looking at the unintended consequences in this blind move forward. Well, we're going to reduce red tape, but let's make sure that we're consulting thoroughly on this.

As we move forward on this, I think there are possibly some changes that can be made along the way. I certainly want to hear the rest of the debate surrounding this. Maybe the associate minister might be willing to get up and talk a little bit about some of the things that they're thinking about. I know that the Premier had mentioned, you know, in the opening day of introduction that they'd be open to amendments around maybe a definition of what kind of red tape it is we're looking for but, more specifically, maybe a little bit around what kind of definitions aren't red tape. I think that'll allow Albertans to be able to take a look at this, assuming that maybe we could look at some way to inform them in real time about some of the things that they're looking at getting rid of, which will allow Albertans and businesses and organizations to come back

with their feedback and talk about what may or may not be the problems around some of the regulations that could be proposed for cutting.

Of course, we always want to see some responsibility in terms of timelines. I think we can create a few timelines here, be a little bit more diligent in terms of how we move forward rather than, quite honestly, just a little bit of a sort of emptiness here when we're looking at Bill 4.

At this point I think I can take my seat. I do look forward to debate going forward here in Committee of the Whole, and I certainly hope that some of the members on the government side have some interesting things to add to the discussion.

Thank you.

7:50

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments with respect to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity this evening to rise and speak to Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act, and pass along some of my comments and add to those that I've already made in this House on the bill. I join others on this side of the House who really question what this and some of the other pieces of legislation that the government has brought forward this session are really all about, what the purpose and what the point actually is. Some of the pieces of legislation we've discussed, including this one, seem like one large communications exercise that really does nothing that isn't already enabled in other legislation. It's all designed to make it sound like they're doing something while they tread water and hope for the economy to improve all by itself or, as one member for the government said earlier today, the Member for Grande Prairie, "let the . . . market work itself out." The collateral damage while that happens is Albertans who suffer from this government's lack of action and meaningful legislation.

Many members have discussed or asked about the definition of red tape, which is the substance of this bill. It's the only substance that there is. It's the title. The title itself has not been defined or the term itself has not been defined in the legislation, and that's something that is a serious flaw. Most pieces of legislation will have a substantive list of definitions which provide a whole raft of meaning to the bill or piece of legislation that they're part of. In this particular case something as simple as a definition for red tape in the Red Tape Reduction Act is completely missing. To actually deal with the issue, if indeed there is an issue that needs to be dealt with, one is left to drift by this bill because the main focus of the bill, the title of it, the red tape of it, is left undefined.

In fact, it's a piece of enabling legislation, in my humble opinion, Madam Chair, enabling legislation to do things that the government wants to do through the back door that otherwise they wouldn't be able to accomplish through the front door, that the public might object to. For example, I believe it's actually enabling legislation to declare an underlying motivation such as we found in other bills. There's underlying motivation in Bill 2, which you can see is an open season on workers; an underlying motivation on Bill 8, an open season on municipalities; Bill 4, likewise, one might call an open season on consumers or an open season on an environmental protection act. I think we should look a little bit more closely at that and why I say it can clearly be called an open season on consumers and an open season on environmental protection.

We look at the supports that we have put in place for consumers while we were in government over the four years. Some of the consumer protection laws that we put in place strengthen protection in areas consumers said were the highest priorities, including

banning the use of ticket-buying bots and approving consumer access to refunds from resellers. We know that there's a lot of these consumer protections which are probably going to be at risk under the guise of reducing red tape, Madam Chair. That's the back door that I believe this government is going to use this piece of legislation for. Under the guise of – quote, unquote – removing or reducing red tape, they're going to go ahead and try to eliminate a number of the consumer protections which we brought in during our term in government, calling them bureaucratic red tape unnecessary.

Other examples. Introducing industry-wide standards for vehicle sales and repairs to improve accountability in the sector and better protect consumers from unexpected or unauthorized charges, something we brought in as a matter of consumer protection: once again, something at risk, I think, Madam Chair, as a result of this so-called Red Tape Reduction Act, which will be used by stealth to accomplish many, many things which, in fact, have nothing to do with red tape but everything to do with quietly trying to strip away consumer protections which we brought in during our last term; for example, introducing a licensing framework for high-cost lenders to ensure responsible operations and help consumers better understand the nature of high-cost credit products. A whole raft of consumer protections that we brought in I think are at risk by this government using this new Red Tape Reduction Act as a tool to carve out many of the pieces of consumer protection legislation that we put in place.

Payday lending is another example. It put an end to 600 per cent interest rates on payday loans to help prevent people from becoming trapped in a cycle of debt. Today payday loan borrowers pay lower fees, have more time to pay off their loans, and are paying them off in smaller installments. Once again, consumer protections are under attack with respect to this enabling legislation, which will allow the government to do things by the backdoor quietly, out of sight, by claiming it's red tape or a bureaucratic reduction.

Door-to-door sales is another example. We put an end to misleading and aggressive sales tactics by banning door-to-door sales of energy products and services. The ban includes furnaces, hot water tanks, air conditioners, windows, energy audits, and electricity and natural gas contracts. Now, I've got personal experience with many of my former real estate clients and also my own mother, who has suffered under these door-to-door sales tactics that were very, very difficult to put off at the door and ended up having people I know sign more than one natural gas contract which cost them hundreds of dollars to get out of. This government is looking to reduce consumer protections such as this that we put in place by using, once again, this piece of legislation, the so-called Red Tape Reduction Act, as a stealthy method to go ahead and carve out consumer protections, and they hope that the public is not going to notice.

Condominium living. We introduced condominium regulations, another good example, to improve buying and living in a condo. It was something that had been a long, long time coming, and the condo market real estate agents throughout this province were very, very pleased to enjoy those new protections under the regulations that were put in place. Once again, we wonder whether these regulations are going to be at risk as a result of the legislation, the Red Tape Reduction Act, brought in by the associate minister to place limitations or completely eliminate these regulations that were brought in to protect consumers.

Another example as well, Madam Chair, is the Utilities Consumer Advocate. We expanded the advocate's free mediation services to water bills and improved the advocate's ability to report on the performance of gas and electricity companies to help consumers make well-informed choices. Once again, there's risk

involved to the consumer because these things are possibly going to be disappearing as a result of the government taking advantage of the enabling mechanism of the Red Tape Reduction Act and going after consumer protections which allow consumers to feel that they have some measure of control in their life while the government looks to remove those safety measures and open season on consumers.

Another side of the coin, another element of protection that this government is putting at risk potentially by the use of this enabling legislation, the Red Tape Reduction Act, is in the field of environmental protection, Madam Chair; for example, dam safety. In 2013 the Obed mountain mine site dam spill occurred, spilling about 670 million litres of waste into the Athabasca River. It was the second-biggest coal spill in Canada and seriously contaminated the Athabasca River and forced a number of major communities to stop drawing water from it. Our government developed new dam safety standards to ensure oversight and monitoring of tailings dams and public reporting of this information, which makes Alberta a world leader in dam safety. We need to ensure that standards like these, Madam Chair, are protected to keep Albertans safe. However, these standards, these protections are potentially at risk because this government may end up using the backdoor of the Red Tape Reduction Act to claim that what they're doing is a reduction of bureaucratic largesse and red tape and eliminating regulations which protect the health and safety of Albertans, not to mention the workers' safety on these mines, and the environment as well.

Air quality is part of the environment that we are all reliant upon, the air that we breathe. Alberta's first Canadian ambient air quality standards assessment report was released in September 2015, a few short months after we took office last term. It indicated that the Red Deer region exceeded national standards for fine particulate matter. The lower Athabasca, upper Athabasca, North Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan areas were found to be approaching the limits for particulate matter, which includes nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide, so-called NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub>. Now, in collaboration with CASA our government updated the Alberta ambient air quality objectives, put in place stricter standards for industrial emitters, and saw reductions of pollutants, improving air quality and the health of Albertans, Madam Chair.

8:00

The Premier wants to turn back the clock on this and a whole raft of other things by removing these protections and putting Albertans at risk and, indeed, very well may be using the enabling legislation that we're debating here today, Madam Chair, the Red Tape Reduction Act, as a backdoor mechanism to achieve those ends. Once again, another attack, this time an attack on environmental protection under the guise of reducing red tape and bureaucratic largesse.

Labour legislation: same thing. This is a wide-sweeping tool which I think the government will be using to mask much of the damage that would be caused by getting rid of many of the protections that we put in place last term. Some of those are found in health and safety protections. For example, our government introduced new protections to ensure that workers are informed of hazards and that health and safety information is provided by employers. We created requirements for joint work-site health and safety committees for employers at work sites with 20 or more workers. We created the independent Fair Practices Office, compensation and meaningful rehabilitation for injured workers, and strengthened appeal commission review and appeal processes.

The Premier has not been straightforward with Albertans about which of these protections is on the chopping block. Madam Chair, may I suggest that the chopping block is going to be named the Red

Tape Reduction Act, the mechanism by which the government intends, in my belief, to circumvent the widely more public method of directly attacking these protections and going through the back door, claiming that they're red tape, bureaucratic largesse, and getting rid of them more quietly by using this enabling legislation that we're debating here tonight. So I'm really, really concerned about this legislation.

I think that the government is quietly bringing it forward and saying: "Hey, this Red Tape Reduction Act is what we said under our mandate. We're going to reduce red tape." They don't even really define it. They don't even make the effort to go ahead and say what it is because they know, in fact, that the whole purpose of this legislation has nothing to do with reducing so-called red tape or reducing bureaucratic replication. It has everything to do with using it as a weapon to attack consumer protections, to attack environmental regulations. Anything that they think of in our past platform that they want to quietly get rid of: they're going to use this Red Tape Reduction Act to do it under the guise of bureaucratic largesse reduction.

Madam Chair, I'm forewarned. I hope the rest of the members of this House are. I know that we on this side of the House have definitely got our antennae up about what the real purpose of this legislation is. I'm not fooled by it, and I don't think Albertans will be fooled by it either once they start seeing how, if passed, this piece of legislation actually gets used. It's something, I think, that I as one MLA on this side of the House will take a particular interest in, watching and seeing the methodology behind the implementation of this act.

The associate minister may hope that we're not going to be following up and reviewing exactly how this legislation is used, but I really doubt that we're going to see it used in a way that it's purported that it will be used, because the enabling capacity already exists within any government department. The Premier simply could have given a mandate letter or simply a memo to each of the ministers of the Crown telling them that their duty was to make sure that they reviewed all their existing legislation under their departments and got rid of anything that was redundant or repetitive or unnecessary. He wouldn't have needed to create another new ministry to do that. It would have been done as a matter of course. In fact, Madam Chair, it's something that, realistically, every minister of the Crown has as a sort of standing argument from their Premier, to make sure it gets done.

It's not something that necessarily every minister has during their mandate, the time to turn full attention to, but I argue, Madam Chair, that that's not going to happen under the mandate of this government either. Red tape reduction is not the focus of this piece of legislation. This legislation is designed to enable ministers to do things other than what they would be able to do under the full glare of the public, and that is to rid themselves of consumer protection which they see as antithetical to their dogmatic, ideological viewpoint.

You know, it's one thing that we certainly can see clearly here in this session of the 30th Legislature, Madam Chair. I hope Albertans become aware and join the debate and realize that there's more than one way to approach an argument or a decision in Alberta. We're looking clearly at two different approaches in this Legislature. Increasingly over the next four years we're going to see Albertans, with the assistance of this opposition, digging more deeply and questioning this place, this province, and this government's activities and making decisions for themselves after debating and talking about what exactly this government is up to and learning to challenge everything that's being said. Some things are not as they seem, and that's what's going on with this piece of legislation. This Red Tape Reduction Act is a weapon to enable the government to



attack issues that they want to do with stealth. It's not something that will be forgotten about by Albertans once they start using it for the true intent that they have in the first place in putting together this piece of legislation.

We'll see if it passes. If it does, we'll certainly be watching the performance of the government in its implementation, and we'll be calling them out on every measure that they bring forward that matches what I say it's going to do, and that is to be used as a weapon against the protections, many of which we brought in, to protect consumers, protect the environment, protect workers, protect everyday people in this province.

I think that in many of the pieces of legislation that this session will see, including some that have already been brought forward, including this one that we're debating right now, you'll find that the government is bringing things forward basically as a bit of a smokescreen, one large communication exercise that really does nothing that isn't already in place. It's all designed to do what other pieces of legislation already enable them to do. It doesn't define exactly what red tape is. It doesn't bother to do that because it doesn't really care about reducing red tape; it only cares about the other mechanism that I've described as the underlying true mechanism in this Legislature, and that is to accomplish by stealth what they couldn't do so openly and directly.

Madam Chair, I think I've made myself clear. I encourage members to vote against this bill. I see it as a clandestine attempt to remove consumer, environmental, and labour protections that Albertans deserve to have in place and that finally did get put in place during our government's term of office. Once they see what this government's effort in dismantling our legislation is really going to mean in terms of consequences for the environment, in terms of consequences for workers' protection, in terms of consequences for working people in this province, we will be able to coalesce a very significant opposition to this type of legislation, the condescending and manipulative type of legislation that this government has been patterning over the beginning of this session. I expect to see a continuation of it.

Madam Chair, with that, I'll finish my comments and open the floor to other members who wish to join the discussion. I once again want to make it very clear that members on this side of the House will be monitoring extremely closely what this government does with this legislation, how it uses it to actually accomplish things by stealth that it couldn't otherwise do. We'll see if I'm wrong or right on the issue.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Any other comments, questions, or amendments to the bill? The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you. A weapon, stealth, sneaky – this is the best one – a clandestine approach. A two-page bill. Now, what's interesting is that we have listened for three hours in second reading to everything from, "This is just a smokescreen; there's no value to it at all," to "This is a weapon, stealth, sneaky, a clandestine approach." You cannot have both. Either it's not going to do anything, or it's going to do all of those things. I'm trying to understand, through you, Madam Chair, what the members on the opposite side really want me to answer. Do they want me to answer their question about whether it has any teeth to it, or do they actually want me to answer: it has so many teeth; the poor Albertans?

8:10

In second reading of this bill, Madam Chair, the Member for Edmonton-Decore stood up and said: we are very interested in knowing. Then he named a couple of things: we're looking forward

to being able to get into Committee of the Whole. And then for three hours after that they continued to say the same – well, actually not the same thing. Two separate points. One is that this is terrible legislation and it's going to destroy Alberta. The other one is that this has no teeth, there's nothing to it, and why would the UCP bring this forward? There is some confusion on the other side, so is it grandstanding, or are there actually questions that they would like me to answer so that we can be able to move forward and bring this bill to fruition?

One of the things that I was thinking about as I've been listening intently to the, I would say, arguments from the other side: the other day, when I heard I think it was the ex-economic development and trade minister, he was talking about how there was no need for this, so he was on the no-need side. He needed to talk to his other colleagues. There was no need for this, and the reason that he gave is that he said that there is a Legislative Review Committee, that brings forward any bills that could expire, and then they review them at that point.

What's interesting about the way that the NDP speak is that they forget to finish the sentence. What's unfortunate is what he forgot to say, that every bill that would come forward – there were no amendments made. So how is it possible that this government, after looking through all of those legislative bills that came forward to be reviewed, couldn't find one redundancy, one obsolete regulation, or one conflicting regulation? In all that time, supposedly this was the approach to being able to deal with the red tape. This was their strategy, yet in the four years that they were privileged to be able to be in government, they found not one. So the question that I have is: was their approach really working?

In the last election I had the opportunity to be able to door-knock on a lot of doors, and I heard this a lot from people saying: "You know what? The regulations are killing us. The regulations, adding layer upon layer upon layer, are really hurting our businesses and our ability to actually do what we do best: create jobs, innovate, make Alberta a better place, provide for our families." This government has been very clear. We were clear in the 117-page promises that we made to Albertans, our campaign promises, that we were going to really make effective changes in this government, effective changes in Alberta. One of the major components to that was actually doing something about red tape, actually effectively working out the problems that our Alberta job creators are facing.

What we did is that we looked at – over the last three and a half years I've had the opportunity to be able to look at many jurisdictions throughout the world. Lo and behold, just to our west in B.C. they had one of the best approaches to red tape reduction. What's interesting is that they've been doing this actually now for 16 years. In fact, under the current NDP government they actually have not gotten rid of their red tape reduction strategy. I think that the opposition needs to take a look at their brethren over to the west of us and ask why it is that the NDP have not gotten rid of their strategy to be able to reduce red tape or to at least stop it from increasing. I think the reason that they would hear from their NDP buddies in B.C. is that they have found in 16 years – yes, they've made mistakes – a good strategy to being able to help free up their job creators, free up their innovators so that those innovators and job creators can help grow the economy.

If the NDP in government over the past four years were truly interested in addressing this issue, they had an opportunity. I brought forward a private member's bill. Madam Chair, I know you were there in the House at the time, so I know you remember that bill. Bill 207 was a private member's bill. This wasn't actually to reduce red tape. It was actually just to stop it from growing anymore, so it was a one-in, one-out rule. I thought: "You know what? There's no way they're going to actually want to reduce it,

but at least we could go for something like a one-in, one-out rule, at least put a stay to what's happening with the red tape." I went and talked to the then minister of economic development and trade and said: "Would your government be willing to support this? I think it's a good measure. It would show to at least the CFIB, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, that the F that we keep on getting in Alberta is not the right thing for Alberta." What I was told was: absolutely, we will not be supporting that bill. You know, there wasn't even a discussion about it. It was almost like: I don't see any problem.

Well, fast-forward a few weeks and they introduced a bill that added 100 pages to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 100 pages of legislation. It was a book. Madam Chair, you remember the time fondly, I'm sure, as you read through that riveting read. What we found is that this government was so focused on micromanaging Albertans' lives that they lost sight of what we do here. We innovate. We look for opportunities of being able to find things that other people couldn't do, and we make it happen right here in Alberta. When you add layer upon layer of the federal and the provincial and the municipal governments in Alberta onto our job creators, what we find is that these guys just say: "You know what? We're not doing it anymore. We're going to go somewhere else where that regulatory burden is not so onerous."

We have seen over the last four years – just so you know, my riding is on the border. I have the only 24/7 border crossing, in Coutts. It's a shame when I watched those companies leave, the rigs go down to the States, where they can actually go with a lower regulatory burden, lower taxation, and the ability to make some money. Businesses actually won't stay in business if they can't make money, and if you're looking for a business that will do that, that's called a charity. We need charities, but businesses actually need to be able to make a profit to be able to stay in business. This is something that, hopefully, this legislation will address.

I want to talk to you about the disproportionate effect that red tape has on our small businesses. Small businesses are disproportionately affected because they don't have the economies of scale like the large businesses do to be able to hire an extra compliance officer. These small businesses, these ma-and-pa organizations, have to wear those hats themselves.

I talked to an interesting fellow in my riding who was in the oil patch. He got out because he said that when he first got in 20 years ago, he'd spend one day a month actually just filling out all the regulatory forms and regulation requirements and jumping through the hoops that governments asked him to do. At the point when he actually got out, he was spending half of his time – half of his time – doing that. He said: "It just wasn't worth while for me to be able to stay in. I couldn't actually go and do what I needed to do, which was actually create wealth and hire more people and grow my business. Instead, I was doing what the government asked me to do and filling out forms."

8:20

Now, I will be very clear. This bill is not about reducing regulations ad hoc. This is about being able to do it smarter, being able to take a look at the regulations that we have and looking for those redundancies, looking for those issues that are obsolete, those regulations that are obsolete, looking for conflicting regulations that make it difficult for businesses to be able to move forward because the only way they can move forward if one regulation is conflicting with another is to actually contact the ministry, and then they have another pinch point that they have to deal with. Then that minister has to be able to go through the bureaucratic levels in government to be able to get an answer. Now we slowed down the process of

them actually being able to do what these businesses are supposed to be doing, which is creating jobs.

It's not a shock to me that this NDP government during their last four years saw some of the worst unemployment in this province that we've seen in a generation. It's not a shock to me because when you continue to pile this regulatory burden onto our job creators, they stop creating jobs. Actually, the NDP didn't see that, and for that reason they lost the election, Madam Chair. For that reason they were sent to time out. It's going to be a long time out if they never learn that rule, which is that you cannot continue to stop our job creators from creating jobs and think that they're going to do it just out of the goodness of their hearts. They're going to do it if the regulatory burden is lower, if the marginal tax rate compared to other jurisdictions where they can make money is lower, and where they have a sustainable government. That's what we used to call the Alberta advantage in this province. We have to get back to that winning Alberta advantage.

You know, during that time, Madam Chair, there was a 10-year period. It's interesting that the NDP have been quoting Ralph Klein, so I'll quote him. Not quote him, but I'll talk about his time. For a 10-year period we had almost 100,000 people moving into this province each year, the size of Red Deer or Lethbridge. During that time we had 150 corporate head offices move here. These weren't just oil and gas corporate head offices. These were other corporate head offices. They saw that the Alberta advantage would actually help them. During that time we saw more foreign investment come into Alberta than Quebec and Ontario combined. That was the Alberta advantage. That was what the lower marginal tax rate, the lower regulatory burden than other jurisdictions, and the sustainable government did.

We've been listening for a little over a couple of weeks now to the NDP talk about how we're getting it wrong, and yet I'm pretty sure – I know that quite a few of the members opposite moved here for the very reason that we are championing to this day, the Alberta advantage. They moved here because there were jobs here, because we did something different than other jurisdictions. We actually created jobs. It wasn't the government that did it. The government just created the playing field so that Albertans, job creators, and innovators could do the job.

We've heard again today and in the last few weeks how this opposition has said that they believe, for some strange reason, that when the government invests a million dollars, it will create more jobs than when the actual private sector invests a million dollars. I'll try to be good about this, but every time the government invests a dollar, they took it from someone else first. That's called tax. So their argument that a million dollars from the government is actually better for the economy is completely backwards, Madam Chair. It doesn't make sense. Before they could invest that dollar, they had to take it from a taxpayer first. When they start taking too much from the taxpayer and from those job creators, those job creators say: "Enough is enough. I'm not pulling the cart anymore. I'm gone." This is what we saw. I watched that down in my riding many, many years, for the last four years.

I've talked about some of the issues, 30,000 feet up issues. I am very interested in discussing this bill, but I need to hear from the members opposite concrete questions. I can answer those questions if they have those issues, and I'm very interested in hearing from them.

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments with respect to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. They changed the name of my constituency, and sometimes I'm confused as well when I hear

Edmonton-North West. I look to the left and to the right, and then I realize it's me. Here I am.

I'm here to ask some specific questions of the hon. Member for Taber-Warner, I guess. They've changed your name, too, and given you a title, the associate minister for the reduction of red tape. When I first came back to the Legislature, the new 30th Legislature, I saw that very name taped to the door, not using red tape but another colour, but taped on there nonetheless. You know, I thought to myself: well, what is this, the red tape reduction office? So I have a number of questions.

I guess being a former minister, I'm just curious to know how you would approach, then, let's say, a particular ministry and make suggestions about which regulations to cut. For example, I know that I did a lot of work in the Ministry of Education to try to streamline because I'm a very keen hunter of redundancy, right? I look for things always to streamline, you know, from my own personal life to family and to my professional life, looking for ways to make things work better. The way that I always find is that you defer to expertise and to, certainly, have a, let's say, theme of streamlining regulation in each ministry. But does it necessitate the creation of a separate office, and what authority does that office have? I'd like to ask through the chair: what authority does this associate minister have, the power to supersede both the minister and the Premier's office, to say: "No. This regulation must go," right? "If you want to put one in, you've got to take two out," kind of thing.

That would seem like sweeping power, Madam Chair, for such a fine office as the reduction of red tape. I'm just curious to know how the associate minister might sort of envision the enforcement of that thing.

Another question I have specifically is: how much does the ministry or department – I'm not sure what it is – cost? Like, what is the budget that is afforded to this new creation, and how does the associate minister expect to spend it? Where would the priorities be physically? As I say, reaching in to the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education and/or Transportation and deputizing perhaps some of those department workers and, you know, giving them a new direction, which is in the pursuit of reducing red tape and regulation, or does that happen through that office that has just been created?

My third question is – you should write these down – what regulations or what specific red tape targets have you had so far? Like, what are the, let's say, top 20, 15 – you can send those back to me in writing – that you're targeting now to reduce, right? Is it regulation around education or health care or environment or just what? I mean, I would like to know some examples. I think Albertans would like to see some examples of what exactly we're aiming for here because, you know, in order for me to cast my vote, I need to know what it is, right? I don't see any. As you said before, very astutely, this is a very thin piece of legislation. It's only a couple of pages.

8:30

You know, like, what are the targets? What are the priorities? What are the parameters of this whole reducing red tape sort of plan, right? We can't just sort of move in helter-skelter and say: okay, every regulation we make here – we seem to be proposing quite a number of regulations with the bills that I've been debating here so far with this new 30th Legislature. There are quite a lot of regulations associated, for example, with reducing youth minimum wage. I mean, you'd have to have a legion of people to enforce through regulation whether a kid's going to high school or not and all of this sort of thing. I mean, I need more specific information around that, too.

So if I can, in summary, just, you know, review the questions that I just asked. How much is the budget for this new ministry? Number two, could you give me a list of, let's say, 15 or so pieces of regulation that you'd (a) consider red tape and (b) how you will reduce and (c) how is this pursued, right? Does the new Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction have the power to supersede decisions and procedure in each of the individual ministries, or is he deputizing individuals within those ministries to execute the reduction in the said regulations that he chooses to prioritize?

So, yeah, those are pretty specific questions, and I know he's up to the task because I can see he's ready to spring forth and edify us all with an answer. Thank you.

**The Chair:** The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank the Member for Edmonton-North West for specific questions. They're good questions, and I will answer those. The first question is: how do you determine what gets cut? One of the things you said, Member, is that, you know, it was always better for you guys to consult with the professionals and the gurus in these different areas.

**Mr. Eggen:** I didn't say that.

**Mr. Hunter:** No, you didn't, actually, but I'll put words in your mouth. You guys do that all the time.

I agree a hundred per cent. Our approach is going to be very simple. We're going to allow those people who are in the trenches, that are dealing with these regulations on a regular basis to be able to come forward and present to us what's stopping them from being able to do what we want them to do, which is create jobs and innovate. As they come forward, there'll be certain things that we can do, and there will be certain things that we can't do. That will be, then, the departments, whether it be in Health or in Education or in Infrastructure, Transportation: they will then have the ability to make those decisions.

Now, we are taking a look at this strategy from the lens of believing people and not being so cynical. One of the things that we've heard from people is that, you know, we need to stop this strategy of when 1 per cent does the bad things, that we punish the 99 per cent. This is something that is completely backwards. Good legislation should punish the 1 per cent bad actors and reward the 99 per cent good actors. This is pretty normal in society. You're going to have the 1 per cent that are going to try to bend the rules to do things that they shouldn't do. Those people should be punished.

What B.C. did over the last 16 years, their strategy was, I think, fairly effective. Again, it was not without error, but we've at least had the opportunity to be able to take a look at what they did, look for best practices, and try to be able to learn from them in what we apply here. But what our strategy is going to be is to be able to free up the hands of our job creators, the good actors, the people who actually are willing to be able to make sure that we are healthy and safe and make sure that our environment is properly taken care of, free up their hands to be able to do what you guys could not do, which is create jobs. You could not do that in your strategy, so we are going to take a different approach, an approach that has actually worked in another jurisdiction. In fact, many jurisdictions, not only in Canada but throughout the world, are tackling red tape. This is a strategy that is being applied in many different places. We've looked for those best practices. This is what we're going to do.

Now, you asked what my ministry has in terms of authority. Can it supersede? This is, again, that cynical approach that we've seen far too often by the NDP when they were in government. This cynical approach is that it's us against them. In reality what's going

to happen here is that we're going to work collaboratively together as ministries to make sure that we tackle this. What they did in B.C. is that they made sure that each of the ministries created a culture, a culture of reduction of red tape so that, again, those job creators could actually create jobs.

The question was also asked: what's the cost? I heard everything, you know, when they talked in second reading about how it was going to be so expensive or create more red tape. This is actually going to cost Albertans nothing because it's actually being funded through Finance. This is an associate ministry, and we did this specifically so that we could reallocate our resources to be able to tackle a job that needs to be done. This is what we're going to be doing. We're using the resources through Finance in order to be able to fund the efforts that this ministry will be doing.

The other question that you asked was: what are the regs going to target? We've been very clear on this, and we've said this many times, actually. In fact, it's the first paragraph of the preamble.

Whereas the Government of Alberta recognizes that a consistent, transparent and efficient system of regulatory and administrative requirements is necessary to protect the public interest, including health, safety, the environment and fiscal accountability.

This is going to be the litmus test that we will use for being able to bring forward good legislation and getting rid of the ones that are redundant, getting rid of the ones that are obsolete, and getting rid of the ones that are in conflict with each other.

Those are the answers to some of the questions. You've talked about targets, priorities, parameters. You know, what's interesting about this is the fact that they never counted. How can you know how deep the rabbit hole goes, Madam Chair, if you don't count? So we're going to count. We're going to actually find out how many of these pinch points, these regulatory hoops, our job creators have to jump through, and we're going to do a very exhaustive count.

When B.C. and Ontario did their counts, they found about 380,000 of these regulations. What's interesting about it is that when Manitoba did their count, they actually counted agencies, boards, and commissions as well, and they found an extra 60 per cent more pinch points, a 60 per cent regulatory burden added on to our job creators and to their job creators. They found almost a million of these pinch points. We're going to make sure that we count agencies, boards, and commissions and all departments. This is how we're going to be able to find out the problems and how deep it goes.

In terms of targets, priorities, parameters, I think what the NDP are trying to say is that they want this to be prescriptive. We've chosen not to make it a prescriptive approach because this needs to be enabling. This actually needs to allow us the ability, Madam Chair, to be able to move on bad regulations. What the NDP would like to do – and this is code for what they've been doing for a while now – is say: "We want to slow you down because we're really upset that you guys won that election. You guys need to stop. You can't move so quickly." With this, a lot of businesses, a lot of job creators, and a lot of workers are saying: "You know what? We need to do something about it. We need to do it now."

It's been 40 years since we've actually even taken any stab at this, and we're going to – actually, maybe I should just say this: I've got my scissors out, Madam Chair, and we're going to make sure we get rid of that red tape.

**The Chair:** Are there any more comments, questions, or amendments? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Madam Chair. That was very interesting. I especially like the question from the Member for Edmonton-North West around what the finances look like for this

associate minister. It sounds like some creative financing possibly going on there. But, you know, we'll see how that rolls out, and hopefully Albertans will like the results of it.

You know, I heard some things around micromanaging, new strategy, and choosing not to be prescriptive around this, yet I still remember the Premier at the press conference saying: but, hey, we're open to amendments around that. I guess it sounds like we're not open to amendments but – you know what? – we're going to give it a try, Madam Chair. We'll see what we can do here.

I have an amendment here that I'd like to move on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. I will let those get to you and await your instructions.

**8:40**

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. This will be known as amendment A1.

Member, please proceed.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's nice to be able to move this on behalf of Member Bilous, that Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act, be amended by striking out section 2(1) and adding the following:

Report

2(1) Beginning in 2020, the Minister shall, subject to the regulations, prepare a report recommending strategies and initiatives for the Government to eliminate and prevent unnecessary regulatory and administrative requirements, including the reasons for those recommendations.

What we're asking here is just simply to let Albertans know why it is that they're recommending that these be eliminated. You know, when I look at things like the incident in Walkerton, and we all know what happened there, when seven people died and over 2,300 became ill after a deadly strain of E.coli polluted the drinking water in the town of Walkerton, Ontario. The investigation into the causes identified that the government failed to put proper safeguards in place after privatizing the water supply, and the ministry of environment, weakened by deregulation, failed to detect the problem.

I think if what we could do is that we're looking to, you know, as the minister said, get out those big scissors and start chopping away there, maybe we can just quickly post some of the things: here's what we're going to be doing and the reasons why. It will allow, you know, not only Alberta job creators but also the public in general, because usually it's the public in general that work for those job creators. I've always said that there's nothing like a front-line worker that knows how to do their job best because every day they want to be able to come back to that job, do that, make sure that the employer is successful because as long as they're successful, they keep getting a paycheck, too.

I'm hoping that we can look at some of those reasons for the recommendations. Certainly, I would say that should those reasons be, you know, completely legitimate and understandable for why we're getting rid of them, Albertans will be more than happy to say: "Yeah. Let's do that because it might make my job easier, which will make my employer, you know, a lot better in the environment, and we can all be prosperous together."

I'm hoping that folks will take a good hard look at this amendment and will be willing to support it. I certainly look forward to, hopefully, maybe some comments on it from the associate minister.

**The Chair:** Any comments or questions on the amendment? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to rise in support of the amendment. One of the things that

the amendment does identify is really the lack of clarity of what has been put forward as the Red Tape Reduction Act. Certainly, I know that the now government very often spoke publicly about how they had about six months out of being successful and becoming government, had developed a transition team so that they could plan ahead, and they knew what was going to happen because they were certain a victory. Indeed, here they are. They are the government. They had a significant period of time to plan. But when you look at this document that is Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act, it lacks much detail.

This amendment absolutely does ask for more detail, which I feel is fair. I would say, Madam Speaker, that if we presented this bill when we were government, many of the members who are currently in the government would have laughed us out of the House. It's just so minimal, giving hardly any detail and direction. It's really very disturbing. It has very little in specifics.

I know that it's all part of the larger plan, that this government is open for business and they're wanting to support the job creators. Another thing that I just was sort of struck by when I was reading some of this – it make me think about something that happened previously, when we were the government. It was when we created the new ministry, the ministry of economic development and trade. The joke was: oh, well, you've created one job, the minister's job. Well, I would venture to say that that's what you've done here. That's about all you've done. And, you know, it's not anything to be proud of with this whole vagueness.

When I look at something, I sort of ask a couple questions always, just generally: what is this, and how is it going to be implemented? When you look at the “what” – I am looking at this two-page document of the bill and it says:

Whereas some regulatory and administrative requirements result in unnecessary costs for Albertans in terms of time, money or other resources, putting burdens on businesses and non-profit and public-sector organizations and threatening jobs . . .

That sounds good. Certainly, we on this side of the House don't have any quibble with that. But I just would like some congruence from the government because already in their Bill 2 they have created much more administrative complexity and administrative burden, totally acting in contrast to what is written here, so creating more red tape for employers.

Bill 2, the pick-the-pockets bill, talks about how youth minimum wage will be reduced to \$13 when they're in school, when they're not in school, when they've worked so many hours. Oh, well, these things change. Employers have to figure that all out and look back to when the holidays were. Was school in that week, or were they off on spring break? I mean, there's a whole myriad of confusing factors. I'm thinking: well, if indeed this government does want to get rid of red tape, why would they create that? It just flies in the face of another bill that they have presented. Of course, that bill, the pick-your-pockets bill, goes on to talk more about when we're just giving straight time, no overtime. Again, you have to sort of look at: okay, did you regularly normally work on this holiday? Do you get paid for that or not? Again, it is an administrative burden on employers. I guess I'm just asking the government to be congruent. If you care about this, then how come you're not doing it in another bill? That is something that I'm wondering about.

Because the bill was so minimal, I was thinking, you know: what did they mean by this? So I did go back to the throne speech to see what they said in the throne speech, and they do have about a paragraph in the throne speech about it. They talk about “This will provide the means to lower the regulatory burden on Alberta's economy by one-third.” Oh, so they say something a little bit in addition to what the bill actually says. They do say that they want

to reduce it by a third. But, like, how do they measure that third? How do we know? I mean, I don't know.

8:50

If you want to achieve a goal, usually you have to know what your goal is, how to measure your goal so that you know that you've achieved it. Or do you just arbitrarily say that we achieved it or not? It just makes sense. Of course, in a huge organization like the government of Alberta, I mean, that's just basics. Certainly, there are all sorts of measures that we use in government to see: are we serving the people the best way?

But this bill: it doesn't even bother to tell us when this is what success looks like. That's another question that I have about this bill. I did go back also to the platform because that's also referred to many times by the government: “Oh, well, it's in the platform. We're very proud of our platform. You know, it had a lot of pages to it,” unlike this bill, but it had much detail in it. I see there is a page, an entire page, on this one. Some of it is just sort of a bit of a table and stuff, so it's not full of words. But it does give a few more details again. It reiterates the one-third reduction target that we're not quite sure reduction of what exactly, fees or just maybe a policy or something like that. I'm not sure. It does talk about appointment of a minister, which, obviously, there's an associate minister who was appointed, so that we can see is – that's part of the success, I guess, of this bill.

But it does, again, say, “Implement a ‘One-In/One-Out’ rule requiring ministries to identify at least one offsetting regulation for every new regulation created.” Okay. There are some specifics. Well, that's helpful. How come that's not actually in the bill? Why isn't that in the document? It's in here. That's a measure. I'm just confused because some of their documents have it, but of course the bill is the legislation. It's very important that the legislation has that measure in. And because this is a new ministry – this wasn't a ministry that was created previously – I'm wondering if this one-in, one-out rule works for that. You've created this whole ministry. Does that mean that another ministry needs to be deleted? What ministry is going to be deleted? What one are you going to take care of? I'm just sort of extrapolating from your one-in, one-out rule. Just curious about a few of these things.

I also wanted to talk a little bit more about looking at the strategies and the initiatives. This is what it does say. It says in the bill that in 2020, in the beginning of 2020 – not quite specific but sometime in the beginning, so perhaps January – the associate minister is going to give us a report. Okay. It's going to be a report about strategies and initiatives to eliminate and prevent unnecessary regulatory administrative requirements. This amendment that my hon. colleague just presented is asking to add to that so that we know the rationale, really, for why certain things are in and out. Many of my colleagues on this side of the House have spoken about the importance of regulations. You know, regulations protect us continually. We know there are consumer protections, environmental protections, worker protections, and we know all the stories of regulatory disasters.

But I want to talk about a certain regulation that I think is very important, that sort of I haven't really seen any talk of at all. I'm wondering if this is one of the regulations they're going to get rid of because if they do, I think that there is some concern. You know, there are professional bodies in our province.

A bit of a history lesson: when Lyle Oberg was the Minister of Children's Services – now, this was some time ago – I was on the board of the Alberta College of Social Workers at that time and we had been working for 30 years with the provincial government to have the profession of social work regulated, made it mandatory registration, and the government had never agreed. We had spoken

to them many times because if anybody just calls themselves a social worker, they have to be accountable to our code of ethics, standards of practice. We have to have important, clear boundaries with our clients. We work with people who are very vulnerable, and if we exploit them, you know, if we have an inappropriate relationship with them, this is all disastrous. It's very unhealthy for our whole society. But there was no regulation for our profession. It was just a voluntary process. Indeed, anybody could call themselves a social worker. They didn't have to have an education background in social work. They could just, you know, put up a shingle and say: I'm a social worker. And people did that.

Something shifted in the late '90s, early 2000s, when Minister Oberg was in office. Somebody in his town did run into a regulatory issue regarding an inappropriate relationship with a client and someone who called themselves a social worker, so he got it. He also was a medical doctor, so he understood regulation because he knew how important it was in the health professions, like nursing and being a physician.

So after 30 years we did have some success, and we were able to have mandatory registration in this province, and that meant that social workers had a standard of practice, they had to follow a code of ethics, and each year they must do professional development. All this is regulation, all of it. But it's so important to the well-being of our society. It's so important to vulnerable Albertans. I don't know. It's not mentioned anywhere that this is something that they're looking at. You know, I'm just talking about my own personal understanding of the importance of regulation. I mean, there are many other things that people can bring up.

I think we have to be very careful, and the vagueness of this bill, really, is not being responsible. It's not. I mean, the minister perhaps talks about that he doesn't want to be – how did he put it? I can't remember his words exactly. Sort of unfettered. They can just sort of make decisions. That's why this amendment is so important, because it does give us specifics and rationales so we can understand. What are the principles that this government will follow when they're cutting so that we can at least understand that? It only makes sense.

I stand in support of this amendment, and I encourage all of the members in the House to support it. I think it would be a great addition and do no harm to what exists already.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Are there any more comments or questions on the amendment? The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you. I have to say that there is lots of stuff to unpack there, but let's just get back to the existing amendment that you've brought forward. The only thing that I can see changed here is "including the reasons for those recommendations." Addressing that issue is maybe what I'd like to do right now.

I guess the problem that I have with this is that they're, again, adding more red tape. They're saying: let's just add more to this legislation. We have created the legislation to be small and precise and concise for a very important reason, that is to make sure that we walk the talk. We're not just going to talk about red tape reduction; we're actually going to do it.

I haven't heard any compelling reasons to be able to support this. It actually doesn't talk about principles, as the Member for Edmonton-Riverview said. This would not change anything about that. It just says "including the reasons for those recommendations." I don't see any reasons why. That seems redundant to actually say that. In our report we will be able to show what we've done, and in that report it will show who we've consulted and what we've done to be able to get to that point.

I would recommend that all members do not support this amendment.

**The Chair:** Any other comments or questions in response to the amendment?

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

**The Chair:** Are there any other comments or questions or amendments to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

9:00

**Mr. Nielsen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, gosh, I'm a little disappointed in that. You know, I remember the associate minister, back when he was on this side of the House, talking about, at great length sometimes, how the government was never clear about what it was doing and why. So here we are. I thought that maybe the associate minister was going to live up to all the things he criticized us for and show us how to do it better. Maybe not today but, hopefully, maybe going forward, we might see a little bit more movement on that.

You know, I've heard some comments again that it feels like creating red tape. It's almost like when you walk onto that used-car lot and you get this guy that comes running out to you after 30 seconds and says: I've got a great deal for you today; trust me. Well, we're being asked to trust you, Minister, around what you feel is necessary to reduce.

Again, we talked a lot about the job creators, but we didn't talk about how Albertans are the ones that are potentially going to feel the effects of what gets cut. I can't help but maybe bring another example again just to create that little bit of caution about how we're cutting things. Can you imagine, Minister, if we'd have known ahead of time that by choosing to, you know, delay water-testing rules for growers – at the time it would save them \$12 million per year – in 2008 there would be a listeriosis outbreak at Maple Leaf, resulting in 22 deaths because of weak regulations? They were cited as factors in recurring E coli outbreaks from lettuce, and between 2006 and 2018 there have been 20 E coli outbreaks related to lettuce production, the most recent just in 2018, where 43 people in 12 states and 22 people in Canada got sick because of it. Wouldn't it be great if we could know ahead of time whether some of these things could create some problems?

Anyway, I'm not dissuaded, Madam Chair. I do have another amendment here that I would like to try out. Hopefully, the government will be a little bit more open minded to this one. I shall pass these forward and await your instructions.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

This will be known as amendment A2.

Member, please proceed.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I've made a couple of references to some things that put public safety at risk, and it certainly would have been nice maybe knowing ahead of time that those regulations were either being cut or affected in some way. With this amendment, hopefully, we are putting the public mind at ease.

I move that Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act, be amended by adding the following after section 2(1):

(1.1) In preparing the report . . . under subsection (1), the Minister shall take into account administrative or regulatory requirements with a purpose of protecting public health and safety, consumers, the environment or workers as part of any strategies or initiatives developed by the Government to eliminate and prevent unnecessary regulatory and administrative requirements.

Again, we're talking about being very, very clear with Albertans around their safety. Again, I'd like to say that a successful company always has very healthy and safely working employees. They are the ones that know their jobs best, as they should. Certainly, when I was working at Lucerne, I would not expect my plant manager to be able to just step into my position at a moment's notice and be able to do it as effectively and quickly as I could or as safely. I really wouldn't expect that unless they go through a whole bunch of training exercises, that I would have been happy to do, around forklift operation and power jack operation and loading a trailer safely and all that stuff.

I'm hoping that the minister will very seriously consider this, just, again, being open to Albertans, making sure that they have peace of mind about the regulations that he's looking to take those big scissors to, that he was talking about a little bit earlier, and allowing Albertans to sleep at night knowing that their health and safety is top of mind for this government. At the end of the day, when workers are injured or people get sick or even die, I believe that creates a whole lot of red tape for this government that I'm pretty sure they don't want to have.

I look forward to the comments of others, and I'm hoping that all members will support this amendment.

**The Chair:** Any comments or questions? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**Member Loyola:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. As always, it's a pleasure to get up in the House and speak to the bills that are before us. As always, I like to share little stories to help and entertain our members on the other side of the House so that I can see some smiles instead of just some sad faces because we're getting up to amend their proposed legislation here.

One of the things that I want to share with you is that I regularly am invited to go to speak to classrooms. You know, sometimes I go to a grade 3 class or a grade 4 class, a grade 5 class. I'm sure that many members of the House go and do the same. Whenever I get the opportunity to go and speak to a class, inevitably I start talking to them about: well, what exactly is it that we do here? They, of course, want to know. They know the whole thing about how a bill becomes a law, especially the grade 6 students because they're the ones that are studying that at the moment. Some of them have already visited the Legislature, so they've gone through the tour. They've gone through all of the educational opportunities that exist here at the Legislature for exactly that purpose.

But then, when I get into a little bit more of the details, I start talking about how our responsibility in making the law a lot of times has to do with safety and making sure that they are protected as citizens of this great province. We go through the whole process. I give them the example of – and I know this is a municipal issue, but this is the example that I like to give them because it's one that they can relate to. It's very easy to relate to. It's, "I want you to imagine what it would be like if there were just no safety regulations from the moment that you left your house, you walk down your sidewalk, and you make it to the public sidewalk." We talk about how it's the responsibility of individuals to make sure that the sidewalk is clean during the wintertime so that there's no snow or ice buildup and things like that. Why do we have that particular bylaw at the municipal level? Well, for people's safety.

Then I say to them: "Okay. Imagine now that you have to walk across the road. You have to walk across the road, and where do you cross?" They say, "Well, you've got to cross at a crosswalk, and hopefully there's a light at that crosswalk." Of course, I tell them... [interjection] Yeah, you don't want to be jaywalking,

right? You don't want to be doing that. But they inevitably say, "You cross at the crosswalk for safety."

Long story short...

9:10

**Ms Hoffman:** Not that long.

**Member Loyola:** You want longer? You want me to keep going?

**Mr. Nielsen:** Crosswalks are red tape.

**Member Loyola:** Well, see, this is exactly the thing. Are crosswalks red tape? They're designed for safety.

You know, inevitably, whenever I have that conversation with students, we initially go through those municipal-level regulations, bylaws and things like that, so that they can get a better understanding.

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

Inevitably, I always tell them: "Okay. Now, I want you to imagine that you go to a restaurant. Imagine if there were no rules at the restaurant and that the people could just serve anything any which way that they wanted to because, of course, that would just be better for their business. It would be easier if there were no government regulations on food preparation, right?" But then I tell them: "Imagine what happens if you get sick. You go to a restaurant with your family. Let's say that it's your mother's birthday. You go there and you're having a wonderful time. You're celebrating a loved one's birthday. But some government regulation in food preparation was cut, avoided, not followed, and inevitably someone gets sick, and even, a worst-case scenario, someone could actually die."

So when the government gets up to talk about red tape reduction, you could only imagine that we're going to have concerns. We're going to have concerns. Just as a way of kind of highlighting this, I want to go over some past failures.

[Mrs. Pitt in the chair]

There's one especially dedicated to food inspection. There was actually \$56 million cut from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which resulted in 100 fewer inspectors, and this reverse staffing measure was put in place in response to the deadly listeriosis outbreak in 2008, which actually killed 22 Canadians. Twenty-two Canadians died as a result of cutting \$56 million from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Now, Minister, I don't know what it is that you're planning on cutting when it comes to red tape, but when I look at things like this, that have happened right here in Canada, not somewhere else but right here in Canada, as a way of cutting red tape in other jurisdictions, at the federal level, you have to imagine that I'm going to be concerned. For us it's really important that we get a better understanding of exactly what it is that you are trying to get at.

For that reason, I'm really happy to support this amendment put forward by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore, and I hope that we can only get some support from the other side as well. Hopefully, we'll hear from other members in the House on why they would like to support this amendment.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Are there any comments or questions with respect to the amendment? The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just really quickly, I appreciate the hon. member for bringing forward the amendment. You know, it's worded well, but it's also in the preamble, so it's redundant. I think that putting this into the body of the bill serves no purpose in that it's already in the preamble.

I'll just read to you what it says, again, in the preamble.

Whereas the Government of Alberta recognizes that a consistent, transparent and efficient system of regulatory and administrative requirements is necessary to protect the public interest, including health, safety, the environment and fiscal accountability.

It's the exact same information that we have in this amendment, so I'm not sure if that is the definition of red tape because of the redundancies of it. So I would be hoping that the members would vote this down.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Any other comments or questions with respect to the amendment?

Shall I call the question?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments with respect to the bill?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 4 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Any opposed? Carried.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we rise and report the bill.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**Mr. Getson:** Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration and reports certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 4. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

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

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any opposed? So ordered.

### Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

#### Bill 4 Red Tape Reduction Act

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to rise to move third reading of Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act.

Our government's mandate includes making life easier for Albertans. This means creating more jobs. This means bringing back investment. This means speeding up approval times. This means getting Albertans back to work. All of this can be accomplished by getting rid of the burdensome red tape that blankets government today. As we've discussed in the House, Bill 4 will enable government to develop strategies to reduce red tape in Alberta and keep Albertans updated on what we are doing, all while protecting the environment, upholding fiscal accountability, and ensuring the health and safety of Albertans.

The cost of doing business, the lack of efficiency, the barriers to investment, and difficulty navigating the system have all encumbered our job creators. This all needs to change, and Bill 4 will accomplish this. Ultimately, we're going to take Alberta from being the most overregulated to the freest and fastest moving economy in Canada. Bill 4 allows government to create an inventory of the regulations that are currently in place, evaluate them, and determine if they have had their intended effect. We all know the state of the deep red tape hole that we're currently in, yet the former NDP government refused to do anything about it. This government is taking action. We promised Albertans. We're going to deliver.

**9:20**

This bill would also direct government to adopt a regulatory approach that focuses on outcomes instead of processes. An outcome-based approach will set a standard of regulatory excellence in Alberta, where all regulations are necessary, effective, efficient, and proportional to the outcomes they are trying to achieve. Essentially, Bill 4 enables us to get rid of ineffective and burdensome regulations and prevent the introduction of unnecessary regulations and requirements in the future. In line with this, the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction, myself, falling under the Ministry of Treasury Board and Finance, has a lean and efficient team.

As mentioned, red tape is putting a stranglehold on doing business in Alberta. The NDP failed job creators for four years. We will not. We must act quickly to rectify this, and Bill 4 allows government to combine red tape reduction efforts into omnibus initiatives. This made-in-Alberta approach will allow us to address red tape more quickly and efficiently than anywhere in Canada.

While we anticipate that most if not all of our red tape reduction efforts will be addressed through policy, this legislation will also allow government to create regulations to administer the Red Tape Reduction Act if necessary. Centralizing red tape reduction under the leadership of one associate minister and one division within Treasury Board and Finance will promote efficiency, guarantee crossgovernment co-ordination, and promote accountability as we slash red tape for all Albertans.

We will also consult with Albertans by standing up a series of industry panels across major economic, nonprofit, and public-sector groups. These panels will represent business and industry experts from key sectors, including oil and gas, tourism and hospitality, agriculture and agri-food, bioindustrial, forestry, manufacturing, construction, and small business.

We've already heard from some of these industries, and they're excited about the potential that this bill will provide. They want a streamlined and efficient regulatory process, they want to help attract new business and investment, and they want Alberta to be open for business and be competitive once again. In fact, when we introduced this legislation, Janet Riopel, the president and CEO of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, said that cutting red tape gives Alberta employers more time to create jobs and grow the



economy instead of being burdened by cumbersome and costly regulations.

We also want to hear from everyday Albertans. We will be launching a website where everyone can share their experiences with red tape and their ideas for making government more efficient. Taken together, these industry panels and online feedback will provide a holistic approach to identifying, eliminating, and improving regulations in Alberta.

Accountability of reducing red tape doesn't stop at consultations. Reporting our activities and progress is a key aspect of this legislation. We will do this in a transparent way, with a copy of the red tape report tabled in the Legislature and made available to the public beginning in 2020, and we'll continue to report back to Albertans through the website.

I'd like to thank all members for the debate and feedback on Bill 4. First, we must clarify the need for the bill. We need the legislative authority to begin this work, to begin identifying what the more egregious examples of red tape are within government before we start getting rid of it. I think that everyone in this House understands what we mean by red tape, and the desire to have a formal definition of it is a stalling tactic. Anyone who has waited for hours on hold, had to fill out the exact same form over and over and over again, or felt unnecessary stalls from inefficient government knows what red tape is.

Second, we're not taking the process of cutting regulations lightly. We understand that regulations exist for a number of reasons and that many of them do serve important purposes, including environmental protections and promoting the health and safety of all Albertans. Our goal is to not get rid of these regulations wholesale but to ensure that they are implemented in a way that achieves their intended goal without creating onerous red tape.

Lastly, we have stated our timeline on this process clearly. We aim to cut red tape in Alberta by at least one-third by the end of our mandate. We are developing a schedule for reporting our efforts publicly, but have initially committed to a report in 2020.

Bill 4 is an acknowledgement that Alberta's economy needs help right now, that our businesses need help right now, and that families need help right now. This legislation is the help that is so desperately needed by Albertans. By working to reduce red tape by one-third over four years and preventing new red tape from being implemented, we'll make it easier to do business in Alberta, easier to invest, and easier to navigate government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is not available.

Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It's been an interesting debate on Bill 4, the Red Tape Reduction Act. On first blush, of course, we're creating somewhat of a new ministry for red tape reduction, which in itself is red tape. We've heard a lot of really great buzzwords: moving our economy along, being the freest, and reducing costly burdens on our job creators. We've seen many examples where, supposedly, costly burdens ended up coming back to bite hard-working Canadians, hard-working Albertans where it shouldn't have.

I have to say that this bill is vague. It contains no targets, no timelines, no procedures to ensure transparency and accountability, something, again, that I noted the associate minister, when he was in opposition, very regularly chastised our government for apparently not doing. Yet when given a chance to do things differently, it was a little bit like I mentioned before, that the second verse sounds much the same as the first verse.

I had talked in earlier debate about how there seems to be a little bit of tunnel vision that's starting to occur here. You know, we are saying: well, we need to do it right now; it has to happen right now. Sometimes you get into that frame of mind – and I made a little bit of a reference back to my younger days playing basketball – of forcing that play. Again, sometimes it's really exciting to hear the crowd cheer when you do make that impossible pass, but more times than not, you end up throwing the ball away, and that just puts you further and further behind.

I'm concerned about the fact that this doesn't define red tape. It's been said: well, we want to keep ourselves open and flexible. I think that creates doubt in Albertans' minds because they have no idea what regulations will be on the chopping block, how it could affect consumer protections, health, labour, social services, things like that, again, all in the name of trying to do something right here right now because it's got to happen very, very quickly. I think we're going to find ourselves coming back here later and having to amend things that we weren't expecting to happen.

There's a commitment, of course, to report to Albertans eventually here, beginning in 2020, which, unfortunately, again, is vague – is that the beginning of 2020, is that the middle of 2020, or is that the end of 2020? – as long as it begins in 2020 sometime. By that time the damage could be done. You know, looking back in hindsight, we see many examples of that. I wish there had been disclosure around some of the things that we've mentioned in this House that put public safety at risk. I'm sure at some point in time somebody said to those people: well, we're going to save the job creators \$12 million. Unfortunately, we made thousands sick because we reduced regulations probably haphazardly. I think Albertans deserved to know what was going to happen before it actually happened. To claim that that's just a burden, I think, is a little bit overinflated.

I'm also concerned around the one in, one out. It's been mentioned, and I think the wording was that every new regulatory burden proposed must be matched with a cut of an equivalent burden somewhere else. How is that determined? How do we weigh that this regulation that we're going to get rid of weighs the same as this one that we're bringing in? I've certainly seen that the minister of labour has said: well, you know, it's all right if we create "just a little bit of red tape." But in that contradictory form to the associate minister's mandate around red tape, is there going to be a rush to get something out? It sounded like they were going to communicate, but then it sounded like they weren't going to communicate.

9:30

I hope that members across the way give a little bit of second thought to this. I think we could have done a little bit better. Certainly, I think there's agreement where we can find those efficiencies, something that is actually outdated. I mean, if we've got regulations that are, you know, back from before we even had the Internet, then certainly maybe we need to look at that. I've seen some crazy municipal regulations in other jurisdictions, for instance, where it said that if you were caught practising magic, you would be burned at the stake. That's probably something that we could get rid of. When we start looking at potentially deregulating things all in the name of trying to save a few dollars, it usually comes back to us as a lot more expensive to deal with. Hopefully, members will give this a second thought.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to support this going forward at this time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is still not available.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill?

Seeing none, would the hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction close debate?

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's been a lively debate this evening, and I've appreciated the questions that were asked by the opposition members. I would like to close debate.

[Motion carried; Bill 4 read a third time]

### **Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech**

Ms Glasgo moved, seconded by Ms Rosin, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate June 10: Mr. Ellis]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any members wishing to speak? The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

**Ms Pon:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to share some stories about me. I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are sitting on the traditional ground of the First Nations and Métis people referred to as Treaty 6 territory. I would like to also acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit footsteps which have marked this land for generations.

I'm very proud and humble to be the first MLA to represent the wonderful constituents of the new electoral district of Calgary-Beddington. Located in the north area of Calgary, the constituency is made up of the friendly communities of Beddington Heights, Country Hills, Hidden Valley, Huntington Hills, MacEwan, and Sandstone Valley. In addition to being Calgary-Beddington's MLA, I also have the privilege and honour to serve as the provincial Minister of Seniors and Housing. Both roles and titles I will not take lightly. I am committed to working hard every single day for the trust of my constituents and which the Premier has placed in me.

Our government is bringing a few priorities, one of which is crucial to my Seniors and Housing responsibilities. We will make life better for all Albertans by ensuring the quality and effectiveness of our public service and by supporting the most vulnerable in our society. With our senior population of more than 600,000, growing to 1 million by 2035, the challenges of an aging population cannot be overlooked. My role as the Minister of Seniors and Housing, representing all Albertans, will be at the forefront of my mind every day. I will work with my dedicated and trusted ministry staff to ensure that all seniors, who have spent their lives building this great province and the many generations to come, are not forgotten and have accessibility to the resources and care they need and deserve.

I will help seniors' live in the communities they choose to live in, help seniors increase their independence, and ensure that health and life expenses are met. As a part of my mandate, I will work closely with various housing providers, both in the nonprofit and private sectors, to ensure that there is flexible, affordable, and quality housing for all Albertans with low incomes.

As a representative of our government I'm committed to begin as a faithful steward of our province. I will work tirelessly to make Alberta the best place in North America to live, work, start a business, and retire.

As a teenager I emigrated with my family from Hong Kong. We appreciate how the community welcomed us with open arms in supporting my family as we began our new life. As my family prospered and grew, so too did Alberta's economy. Over the many years ahead this prosperity confirmed to my family that we made the right decision to relocate to Alberta. This hope of growth that I had when I moved is something that I would like for many future generations of Albertans.

But this goes beyond our future generations. I want to ensure the possibilities of growth back to the residents of Alberta. I believe our government has the power to rise as they relentlessly focus on policies that are designed to create jobs, growth, and economic diversification. I want to be part of an economy that is strong, where there are jobs for Albertans who can feel proud and raise a family in the same place that gave my family hope, in a place we proudly call home. With hope comes hard work, difficult choices, and sacrifice for the long-term well-being of family and community. I ask all Albertans to work together for common goals to bring in a brighter future.

I'm thankful for the community members that helped integrate myself and my family when we were new to the community. To reciprocate what we received, I have always enjoyed volunteering in the community and served on various boards to assist those who need it the most. As I pursued a long-term career in banking, with exposure to personal, commercial, and international banking, as a Canada Mortgage and Housing, CMHC, employee in mortgage insurance, affordable housing, and international trade and also as the vice-president of a medium-sized business, I know how hard people work every single day to support their families and ensure there's food on the kitchen table and to save their hard-earned money to buy a house for the family that they can call a home of their own.

I would like to share with you a story about how work can truly pay off. I was in a Tim Hortons ordering a coffee one afternoon. A young man behind the counter recognized me from a financial seminar I had given years ago. His English at that time was poor; still learning, he found it very difficult to find a job and integrate into the community. As we were chatting, he let me know that the seminar encouraged him to keep learning and to not give up. Soon after the seminar he obtained an entry-level job at Tim Hortons, and shortly after that he was training to become a management trainee. This can-do attitude we must bring back to our province, and let our great nation and beyond our borders know that we are back in business.

While we grow, we cannot forget those who are vulnerable: our seniors, the disabled, and those facing mental health issues or other challenges in their lives. All Albertans deserve the support they need in their healthy lives.

**9:40**

After volunteering in the community for many years and serving on various nonprofit and for-profit boards, I felt that the time was right to become involved in politics as a way of being able to improve our lives and to ensure that the many opportunities my family and I received are paid forward. We are here in the Alberta Legislature because we want to do our part to make positive changes for all Albertans. With the support of taxpayers, the residents of Alberta, and my government colleagues I'm confident that we will build a strong, vibrant economy for all Albertans for many generations to come. I'm very proud to be an Albertan, the first Chinese woman to sit as a minister with the Alberta government, and honoured to represent the constituency of Calgary-Beddington.

Thank you.

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

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

**Mr. Wilson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. [Remarks in Cree] [Translation] Welcome. How are you? [As submitted]

It is with great respect and awe that I rise today to reply to the Speech from the Throne and offer my maiden speech as a first-time elected Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the constituency of Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin. I want to first acknowledge the lands we're on as Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of the First Nations and the Métis people. They've been marked for centuries by the footprints of the First Peoples that call this area home.

I extend my congratulations to all the members of the Assembly on their elections. It is truly a team effort to get here, requiring the backing and support of our family and friends. No matter what political affiliations we represent, I think it's safe to say that we all have two common goals: one being to represent the best interests of our constituency and, two, to move this great province forward. Finally, I'd like to thank my constituents for allowing me the privilege to represent them in this esteemed House. I am truly humbled and blessed by their act of faith. It is a heavy responsibility and one that I take very seriously.

My constituency is Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin: maskwa, meaning "bear," and cîs, meaning "hills." Wetaskiwin is Spatinow. That means "the hills where peace was made."

Approximately half the population of my electoral division is indigenous. I grew up in the middle of the four bands. We called it Ma-Me-O Sâkâhikan, otherwise known as Pigeon Lake. Racism, sadly, was still an issue. When I went to school – I can remember my first day. I came home from school, my shirt was torn, I had a bloody nose, and my mom said, "My goodness, what happened to you?" I said, "Well, they were beating up on my friend Larry." My mother said, "Why?" I said, "Because they said he was an Indian." She said, "Well, he is. Why did you get beat up?" "Well, they said I wasn't an Indian." She said, "You're not." It broke my heart.

Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin used to be a big resource-producing area, but the past few years have seen a steady drop in resource, manufacturing, and oil and gas activity. This hurts the region as there are several manufacturers in my riding supplying electrical components, agricultural equipment, and oil field components. In fact, just last week I was at the Leduc-Wetaskiwin chamber of commerce, and it was there that I learned that the county of Wetaskiwin lost \$1.6 million in tax revenue in the past three years. This has meant that they've had to dip into reserves to cover the shortfall. But my residents are hardy people, willing to dig in, tighten their belts, and get to work when times are tough.

Recently the riding has begun to revert to its agricultural roots, helped by some of the best topsoil seen in western Canada. We also have a large tourism base, which is really beginning to pick up, fuelled by the many lakes in my riding as well some of the best golf courses in the province, all in close proximity to the city of Edmonton. I would be remiss if I did not mention the Reynolds-Alberta Museum, a crown jewel to be found in Wetaskiwin, and I'm happy to report that the museum will be getting an expansion to the Aviation Hall of Fame this year.

Also, some good news on the economic front at home: a new grain-handling facility is being constructed along the tracks just south of Wetaskiwin. It's the G3 facility, and it'll be a state-of-the-art grain-handling facility which will feature a 42,600-tonne storage facility, with a 17,000-tonne main house and three 8,300-tonne steel bins, surrounded by a 134 car loop track on a property south of Wetaskiwin. This construction has meant new jobs and new money flowing into the riding and Alberta's economy. The unique JEDI

partnership, the Joint Economic Development Initiative, between the county of Wetaskiwin and the town of Millet, was key to bringing this project to fruition.

I will now move to discuss how the four bands of Maskwacis are dealing with the tumultuous Alberta economy. We have the Montana, Louis Bull, Ermineskin, and Samson. They've been hit hard as well. Local leadership tells me that the loss of oil and gas activity has been a struggle. As we all know, the loss of economic prosperity often means an effect on socioeconomic well-being, and these communities are dealing with that fallout. The good news is that local leadership has been acquiring and opening new businesses and farmland to offset the resource development loss.

I'm excited to invite them to participate in the indigenous opportunities corporation once it is established. We had discussions about that today during our summit with the Alberta chiefs, a meeting not held in almost four and a half years.

I'm also proud to report that the four bands have amalgamated their schools into one district. They are doing an amazing job graduating students from their schools and their own college. They have their own health system, and I was there just two weeks ago and got a tour of that facility, which offers all under one roof dental, optical, community pharmacy, and a diabetics' clinic, with plans one day of opening up their own hospital. Eventually they would also like to add dialysis, IV therapy, and seniors' care as well.

The city of Wetaskiwin also has a great hospital and seniors' care facilities. I was honoured to be the chair of the hospital board and later chair of the region. One of the biggest accomplishments I was most proud of was to get a dialysis unit for the area's residents – and my own father is now also using that dialysis unit – so residents don't have to drive to Edmonton or farther to receive saving care. As we all know, it's incredibly exhausting for family members to drive long distances for this type of care, so it's critical that we get this type of support and medical service in the rural areas and indigenous communities.

There are so many little hamlets and towns in my riding I cannot mention due to time, but a quick shout-out to some like Millet, Pigeon Lake, Hay Lakes, Ferintosh, Falun, Rolly View, and Mulhurst.

A big concern in my constituency is addictions and mental health. I'm so proud our government has appointed an Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. I will be meeting with the minister to discuss this important issue and look for solutions. Sadly, residents, especially the younger people – taking their own lives is a big concern in Maskwacis. They have made tremendous strides to slow down these terrible incidents, but as we can all attest, even one life gone too early is one too many.

I'd like to now discuss a little bit about myself so that my colleagues and Albertans have a better understanding of who I am and what drove me to accept running in this election. Was it the 15-hour days of endless meetings or having to memorize thick binders of public policy? It was the thought I could give back to my friends and family, my fellow citizens of Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin, no matter how small my contribution might be.

My family has a long history of public service. I'll start with my grandpa serving in World War I. You probably have seen the movie *Passchendaele*. A lot of that's based on my family's history. If you look up "love in a dangerous time" in the *Edmonton Journal*, you'll see a picture of my grandma and grandpa in there. My grandpa was one of 17 survivors of that battle of a thousand men. That's how many died from the Princess Pats from Edmonton here. He was pronounced dead on the battlefield, but somehow he was only mostly dead and came back. He was a medic so he dressed his own wounds and made it back to the clinic and six weeks later awoke in England to a little Welsh lady, who

nursed him back to health. He married her, and that became my grandma and grandpa.

My dad was in the militia in the Korean War, and my dad's cousin is the late Lieutenant Governor Grant MacEwan. My dad was also on village council, and my oldest daughter was a councillor for the city of Wetaskiwin and is now a municipal administrator. Another daughter was a page here in this very Chamber. My father had a big influence on me, amazing me with his many talents. I can always remember him helping out in the community for anyone and anywhere he could. I remember when natural gas was being installed in the area. My dad became an expert in converting furnaces, and as a result, was gone every night helping where it was needed. One time I said that I was going along, and my dad thought, "Wow, my son is taking up the family trade," until he realized the house we were going to had five girls, one of which became my wife.

My mother's family came from Odessa, Russia, which is now the Ukraine. My mom was raised in a log cabin with a dirt floor but thought she was the richest person in the world as there was always so much love in the family, a lesson passed down to me. My mom always told me that you'll be remembered for what you give back to the community, not what you take out.

My wife's mother was widowed and had 10 kids all at home, and she raised them all by herself, including a pair of two-year twins, with no help on the farm, which my wife and I ended up buying. We just recently turned over that 120-year-old family farm to our son, who's now running it.

9:50

I'm blessed to have such an amazing partner as my wife. I call her my trophy wife after 41 years. She's patient and loving and has always supported me in my business ventures. In my political life I would not be where I am without her.

We have four amazing grown children, three girls and one boy, and seven grandchildren, and I love them all dearly. My youngest daughter and her wife and my grandson know that I love them so much, and I am incredibly proud of all of their accomplishments. I also have two Métis grandchildren. I look forward to talking to them as they grow up and telling them that their omosômimâw was Minister of Indigenous Relations.

I've always had various business ventures on the go to support my farming life. I've been lucky enough to be involved in a lot of development in my riding. I was also proud to open and support businesses in the Maskwacis area when a lot of people weren't willing to do so.

I want to conclude by thanking the Premier for his appointment. What an honour and humbling experience it has been in my short time so far. I'll always remember fondly being sworn in as Minister of Indigenous Relations.

I also want to take time to thank all the members of the House for your kindness and your support.

I also need to thank the many people who got me here. Some have closed up shop, spent weeks with doors closed, and volunteered on my team seven days a week.

I thank my family and my wife, who have seen my time with them diminish greatly. When we take this job, we also take our families with us. We owe them a debt we can never repay. I stand before you tonight and will continue to work hard, stay humble, and keep our commitments to Alberta.

[Remarks in Cree] [Translation] Thank you, your friend and partner. [As submitted]

And with that, Madam Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

### Bill 8 Education Amendment Act, 2019

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education.

**Member LaGrange:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is my honour to rise and move second reading of Bill 8, the Education Amendment Act, 2019.

Madam Speaker, with this important piece of legislation we are taking a significant step forward for education in Alberta. The Education Act with these proposed amendments will provide a better foundation for unlocking the potential of our students today and in the future.

Let me first explain how we got to this point. Work began in the mid-2000s to replace an outdated School Act, which had been in place since 1988. The world was changing and so, too, were the expectations of parents, school officials, and students for their education system. Years of widespread consultation went into the Education Act, which this House passed in 2012. It reflected the priority of Albertans, that the student is at the centre of all decisions we make around education and learning. The Education Act never came into force, though, as work continued on its regulations.

After the 2015 election the newly elected government decided to take a different approach. They ignored the Education Act, and the act languished as they decided to bolt their changes to the 1988 School Act. That brings us to where we are today, and that's why our government promised to go back to the Education Act. It was the result of so much work and input and reflected what Albertans had said that they wanted. Once in place the Education Act will modernize our education system and bring to life the vision shared by thousands of Albertans.

Madam Speaker, the Education Act recognizes parents as a child's first and most important teacher. It strengthens local decision-making and puts school boards in the best position to determine the needs of their students and the learning opportunities necessary to meet these needs. It highlights the importance of choice and confirms our ongoing support for all types of education choices, including public, separate, francophone, charter, private, and home-schooling. It confirms that the school system should support every child of every background and every ability.

This act focuses on putting our kids first and making schools safe, welcoming places, where diversity is celebrated and bullying is not tolerated. As the members can see, the Education Act is based on values our government believes are fundamental to supporting our students.

Looking specifically at Bill 8, members can also see that our government is being pragmatic. We know that the next school year is only a couple of months away, and we know that certain aspects of the Education Act would add additional costs to the system. So to be mindful of the bottom line and to provide certainty for families and educators, we are proposing some amendments to the Education Act.

Madam Speaker, let me first start with those amendments related to access. We are proposing to keep the current rules for age of access, age of compulsory attendance, and residency rules. Some may be disappointed that we are making these changes to the original Education Act, and we recognize that one aspect of the act was about increasing access to education. However, the act was drafted under different circumstances. In 2012 the province was booming and more students were dropping out of high school early to go to work. We are not seeing this today. Maintaining the status

quo will save taxpayers money while providing stability to school authorities. We are also being responsive to school board concerns. Some school authorities are currently facing space and capacity issues, and if we did not amend the act, they would struggle to find room for even more students.

School jurisdictions also expressed concerns over additional costs associated with these changes. We also proposed to keep the current timeline of 2020 for when changes to the common kindergarten age of entry come into effect. The Education Act would have this happen right away, which would mean the change in age would happen for the 2019-2020 school year. We estimate that 4,500 children would be caught in this change. Therefore, we know schools and parents have already made their plans for the next year, so we want to make sure that they have the stability within the system that they require. It simply makes sense to keep the timeline as is.

We also want to provide certainty and consistency for parents and school boards when it comes to student transportation, so we're proposing to maintain the current eligibility rules for busing. The coming school year's transportation schedules have already been determined and communicated to parents, so we know parents will support this amendment. They will understandably prefer stability for this upcoming school year to a disruption in the plans they have already made. This is particularly important for rural families. It is also important to maintain certainty in this area to ensure that families across the province have equal access to transportation and to ensure boards can contain their costs of providing transportation.

Also, to help contain costs this time for parents, it is to limit the school fees they pay. It is important that parents do not pay additional school fees for instructional supplies and materials required in a classroom such as textbooks and paper. Amendments will prohibit school boards from charging fees on these types of materials. School boards will be free to charge fees for other items such as for optional courses and extracurricular activities, but they would be accountable to parents for whichever fees they may choose to set.

Also related to minimizing cost drivers is superintendent compensation. I think all members of this House can agree that superintendent compensation should remain in line with executive pay in other Alberta agencies, boards, commissions, and postsecondary institutions. Therefore, we propose to amend the Education Act so the current superintendent compensation rules are carried over into the legislation.

We are also proposing amendments so that we can implement leadership certification and teaching-quality standards as currently planned. As many people know, school board leadership certification has broad support from all stakeholders, and a significant amount of work has gone into preparing for it to be in place for September 1.

Madam Speaker, we are also introducing additional amendments that relate to system governance or are administrative in nature. This is primarily to align the Education Act with other pieces of legislation or current practices. This includes updating language around establishing separate school districts and aligning dates for bylaws related to ward boundaries or trustee representation within the Local Authorities Election Act.

Taken altogether, these proposed amendments will allow for the smooth transition between existing legislation and the Education Act, which, if passed, will come into force on September 1, 2019, as promised.

**10:00**

In conclusion, from stakeholders to students, from policy-makers to parents Albertans have told us that they want an education system focused on student success. I'm confident that all members of this

House would also agree with this statement. For this to happen, we need a modern piece of legislation that creates a strong foundation for our education system today and into the future.

We do not need to look further than the Education Act to find this. It is a foundation built on years of input from students, parents, teachers, principals, school support staff, trustees, employers, and many, many other Albertans. It goes beyond learning and speaks to the system as a whole, including teaching, leadership, collaborative and community engagement, all within a more flexible system that provides for local autonomy and is accountable to parents and taxpayers. The original Education Act together with the proposed amendments will deliver a provincial framework focused on educational excellence in Alberta, one that Albertans expect and deserve.

Madam Speaker, I'm asking all members of this House for their support of Bill 8, the Education Amendment Act, 2019. Thank you.

I would like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

### **Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech** (continued)

Ms Glasgo moved, seconded by Ms Rosin, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

[Adjourned debate June 10: Mr. Wilson]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie and Deputy Chair of Committees.

**Mr. Milliken:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. At the risk of sounding a little self-serving given my election as the Deputy Chair of Committees, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Deputy Speaker of the House.

Now, having given this opportunity to speak some thought, I think it is best for me to start right at home, with my family. I would like to start by thanking my wife. She gave me the go-ahead to start door-knocking more than a year ago in order to win the nomination for the United Conservative Party. I don't think either of us at the time knew what we were getting ourselves into. So thank you, Christine. Your sacrifices mirror my own. To my son, Eric: you don't understand all of daddy's words yet. For those of you who don't know, he's only two years old. I hope that one day you will understand that everything I do – the late nights, all the travel away from home, the time that I spend away from you – I do for you to ensure that you have the opportunities in the future that I had when I was growing up in Alberta.

To my mother and father, Jane and Don, or Dr. and Dr. Milliken: your love and support throughout the years did not go unnoticed. In a weird way I actually owe my life to politics. It was actually an unsuccessful attempt at an election in 1979, one that didn't quite work out, that then allowed my parents to decide to have another child, and that child was actually me. To my brothers and my sister: I am still the kid who looks up to all of you. To the volunteers who helped me win and are the reason why I am here: I am forever in your debt.

By way of some background on me, I took economics and business at the University of Alberta, and then ultimately I became a lawyer. After several years of practising, I ended up starting my own business, so with all due respect to Parliamentary Counsel and the many lawyers in this House, I do often refer to myself as a reformed lawyer.

On the business front I've told many people throughout my door-knocking that it's great to say that I managed to build up this business to do business across Canada, but really it's actually a darker story in the sense that in 2015 and 2016 the economy of Alberta was turned in a way that I didn't agree with. Ultimately, it was out of necessity that I had to start looking for clients in other provinces and other countries in order to diversify my company away from Alberta. It meant long days of work, long business trips, time away from my family given the economic mismanagement of our province over the last four years. As such, I am honoured to be part of the United Conservative Party and the United Conservative government, one that is actively supporting job creators, entrepreneurs, and risk takers. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy.

I will be the first to admit that I was not asked by anyone to run for this office. A year and a half ago I was working hard, minding my own business, both figuratively and literally. I guess there's a pun in there. I was working, obviously, to help provide for my family. I was also fed up with how the province was being run. We need a government that supports the economy and responsible growth of our energy sector, which in turn helps support prosperity not only in Alberta but across all of Canada. Long story short, a year and a half ago I disagreed with the direction of Alberta, so I decided to change it.

I ran in Calgary-Currie because I live in Calgary-Currie. I'm raising a family in Calgary-Currie. I even started my company in a small extra bedroom that we had in a home in Calgary-Currie. Years ago, before I decided to run, I actually found fulfillment through volunteering and fundraising within my community. Once my company was sort of up and running, I had a little bit more extra time on my hands, and I filled that time within the community. Remember: getting to this point was not an easy task. It took many weeks of 100-hour-plus workweeks, trying to build my company out of nothing, with absolutely no guarantee of a paycheck. I can't say enough about the risks taken by small-business owners, and they need our support.

At the time, though, I was volunteering for my community association and providing a little extra hand here and there, labour wherever I could, moving guitars and helping store donated keyboards, things of that nature, flipping burgers at different events. I even helped fund raise for a 10-seater bus to help drive local new immigrant children to various sporting programs and after school programs. If I can say one thing with the platform that I have here, it's that if you have an extra hour, even just one hour, if you decide to dedicate that time to a local charity in your area, the marginal benefit of that one hour can be immeasurable. Take care of your community, and your community will take care of you.

Calgary-Currie is an amazing riding, Madam Speaker. To borrow some words from Mr. Speaker, who often talks about his riding being fantastic, I would arguably say that my riding of Calgary-Currie could be considered the best riding. I've heard many stories from the MLAs here. Well, some people have said that their riding is as big as Belgium. Well, my riding is a little different. On a good day if I don't hit a red light, I can probably drive across it in less than 10 minutes. Twenty-four per cent of Calgary-Currie's population are visible minorities, and that includes my wife and my son. It's a young riding, with about 40 per cent of the population being between 25 and 44. At 39, I'm in that category. It's an urban

riding with bike lanes, senior living centres, great restaurants, and even a golf course. But it has problems, too.

Along with some of the highest rated schools, it actually has some of the lowest rated schools. Along with some of Alberta's most expensive homes, it also has several community housing projects. We have certain pockets of community members that have been in the area for generations, and we have pockets of new Canadians, new immigrants and refugees from various war-torn countries. The challenges facing Calgary-Currie are real. All you need to do is go to the Westbrook Mall C-Train station early in the morning, and you will see mass homelessness. You will get a glimpse into the opioid crisis. Door-knock the community's housing projects, and you will find many people struggling to feed and clothe their children without computers or TVs or phones. Then you can door-knock in some of the more affluent areas, and you will find what you think are people who, on the surface, are enjoying great successes, but if you dig a little deeper, you will find that some of these individuals have been out of work for upwards of three years. They are hanging on for dear life just to keep their homes. And then, if you go around, others are just gone; forced to sell and move recently to other provinces or countries in search of work.

Just as one example, I was door-knocking in Rutland Park, which is a relatively new area within my community. I ran into a lady by the name of Sarah, and she had two young kids about the same age as Eric. Immediately we started talking about kids, and the ice was broken. Then she quickly mentioned that her husband was in Houston. At the time, my wife was actually in Houston attending an energy conference, so I just assumed that the conversation was going to go down that path. I started to talk along the lines of Houston and conventions, and she said: "Whoa. No. That's not it, Nick." In this case her husband had lost his job 10 months before and was not able to find work in Canada and, ultimately, had to move to Houston. Now, the big problem with this, essentially, is that the family was forced to split and live in completely different countries. Once they were financially back on their feet, she had the full expectation that she was then going to move the whole family to Houston. This is just one of the stories of hardship that I heard over the last four years of a government that failed to support our workers and failed to support the economy.

#### 10:10

The saddest part of this is that once these people leave, they almost never come back. We have experienced a province-wide brain drain over the last four years, but it has to stop now. We will support the free market, support our energy industry, bring back jobs to Alberta, and help create the prosperity which, in turn, allows us to care for marginalized portions of our population and protect the individual regardless of faith, lifestyle, or background.

I grew up in Alberta knowing that the opportunities would be there for me regardless of what I did with my life. I could be a drummer – Lord knows I tried – an artist, a plumber, an accountant. In my case I became a lawyer and then an entrepreneur, and I guess that now you could probably call me a politician. This is my chance to help restore those opportunities so my son can have opportunities for success right here in our great province.

Okay. So this is now also the time of the speech that we can all just sit back, stop for a second, take a deep breath, and take all of this in. All of us here today who are elected, on both sides, are now part of Alberta's history, and that statement is almost overwhelming to me. The responsibility and weight on all of us is enormous, and we have some big shoes to fill.

For me, I remember Christmas in Red Deer. I remember family trips to Gull Lake, and I remember hearing stories about my great-grandfather, William R. Howson, who was an MLA here from 1930

to 1936. He was the Opposition leader against Premier Aberhart. He was also the leader of the Alberta Liberal Party, but I don't hold that against him. At the time, though, as a child I could only imagine what it was like to sit in this Chamber. I remember thinking: man, my great-grandpa must have been really old.

But now here I am, and it's my turn. It's our turn. I walk around these marble halls, sit in the Chamber, sometimes even on the Speaker's throne, and I realize that we are all blessed to be here with the opportunity to help restore Alberta as the engine and Canada's economic leader and a leader in the world. No matter your political stripes we are here to support Alberta, support Albertans, support our families, and in many ways support each other. Together we can make Alberta the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Thank you.

With that, if it pleases Madam Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

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

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. What a great day. Lots of progress. Bill 4, the red tape bill, is through the House. As such, I think that we should be very happy with the progress today. I thank all members for all their hard work, and I will move that we adjourn the House till tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 10:14 p.m.]









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