



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday evening, June 25, 2019

Day 19

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

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

First Session

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Copping, Hon. Jason C., Calgary-Varsity (UCP)  
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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (NDP)  
Deol, Jasvir, Edmonton-Meadows (NDP)  
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Hoffman, Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (NDP)  
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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)

**Party standings:**

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Singh  
Smith  
Turton  
Yaseen

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 25, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

### Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

#### Bill 5

#### Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2019

**The Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader is rising on behalf of the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is correct. I rise today on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Finance to move third reading of Bill 5, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2019.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides the funding to meet the obligations of the province from the 2018-19 fiscal year, which ended on March 31, 2019. I would remind the House that that's prior to the last election on April 16, 2019, and prior to the current government coming into its place in this Assembly. The amounts specified in this bill reflect the picture that was presented in the third-quarter fiscal update and includes spending beyond what was budgeted for the previous fiscal year.

The bill is backwards looking, where government is asking the Legislative Assembly to approve spending brought forward by the previous government. Due to our commitment to the parliamentary process, Mr. Speaker, we are here today to ask for approval to ensure the obligations of the province are met. As has been stated before, we understand that unplanned expenses come up, like natural disasters, and we recognize that our key commitment as a government is to provide support for Albertans in times of emergency. I believe that in these cases it's appropriate to ask for supplementary funding, funding that ensures people are evacuated safely, their communities are re-established in a timely manner, and their return is managed as smoothly, effectively, and efficiently as possible.

However, where I differ from the opposition on this idea is on requesting supplementary funding to pay for poorly thought out and negotiated projects that do not add value for all Albertans. This is not a prudent use of Alberta taxpayer dollars, and our government will not be continuing this practice of the former government. Moving forward, we plan to do things differently to bring prudence and predictability to Alberta's budget planning, and through these careful actions we will bring Alberta's budget to balance by 2022-23 and begin reversing the course of the previous government's path towards almost \$100 billion in debt, Mr. Speaker. A hundred billion dollars in debt.

But before we can start our work on Alberta's finances for the future, we must clear up the outstanding issues from the NDP's past. Our intention with Bill 5 is to clear previous obligations from the table so our government can approach Budget 2019 with a clean slate. I'd like to thank the House for its support of Bill 5 even though I'm sure it's hard in some cases, Mr. Speaker, to vote for such a bill, and I encourage my colleagues on both sides to do just that so we can start with a clean slate and move past the NDP's past.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

#### Bill 6

#### Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2019

**The Speaker:** The hon. Government House Leader is rising on behalf of the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You are correct. I am rising today on behalf of the President of Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance to now move third reading of Bill 6, Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2019.

This interim supply bill allows the normal course of government business to be carried out for the first eight months of the 2019-20 fiscal year. By passing this bill, we are ensuring that government operations can continue as a new fiscal year begins on April 1. This also allows the work of the MacKinnon panel to be completed and considered by our government. The eight-month time frame will give our government time to develop and debate a budget through the Committee of Supply process. We are asking for this time so we can take time to be prudent and carefully approach the next budget, making sure that our priorities represent those of Albertans. We know that action must be taken to bring Alberta's budget back to balance, and we are dedicated to taking the time to ensure we are making the right decisions without sacrificing front-line services that Albertans are counting on.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans can be confident that our government is making thoughtful, prudent decisions to ensure there is funding both now and for future generations. If we do not balance the budget now, we'll end up spending billions on interest payments to bankers instead of funding Albertans' priorities. This is about looking to the long term, making responsible choices, and eliminating reliance on debt financing that steals from future Albertans. These are the decisions we can't make without first taking the time to understand the problem. We will be gathering input, including the report from the MacKinnon panel and discussions that are happening in each ministry as we speak, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to incorporating this feedback into our government's first budget.

In the meantime I'd like to thank my colleagues for their thoughtful comments on this bill, and now I must ask for the support to allow us the time we need to create the best plan for Albertans. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, anyone else wishing to speak to third reading of Bill 6, interim supply? The hon. the Member for Calgary-McCall.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to interim supply. We'll have some specific questions as well, but before I do that, I just want to begin by saying that, essentially, through this bill government is asking for almost \$28 billion just in expenses. There are very few details that have been provided. These amounts will be for eight months, for most part of the year.

Every time when we ask any question in this House, the answer is: there will be a budget, and details will be provided therein. However, when we were in government, I do still remember the Government House Leader's comments on interim supply, every time they got up: the government is asking for a blank cheque; government is asking for a carte blanche. I think the same applies here, too. Government is asking for a blank cheque for eight months, they are asking for a carte blanche for eight months, and they're not willing to provide any details whatsoever. The only thing we hear is that it's the normal course of government business. Certainly, when we are in question period, we do hear that they have cancelled this and they will not pursue that plan, this plan, but when we ask where it's reflected in these numbers, we do not get any

answers whatsoever. I think it's a huge sum of money that government wants through this bill, and Albertans deserve to know that how this money will be spent.

It's not that government doesn't know what these expenses are, what these departments will do. They have a platform. They have their priorities, which they talk about all the time in question period. Certainly, these sums will go to fulfilling those commitments, and Albertans do deserve to know how their money is spent since it's a huge sum of money and it's for eight months, for most part of the year. There are questions that we will want to know before we can vote. Otherwise, I think government is just asking us blindly to vote for these billions of dollars and wants us and wants Albertans to believe that somehow this money will be spent in their best interest.

7:40

Since the Minister of Energy is here, if I look at those numbers, there is an increase in expense from \$262 million dollars they are seeking. They are asking for \$309 million. Certainly, some priorities factored in. There certainly are some plans that they have to increase the expense from \$262 million to \$309 million. Similarly, with capital investment there was none before in the previous Budget '18-19, but now they're adding \$300,000. Similarly, in financial transactions there is also a huge difference because previously it was \$378 million. Now they are asking for \$95 million.

These are not just the numbers that are pro-rated based on the previous numbers. Certainly, there is a huge difference in this number, in the 2018 numbers, and Albertans deserve to know. I think we as opposition need to know before we can decide to vote on this, how these monies will be spent. Especially in this Energy estimates supply amount, there is a huge difference, so I would really appreciate if the Minister of Energy will help us understand where these increases or decreases will go because that's important information.

Also, we have heard before that they're not planning on moving ahead with oil-by-rail contracts, which, based on the advice we received, would have seen oil moving by next week and would have helped us create a 120,000-barrel takeaway capacity and also generated \$2.2 billion in revenues. Since they are not pursuing those contracts, following through on those contracts, I think it will be helpful if the Minister of Energy could tell us whether there was some amount that will be going towards cancelling those contracts.

Similarly, in other areas, other ministries: same thing. There are many ministries where expenses are higher or lower than the previous years, so I would encourage the respective ministers to at least help us understand those differences. Otherwise, it's just a blank cheque of 27-plus billion dollars, and we would not be in a position to sign off without knowing anything whatsoever.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Energy and other ministers with respect to the fluctuation in their presented estimates from the previous 2018-19 estimates. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Would anyone else like to speak to Bill 6, the interim supply – oh. Correction: Bill 5. Bill 6? Bill 6. We are on Bill 6, the interim supply bill. I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has risen to join the debate.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak to the interim supply bill no matter what number it has. I think it's important that we have this opportunity to discuss some of the significant issues that I see, and I'm going to speak primarily about the Education budget given that I know there has been a

considerable amount of messaging, but there has been very little clarity provided to school boards and to parents.

You've heard me talk about the Calgary board of education earlier today. They were debating their budget, of course, making assumptions based on provincial funding. Consistent with what they heard during the election campaign they're assuming flat funding year over year, so that means a \$40 million shortfall, they're saying, based on growth and other pressures. When I asked how that'll be split up, they said that \$18 million will be absorbed within central units – absorbed means cut from central units – and \$22 million will be passed on to schools. Of course, Mr. Speaker, \$22 million being passed onto schools is a considerable amount, especially when the biggest cost for any school district and, arguably, for the government is its human cost, the fact that we employ a significant number of people working in the public sector as well as in schools on the front lines.

So \$22 million coming out of schools and the front lines. Teacher unit costs in Alberta for the last more than five years, probably six years, has been \$100,000, when you factor in benefits, when you factor in other types of incentives that teachers receive, not salary but the total unit cost. Of course, the Calgary board of education, ATA local 38, has said that that is the equivalent of 220 teachers.

Now, not all schools, of course, will see strictly teacher reductions. They have said that on average it'll be net reduction of three teachers in a Calgary high school and a net reduction of half a teacher in an elementary school. Many elementary schools have seven classrooms, kindergarten through grade 6, straight classes. How do you take half a teacher away from seven? You can't, really, unless you have lots of complicated combined grades, basically split grades at all levels, causing a lot of misconfiguration through the school. What many of the elementary schools are doing is reducing their educational assistants.

Well, Mr. Speaker, those educational assistants provide valuable service for the children they work with and, of course, for all children in the classroom. I know that when I had the opportunity to spend time in a classroom, if it wasn't for the educational assistants that were paired up with me, I would have had significantly more issues with overall classroom environment. I think we spend a lot of time training students who are aspiring teachers how to develop IPPs, how to work on these individual programs, but how do we actually support them in having the time to be able to deliver them? That's what these educational assistants often do. They actually implement the strategies, that we've invested in giving those skills through postsecondary and through further education, to make sure that there are these individual program plans. Of course, if you don't have the actual people there to deliver them, not only do those children who have those IPPs suffer, but the entire class does. It certainly creates a greater sense of disorder and lack of opportunity for all students to be able to focus and achieve their full potential.

The CBE, I know, was debating their budget just a few hours ago. Members of the government will say: well, they'll get their actual budget in the fall. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Kids show up to school in September. They don't wait until October, November, when this government chooses to bring in a budget. They certainly won't wait to show up to school until after this government has passed a budget, which could be well into December. Unless something has changed. Maybe the government has decided they're just not going to have kids come back to school in September. They can wait until a budget gets passed. Well, that certainly would be irresponsible. And I assert that it's irresponsible to have kids go back to school without actually giving those targets.

Now, I know that when we formed government around a similar timeline, slightly later, we did interim supply as well, but we

actually gave that clarity around: we will be funding enrolment; we will be ensuring that it's the same formulas that's been in the past. We haven't gotten that clarity from the government benches. They say, "Enrolment will be funded," and when people say, "Well, does that mean that there's going to be a tinkering to the formula?" you know, it's radio silence. Essentially, what's being told back is: well, when the budget comes out, then you'll have more details. Well, when the budget comes out and then later when the budget is passed, kids are almost halfway through the school year, Mr. Speaker. That certainly isn't fair to those kids or to the staff.

Edmonton public had their board meeting earlier today as well, probably just wrapping up, I'm going to guess. They are assuming, from what they've heard in this Chamber and what they haven't heard through direct correspondence from the Ministry of Education, that the classroom improvement fund is being cut. Well, that classroom improvement fund was used specifically to support students with severe special needs and other students.

Again, with the lack of clarity through this interim supply and subsequent lack of correspondence with two boards from government we have of course come to the assumption that these types of programs, that the minister herself said in interim supply were set to expire this summer – we will have to wait until after there's a budget, well into the fall, to know whether or not they're back. Well, it's really unfair for boards to either have to try to reconfigure classroom configuration well into December, once students have already formed those relationships, or lay off teachers, which will be probably even more problematic if they did that well into the fall, after this government brings in a budget, and then had to do reconfiguration but into even larger class sizes.

Those are the two largest boards.

7:50

I wanted to touch on one of the smaller boards but still with a significant number of schools and a number of students, and that's the Battle River school division. I imagine the Member for Camrose will take an interest in this as well as the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. I know she taught in Bawlf, which is, of course, one of the schools in the Battle River school division. Some other schools include Forestburg, Hay Lakes, Killam, Ryley. None of these schools next year will have learning coaches. None of them. What's a learning coach, you ask? That formerly used to be referred to as a special education teacher. Speaking directly with the ATA there, they have told us that every single one of what were formerly referred to as special education teachers, now learning coaches – every single one – from the district will be gone. That's what they've told us.

These teachers are on the front lines. Many of them have worked in this area and have developed tremendous expertise over the years and relationships with the children that they work with, the students that they work with. Many of them, fortunately, if they have worked for many years, have continuous contracts, so they won't actually be getting a pink slip, but they will absolutely be moved into a different position, often positions that they've never taught before or have the expertise to teach, which, of course, is difficult for those teachers. It's also incredibly difficult for those students who rely on these special education teachers or learning coaches to give them that direct mentorship skill building to ensure that they're set up for success.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the government says that, you know, they'll just have to wait until the fall, hopefully most kids in Alberta will only experience grade 3 once, right? Most kids will only get this opportunity once. If we say to them, "Wait until you're halfway through your grade 3 year, and then we may find money; we may not," I would say that that is incredibly irresponsible. I know that

there are many parents of young children in this very Chamber, and I can't help but express the frustration that I imagine even they are feeling even though they're being told to vote for this interim supply bill. When you think about how these impacts are going to affect your child, I think it's very problematic.

I also have met with some parents who choose to home-school, and they said: "Well, what is it going to mean to me if I have another child I'm planning on home-schooling – I have one now, and I have a second one I'm planning on home-schooling next year – how is that formula going to change? What is our allocation going to be? Are we going to get the same kinds of supports times two that we had last year, or are we going to see a chipping away at the formula that we get and the supports that our schools that support us like Argyll and others get to provide us with enrichment opportunities for those who choose to home-school?"

These are very fair questions. People have been asking these since the election in April, and they have yet to get clarity. The little bit of clarity that has been received in interim supply was that the classroom improvement fund is gone, which, again, primarily focused on making better learning conditions, especially for students with special needs, and that, you know, after the budget is passed, then we'll have more to say about the school nutrition program. Well, that won't put food in the stomachs of the 33,000 students who get it today and whose families need that support in September, Mr. Speaker.

These are a few of the things that I think frustrate me deeply about the lack of clarity and the lack of detail with regard to this interim supply. And it's not just me. It's the other boards that are making decisions based on assumptions. I know that the hon. the Premier will say: you know, they don't need to make these decisions; we've said that we're going to fund enrolment. Well, then questions come in about: well, is enrolment going to be funded in the same formula in the same way it has been in the past? And then, again, nothing but talking points. No clarity. Well, okay: are we going to fund the classroom improvement fund? Silence: we'll have more to say after the budget gets passed. Okay: is the school nutrition fund going to be provided? Again, nothing but silence.

This is why there have been so many days – and I know probably hon. members are sick of me asking about these things in question period. Trust me; I don't want to ask about them either. I want our teachers, our students, and our families to have clarity and certainty and sufficient – I would say more than sufficient. When you do a report card and you write, "has sufficiently met the learner outcomes," that's kind of a C. That kind of means that you passed; not great, but you passed. That's what we're asking for right now. We're asking the government to at least give a pass to the Education budget. Give a sufficient amount of funding and a sufficient amount of detail, and we can't even get that. We're getting: we'll wait in due course.

Well, you know, if I was asked to hand in an assignment on time and I was a student and I said: "You know, I'll get back to you in due course. I need a few more months. I'll get back to you in December, but – guess what? – the course I'm in ends right now" – because it does. This is the week. This is the last couple days of school. This is a week where staffing is being slotted. If I said, "I'll get back to you at Christmas," I can tell you what my teacher would say if I was a student. My teacher would say: "Not good enough. Not good enough. You get a fail. Or get your butt in here over the summer. Make sure you get the job done. Give us that clarity. Finish your assignment." And that's what I have to say to the government about Education funding.

That's probably the bulk of my comments. The other one I want to mention is just around assumptions in the Health budget, and I do wish the Health minister the best of luck in achieving what I was

very proud we achieved over the last two years, which was no requirement for supplementary supply. It's not an easy feat in Health because different from Education, in Education you can say: we're freezing your funding, and you're going to cram more kids into the classroom. I'm not saying that's good, but you can do that.

In hospitals when more patients show up, you don't say: sorry; we're full; we've already hit our targets. When more patients come in, physicians see them, staff might have to work overtime, and most of the physicians in Alberta are on a fee-for-service arrangement, which means more patients, more fees. Again, yeah, very difficult to constrain that budget when there's something like a difficult flu season or other outbreaks and same with a necessity to have overtime for nursing staff and other allied health and supports within acute care in particular. I do certainly wish him all the best, but I fear that with some of the pressures that are being put on him at this time, it will be a significant challenge.

The last thing I want to say is that if these interim supply numbers are based off projections that were created by our government, which has become my understanding, then there should be a continuation with important projects like ensuring that we have a state-of-the-art lab for folks who live in Edmonton and the north zone. Having fragmented lab services in a facility that is past its best-before-date does not say that you've got the best. I have been proud when I had my time as Health minister to say that I believe that we have the best health care system, not only in Canada but in the world, here in Alberta. I worry that if the Premier and his cabinet keep pushing ideological choices over patient-centred choices, we won't be able to say that for much longer.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Government Motions

### Federal Carbon Tax

21. Mr. Jason Nixon moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly express its support for the government in its efforts to challenge the federal government's attempts to impose a carbon tax on Alberta, which this Assembly views as a clear violation of provincial jurisdiction, including the launching of a constitutional challenge if necessary; acknowledge the negative impacts that a carbon tax has upon the people of Alberta, including the increased cost to heat homes and run businesses in the midst of an economic downturn; and recognize that Alberta's oil and gas industries continue to be global leaders in emissions reduction.

[Adjourned debate June 25: Mr. Kenney]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, anyone wishing to join the debate on Government Motion 21? The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

**Mr. Rehn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal carbon tax being imposed on Alberta is unconstitutional. Alberta has constitutional power to manage our own local undertakings, natural resources, economy, and greenhouse gas emissions plan. It is a clear violation of provincial jurisdiction, and our government will challenge the federal government's attempts to impose a carbon tax on Alberta.

The federal carbon tax is an imposition. This is because it is all economic pain for no environmental gain. This federal cash grab will only punish Albertans for heating their homes and driving to work. A \$50-a-tonne carbon tax would sacrifice over 6,000 new jobs and take almost \$2 billion out of Albertans' pockets. The Trudeau carbon tax would also increase the cost of food and other

goods for Alberta families at the cash till and make us less competitive in Canada and around the world.

We all saw our soaring gas prices when the NDP government imposed their carbon tax cash grab. Albertans elected this government to create jobs, growth, and economic diversification, to help get Albertans back to work and make life easier for families who need to pay their bills. We did this by having our first piece of legislation to repeal the carbon tax. Promise made; promise kept. The government of Alberta delivered on its promise to repeal the NDP carbon tax and will explore all available avenues, including legal challenges, to protect our province's economy from the federal carbon tax that causes economic pain with no environmental gain.

Our government recognizes that climate change is a real and important issue in our province and is committed to working on a climate change plan that strikes a balance between economic growth and environmental protection and achieves real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. A carbon tax imposed on Albertans doesn't solve the climate change issue but, rather, contributes to less economic growth that could be invested into real solutions.

8:00

Albertans are frustrated. They do not get a say in the matter. Either we have our own carbon tax that we saw destroy jobs and our economy, or we have a federal carbon tax imposed on us that will destroy jobs and the economy. It is a no-win situation for Albertans. They elected a government that will fight for them. They elected a government that would put their best interests in mind. Having a federal carbon tax imposed on Albertans without our consent is not in Albertans' best interests. That is why we will challenge the unconstitutional federal carbon tax.

The federal carbon tax would disrupt the balance of Canada's federation by undermining Alberta's exclusive constitutional power to manage its own local undertakings, natural resources, economy, and greenhouse gas emissions plans. Alberta has the constitutional authority to make policy choices within our own jurisdiction. Our government is going to take action to keep jobs and the economy secure in Alberta. We were elected on this platform and are determined to keep our promise we made to Albertans. The job-killing carbon tax the Trudeau government is putting on hard-working Albertans is unfair and unconstitutional. We cannot lay back and let them destroy our economy. It is unjust to let the federal cash grab punish Albertans for heating their homes and driving to work. Imposing this job-killing carbon tax is not constitutionally viable, and it infringes on our province's authority to make policy choices within our own jurisdiction.

We do not believe that punishing Albertans to heat their homes and gas up to go to work is an effective way to reduce carbon emissions. As our members across the floor know, it is an effective way to lose an election. We can't have an effective climate change action plan without having a strong economy. It is impossible to fund innovative projects without money to invest. We can't be running enormous budgets to leave our children and grandchildren to pay for because we wanted to impose failed ideological experiments such as a carbon tax that does not produce effective results to combat climate change. Our government is going to fight for Albertans. We are going to make sure our voice is heard and challenge this unconstitutional job-killing carbon tax.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Anyone wishing to ask a brief question or comment?

Seeing none, I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview is very excited to join the debate.



**Mr. Bilous:** Oh, I'm very excited, Mr. Speaker, to rise and speak to this. I will probably end up taking much of my time only because I need to clarify some of the comments or misconceptions that were laid out earlier today by a couple of speakers as far as the reality of a price on carbon and a number of other messages. I have the benefit of having the Premier's words printed in front of me and will actually address many of his comments.

I want to say, first of all, Mr. Speaker, that it's clear that this government struggles with the science of climate change. I know their previous iteration of a party, the Wildrose Party, denied the science of climate change or that climate change was human caused or that we impacted the planet. I think, you know, quite frankly, what our government tried to do was to demonstrate that the environment and the economy can go hand in hand. They are not opposites. You don't need to sacrifice one for the other. The day that our government introduced our climate leadership plan was really a historic day in Alberta. Quite frankly, it made news around the world because onstage there not only was the Premier and the former Minister of Environment and Parks; there also were CEOs of large oil sands companies standing shoulder to shoulder with indigenous leaders as well as with environmental NGOs, all recognizing that there is a part to play in improving our environmental standards and reducing our greenhouse gases, reducing our environmental footprint.

I will talk about some of the tools that our government introduced, which is quite humorous to the extent that the current Premier now talks about an innovation fund. Well, you know, I think he's about three and a half years behind the times, Mr. Speaker, because I recall standing onstage with the former Minister of Environment and Parks announcing a \$1.4 billion innovation fund to, similar to how the government currently describes, work with some of the largest industrial polluters, looking at investing dollars for them to find real-world solutions to reduce their environmental footprint, to enhance efficiency and reduce their bottom line. It had a significant benefit of meaning that companies were reducing their bottom line, so becoming more profitable at the same time as taking significant action.

You know, there are a number of companies that have used some new technology, some that was coderived from the Alberta Innovates Corporation, which does incredible work. You know, I'll highlight the fact that I really encourage this government and hope that as they are looking to stand up their fund, again, similar to the \$1.4 billion fund that we introduced, they talk to and consult with Alberta Innovates. There are some folks that are incredible experts who know who to talk to. I would encourage them to talk to the former Emissions Reduction Alberta as well, who helped design some of the programs but also deliver these programs, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure I'll find it later on in my notes.

The other thing I want to highlight, Mr. Speaker, is that the climate leadership plan that our government put forward is part of the reason that the TMX was approved in the first place. Again, I think what this current government fails to understand and grasp is that there is an interest around the planet in every nation in stepping up their efforts to do more to protect our climate, which – you know, I appreciate the fact of how important the economy is, but there can be and are ways to take meaningful action to address climate change while also supporting the economy. I can tell you that doing nothing is not a solution. I can tell you I can't wait for the government members to go into their schools and talk to especially school-aged kids, who understand that the time for action is now and are extremely disappointed that this government is going down the path that they're currently going down.

Now, the other thing that's interesting about this motion, Mr. Speaker, is to challenge the federal government's attempts to

impose a carbon tax on Alberta. I can't support a motion to waste taxpayers' dollars to fight the federal government and lose because, I think, it's going to be very clear that the federal government does in fact have jurisdiction. But what's fascinating is that just earlier today the Premier talked about how, through unions that are now filing court challenges to the unconstitutional Bill 9, our party was opposed to Bill 9; therefore, we are in favour of unions suing taxpayers.

Well, if that logic is correct, this current government is about to sue the federal government, who are the same taxpayers that they accused us of trying to sue doing the exact same thing. By taking the federal government to court, they're actually taking Canadians to court and trying to sue them. I think, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they're going to be unsuccessful. This is where, when the government repealed the carbon tax, my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar affectionately named it the Act to Impose Justin Trudeau's Federal Carbon Tax on Alberta, which I think we will see.

**8:10**

I do have a question for the government. In the whole dialogue of a carbon tax and its impact on the economy and on people the government loves to say "the job-killing carbon tax," to which I'd like them to table documents that show exactly how many jobs were lost because of the imposition of a carbon tax. I appreciate that it did impact costs. We tried to mitigate that. I appreciate that not all of those costs were mitigated. But I'd like to see the government table documents on how many jobs were killed by the carbon tax, and if not, then maybe they can stand up and admit that the government is actually spreading mistruths in this place. Prove how many jobs were lost from an imposition of a carbon tax.

I'm going to continue to move along, Mr. Speaker. Looking at the hon. Premier's speech from earlier today, you know, he was talking about how Albertans elected this government and accused us of being arrogant, which I find ironic coming from the members from that side. What the Premier needs to recognize is that not every Albertan is opposed to paying a price on carbon. I recognize that, again, there are some Albertans, absolutely, who disliked the carbon tax, but not every Albertan was opposed to it. Again, there are Albertans, especially in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, who saw some of the benefit of where those dollars were going both in Edmonton and Calgary, in the green line. I'll be curious to see how the current government plans to fund those projects.

As well, I think it's naive to try to frame or deny the fact that humans have and do impact climate change. I think what we are seeing is an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, whether it be forest fires or floods, depending on where you are in the world, and that there is a responsibility for governments to take around the planet. I can't stand that argument of, like: you know, country X pollutes more than we do, so therefore we should do nothing. Well, that's great. That's how you drop the bar to the ground as opposed to trying to raise the bar.

Again, I mean, you know, the hon. Premier, who I know loves globe-trotting, will also know that China is investing tens if not hundreds of billions of dollars into innovation, especially around wanting to make significant reductions in how much they pollute. Now, if we compared them to Alberta today, of course, Alberta would be not even a pin drop compared to the country of China. My point, Mr. Speaker, is that they are taking meaningful action and recognizing that just denying it and pretending that it doesn't exist and doing nothing is not the solution.

I finally found that part, Mr. Speaker, where the Premier talked about the development of their technology and innovations emission reduction levy and fund. I encourage the Premier and the

government to look at that \$1.4 billion fund that we made available. That wasn't just to the oil and gas sector. Primarily they benefited from accessing those funds. It was also available to manufacturers. It was available to the agriculture sector, the forestry sector, and then broad-scale manufacturing as well. I encourage them to look at the strides and progress that we made.

What's interesting is that earlier the Premier talked about how the Minister of Environment and Parks got a question today about a subsidy program for solar panels, and the Premier referred to it as "voodoo economics." I find it fascinating. A significant reduction in corporate taxes: is that not an indirect way of providing a subsidy to industry? I think, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we know that there isn't any significant or substantial proof that dropping the corporate tax rate will result in job growth. We have a number of examples to point to around the globe. Now, again, some companies, sure, will use it to hire more people, invest it back into their company. Will all of them? No, Mr. Speaker. Will they result in the numbers that the Minister of Finance has put out or anticipated? Not necessarily. So we're really, you know, going on this whole: well, trust us that this will create the growth and economic activity that this government wants it to.

I find it interesting as well when the Premier talks about the carbon tax and talks about the debt and deficit that increased under our government, but, you know, I'll remind Albertans, quite frankly, that when the Premier was a senior cabinet minister in the Harper government, they ran tens of billions of dollars of deficit every year. In fact, I think the Premier's greatest accomplishment – maybe he should have a little badge and a star – was that one year he ran a \$150 billion deficit in the federal government.

**Ms Hoffman:** Sorry. How much?

**Mr. Bilous:** A hundred and fifty billion.

That's fascinating. I mean, for someone who is supposed to be anti debt and deficit, that's quite an accomplishment, quite frankly. You know, it's a little rich to run up massive deficits federally, come back to Alberta, and then talk about how we're bad for doing that.

What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that because of the investments that we made when the economy was in a recession, we got incredible prices on much-needed infrastructure builds around this province, whether it's schools, roads, bridges, hospitals, rather than competing with the private sector when the economy is red hot. At the same time, it obviously resulted in tens of thousands of construction jobs that were much-needed when the price of oil went from \$127 a barrel at its peak down to \$27 a barrel at its trough. Again, I appreciate that the UCP's talking points are about the job-killing carbon tax. Again, I'd love to see evidence of how many jobs were lost from the price on carbon that we put on.

The other thing that's fascinating is that members from the other side, the whole time we introduced our climate leadership plan, talked about the slush fund that would be created from the collection of the carbon taxes. We reinvested every single dollar back into the economy through subsidies, through programs. What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that this current government, with their Bill 1, repealed the carbon tax. Guess what they've done with the significant amount of money that was collected from the carbon tax? It's gone into a slush fund. Well, isn't that interesting? Again, how quickly things change when a party moves from opposition to government.

Mr. Speaker, for those reasons, I will not be supporting this motion.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available, and I believe that the hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction was first on his feet.

**Mr. Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to rise to the occasion to address the concern or the question that was asked by the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. He asked for evidence of the job-killing carbon tax, and I would like to submit that he is sitting with the remnants of those who survived the job-killing carbon tax. According to the last election their caucus moved from 52 MLAs down to 24 MLAs, which lost 28 NDP jobs as MLAs. This was a direct result of Albertans casting their vote saying: enough is enough; we are not going to accept the carbon tax and their iteration of being able to save Alberta. The member is looking for evidence. I submit to him that their party is the evidence.

**8:20**

There was an election document, that either has been tabled or will be tabled, called – the Election Act provides for that evidence, to show that Albertans rejected that carbon tax and rejected the fact that it was killing jobs, to the tune of over a million people who voted in favour of our approach to being able to have the heavy emitters price on carbon rather than the job-killing carbon tax the NDP had introduced.

Mr. Speaker, from my riding I had the opportunity of being able to speak with a company, Lantic Sugar, better known as Rogers Sugar. When I sat down with the general manager there, he told me that they're price takers, not price makers. They're an international market. They cannot pass the price on to consumers. This is what really happened with the carbon tax. It was just an inflationary measure when you think about it. Anybody who could pass the price of that carbon tax on did. So this was just an inflation on our regular, everyday Albertans. People who were affected most by this were senior citizens on fixed incomes, charities. Schools, who cannot pass that price on, had to eat that, just the same as Rogers Sugar had to eat that price increase. They told me that if this was to continue to where the NDP wanted to go, which was \$50 per tonne, that would actually drive their business south to a jurisdiction that did not have a price on carbon, a carbon tax, and we would lose one of the largest employers in my community of Taber.

Mr. Speaker, they had to make changes to be able to deal with the \$10 million that they had to deal with for the extra cost. They had to make changes. This was not something where they could just say: "Well, you know what? We're rich. We make so much money. We can just eat that cost." They had to make some changes, and there was a cost to the labour in that community. The cost, if they had had to carry on with an NDP carbon tax, would have been substantial to that community and to that business. They would have left. They would have gone down to the United States, where there was no carbon tax.

The assertion that provides us with evidence: I actually think that it's the hard-work ethic, the get 'er done attitude of Albertans that actually helped us survive these last four years. This is what actually helped us survive the carbon tax and all the other poor legislation that this NDP added to our job creators and to our innovators, to regular Albertans. It was their can-do attitude, their "we will survive this, we've been survivors, and we will always be survivors" that got it done. It wasn't the fact that this was not egregious legislation.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, anyone else wishing to speak to Government Motion 21? I see the hon. Member for Sherwood Park has risen to speak to the motion.

**Mr. Walker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is extremely hard for Albertans who don't have the luxury of having a public

transportation system in their community to be able to get to work every day without emitting carbon. Because of where they live, they are being punished by the Trudeau carbon tax. This is a reality for many rural Albertans. Many Albertans have to travel across the province in order to visit their family on their days off from work or travel to larger communities because their community doesn't have the facilities for their children to actively participate in sports. We heard from all Albertans that those who live in rural areas were being punished for going to work; that is, if they already had not gotten laid off due to the actions of the former government. Many jobs were lost due to the NDP carbon tax, and we are certain that this is going to happen again if the Trudeau cash-grab carbon tax happens again from the Laurentian elite.

If the federal government wants to invest in LRT systems across our entire province, be our guest, but we don't see much investment into Alberta happening with the Trudeau government planning on killing pipelines and banning all transport of our critical resources. The federal government doesn't care about the everyday problems Albertans have. They don't care that a parent has to take off time from work to take their kids to hockey practice, let alone pay extra at the pump, and can't afford the carbon taxes imposed on them. The carbon tax is a one-size-fits-all solution that doesn't work for every province, let alone all communities in one province, Mr. Speaker. No one in this nation, let alone this province, should confuse climate action with the carbon tax. Imposing a carbon tax on Albertans is not constitutionally viable and infringes on our province's authority to make policy choices within our own jurisdiction.

Our government is aware of these issues that rural Albertans have, also that climate change is a real and important issue, but we believe that we should have a climate change plan that doesn't halt economic growth and take money from hard-working Albertans. Our platform makes it clear that we are committed to a practical approach that achieves real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. We need a solution that can strike a balance between economic growth and environmental protection. Again, one more time for the members opposite: an approach that will strike a balance between economic growth and environmental protection.

Our government was elected on a mandate to create jobs, growth, and economic diversification. This federal carbon tax being imposed on Albertans inhibits our ability to keep that promise. Our 6,000 new jobs and almost \$2.4 billion out of Albertans' pockets would be sacrificed if a \$50-a-tonne carbon tax was imposed on Albertans. The federal carbon tax would also increase the cost of food and other goods for Alberta families at the cash till and make us less competitive in Canada and around the world. The federal carbon tax would disrupt the balance of Canada's federation by undermining Alberta's exclusive constitutional power to manage its local undertakings, natural resources, economy, and greenhouse gas emission plans. Alberta has the constitutional authority to make policy choices within our own jurisdiction.

But we will not go down without a fight, Mr. Speaker. The federal carbon tax is a clear invasion of Alberta's jurisdiction of having the exclusive constitutional power to manage its own natural resources, economy, local undertakings, and greenhouse gas emission plans.

Albertans made the decision to scrap the job-killing carbon tax this last election, when they voted in this government. It is unfair and unconstitutional for the federal government to impose a carbon tax after clearly seeing that this isn't what the people want. Imposing a carbon tax on Albertans is not constitutionally viable and infringes on our province's authority to make policy choices, again, within our own jurisdiction. We should have the authority to be able to make alternative environmental plans rather than a carbon

tax that kills economic growth in our province. We delivered on a promise to repeal the NDP carbon tax and will explore all available avenues, including legal challenges – you betcha – to protect our province's economy from the federal carbon tax, that causes economic pain with absolutely zero environmental gain.

Our government made a promise to fight for Albertans against the economy-killing carbon tax. We are going to challenge the unjust carbon tax. Promise made, promise kept, Mr. Speaker.

Then, briefly, Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk a bit on other reasons why I strongly support Government Motion 21, where we acknowledge the negative impacts that a carbon tax has had upon the people of Alberta. It has been great. I want to give just quickly an international perspective on how these job-killing carbon tax policies, be it from the Laurentian elite in Ottawa or here from our colleagues across the way, the former government, have hurt Albertans.

Foreign direct investment is so important to generating prosperity in any jurisdiction, including here in Alberta, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the last four years have been a period of darkness, with incredible capital flight from foreign jurisdictions and foreign companies as they've been turned off by the high-regulation, carbon-tax-imposing policies of the former NDP government.

8:30

Let's just look at a couple of examples. The big Asian economies of China, India, and Japan, Mr. Speaker, are carbon hungry, and they will be for at least 30 or 40 years to come. But they have been greatly turned off by carbon tax policies that make us uncompetitive when competing for critical international investment. China is the world's second-largest economy, Japan the third-largest, and India now the sixth.

Again, in man's long climb from the swamp to the stars there has never been a resource or a mechanism, if you will, Mr. Speaker, to allow people upward social mobility, which is their God-given right, like fossil fuels. We have the greatest record in the world, when it comes to environmental standards and human rights, of any other jurisdiction, so we need to really support and promote a global Alberta product for our fossil fuels. The carbon tax that is seeking to be imposed by the Trudeau Liberals will make us less internationally competitive, as did the carbon tax imposed by the members across the way. Thankfully, we have scrapped that.

You know, in the big Asian economies right now, Mr. Speaker, you have strong, in two cases democratic governments that, again, are desperate and really want to seek Alberta's energy products and fossil fuels, but they've been turned off by the antibusiness practices, including the carbon tax, imposed by the former government. You have Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, who's just been re-elected with a second thumping majority government. He has a majority through his own BJP ruling party. He won 303 seats in the Lok Sabha, or what is the lower House of the Indian Parliament. And then you have Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, where he's won his third straight majority government. Quite incredible. For the last two government mandates he's had supermajorities. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe desperately want Alberta energy products.

For a second, Mr. Speaker, while I still have time, let's take a look at Japan just quickly. Japan is the world's third-largest economy. It is the most energy-dependent developed nation on earth. Let's take a look. Coal: 96 per cent they import. Oil: 99 per cent they import. And 99 per cent of their liquid natural gas is also imported. There are just such great opportunities here with India, China, Japan, for example, to do really big things. And the carbon tax being imposed by the Laurentian elite in Ottawa through Prime

Minister Trudeau or the former NDP government really took away from great opportunities over the last four years, and that undermined Albertan prosperity and greatly hurt Albertans' ability to prosper: incredible negative impacts.

Continuing on, Mr. Speaker, just speaking about the incredible foreign direct investment opportunities from the world's, for example, third-largest economy. You know, Japan is an FDI superpower. It holds more than \$9.5 trillion in financial assets, including \$2 trillion in cash. Japanese households possess a record \$8 trillion in cash savings. The Japanese people are the greatest people when it comes to savings. Furthermore, the Japanese public pension plan is the world's largest publicly funded pension plan, being valued at over \$1.2 trillion. From Indian companies to Japanese companies, which have been involved in the oil sands since 1978, there are such incredible opportunities.

Going back to this motion, Mr. Speaker, again, one of the reasons I strongly support it as the proud Member for Sherwood Park, if I'm allowed to speak in the third person – I don't know, but hopefully – is it acknowledges the negative impacts that the carbon tax has upon the people of Alberta. We have missed out on tens of billions of dollars in foreign direct investment. You know, the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview: I deeply appreciate his passion for international relations, which is one I share, but I would say: what the heck was the former government doing over the previous four years, losing tens of billions of dollars of investment when you have these incredible opportunities, real strong leaders like Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who were ready to do big deals with us? But they see our jurisdiction as not competitive, so they'll go to Malaysia, they'll go to the south or they'll go to the Middle East.

You know, we have to sell our energy to allow Albertans to prosper once we fight against the Trudeau Liberals with their job-killing, imposed carbon tax. We have to sell our fossil fuels not only as the most environmentally and ethically top-notch, but also, frankly, Mr. Speaker, we have to sell our security premium. There's always great conflict and tension going on and happening in the Middle East, and here in Alberta and Canada we are an oasis of stability. We need to tell that story once we become economically competitive again, fixing the disastrous mess left by the former government.

You know, Alberta greatly prospered under the golden tenure of Premier Peter Lougheed, a very wise man, a person I greatly admire. A key reason, in part, why Alberta prospered so greatly then was because of great tensions in the Middle East during the 1970s and '80s, which allowed oil prices to spike and Alberta to greatly prosper. You had the 1973 Arab-Israeli war as well as the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War. At that time Alberta was incredibly competitive internationally, attracting lots of foreign direct investment, but we've lost that, Mr. Speaker, or we did under the former NDP government, but we can get it back.

I would just conclude, Mr. Speaker, after going around the world to some major economies in Japan, China, and India, that I strongly support this motion. Again, a key reason is that there have just been incredible negative impacts that the carbon tax has had upon the people of Alberta, especially in the realm of international relations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available, and I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has risen.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for . . .

**Member Ceci:** His enthusiasm.

**Ms Hoffman:** . . . his enthusiasm. Thank you, Member for Calgary-Buffalo. He was certainly enthusiastic.

I have to say that during parts of his speech I stopped to reflect on the remarks that you share with us every day, Mr. Speaker: may they never lead our province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or untrustworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind the responsibility to seek improvement for the condition of all. Wise, wise words. What that means to me in the context of this debate: certainly I'm thinking about the fact that I think the member for Medicine Hat – and I forget the other half of the name of the riding . . .

**An Hon. Member:** Brooks.

**Ms Hoffman:** Brooks-Medicine Hat. Thank you.

. . . talked in her main speech about going camping with her parents and them telling her to leave the campsite better than the way you found it. Mine did the same. When I was little it meant that I gathered kindling. When I was older it meant that I chopped some extra wood. Now it means that I pick up all the trash in the area and make all the littles who go camping with me do the same.

There are different ways that you leave the condition better for all. I would say that one of the main ways – and I brought Sadie in, the young woman, a grade 6 student, who wrote to me with her fears about climate change and a desire for her to be able to do something to combat it and make sure that we have a better condition for all.

Certainly, I would say that the science is in. Climate change is real. It's man-made, but the good news is that we can do something about it. I appreciate that the member did at one point say something about – I think the remarks were around: our plan was only punishment, and it didn't fix things. Well, at least we had a plan, Mr. Speaker. I'd argue that we did many things to fix conditions. You only need to visit – I'm sure that probably every riding that each of us represents has at least one school that's engaging in renewable energy in some way. I know that the First Nations who took advantage of the opportunities to do energy retrofits or renewable energy certainly embarked on that, and it definitely is more sustainable in the long term for the areas that they were using it. I know that it led to many jobs still in the energy industry and in other areas of renewables and energy efficiency.

So when I think about that "leave the campsite better than the way you found it," I can't help but think that irresponsible blinders when it comes to climate change – and the man-made responsibility we have to act in a way that takes care of our energy interests, takes care of jobs, and protects our environment, I would say, is the minimum in leaving the campsite at least not worse than we found it. I think we do owe it to leave it better than we did.

"Never lead our province wrongly through love of power." Well, certainly, we keep hearing about: well, the best way to lose elections is to act on climate change. Well, Mr. Speaker, the best way to lead is through vision and through leadership. Certainly, fighting against something is one way to run a campaign, and it certainly was successful in winning this last election campaign, but now that's done. Now it's time to lead, and it's time to show what the Alberta government will do to actually act on this. Sure, show us another path, but don't stand still and pretend that the reality is not here.

**8:40**

The reality is that when we see the devastating impacts that we've had even in this most recent wildfire season – you know, the hon. the Premier will say: well, the number of fires is the same. Sure, approximately the same, but the land mass of these fires, I believe I've heard scientists say, is about double what it is in a typical fire

season. These consequences are real, and they have lasting impacts for all of us.

I think it is important that we reflect on when you say “desire to please” – I’ve touched on that – “or unworthy ideas”: well, I would say that it’s certainly unworthy to only act in opposition to something without proposing what you’re going to do to address it moving forward. Then, of course, “laying aside all private interests”: well, Mr. Speaker, I think it is in the public interest of all Albertans as well as our nation to make sure that we are acting in a responsible way for our planet.

By doing this previously – I know that we got the approvals on Trans Mountain. Part of why the Trans Mountain did get approved is because the marker for public support across the nation moved from 4 in 10 Canadians four years ago to 7 in 10 Canadians at the time of the last provincial election supporting the change in moving forward with a pipeline to tidewater. I’d say those are certainly important accomplishments.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has been trying to rise, and I’ll recognize him now.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to Government Motion 21 this evening. I’ll start by sort of taking note of some of the debate that’s been taking place so far in this Chamber this evening around this issue of action on climate change. I wanted to pay particular attention to the Conservative movement’s continuous momentum to keep kicking this can down the road on the climate change issue and other issues, which ends up costing the Albertan taxpayer, in this case, more down the road because the problem is not addressed.

Basically, there’s a false premise underlying much of Alberta government policy about the global warming issue. They’re very sensitive to accusations that they don’t understand or they don’t accept the science of climate change and that global warming is a real thing. They vehemently claim, you know, that the opposition is vilifying them incorrectly when we accuse them of not really enveloping the problem and creating solutions that are really, actually existing to endorse the fact that it is a problem. They never ever really seem to grasp that it’s necessary to, first of all, give more than lip service to the fact that global warming is a problem and climate change is affecting us all even now. The reason that they do this is because they create the false premise that it’s a problem. They’ll admit repeatedly: “Yes, it’s a problem. We know it, just like the opposition, the NDP. Yup. We agree with you that it’s a problem. Global warming exists. But, guess what, Mr. and Mrs. Taxpayer? You don’t have to pay to fix it.”

That was the underlying false premise that they used repeatedly in the last election and has become government policy and is further reflected in Government Motion 21 here. Too clever by half, perhaps, but indeed they used it effectively in the election and now are trying to foist the same argument on Albertans and the rest of the country by claiming to the general public that a price on carbon is not the most efficient way to attack climate change. What they did was to offer Albertans a climate change coupon, if I may, to finance the solution, saying that heavy emitters will be capable of financing the solution to climate change: “You won’t have to pay for it, Mr. and Mrs. Taxpayer. They will. Those other guys will. Therefore, you know, rest easy. Don’t worry about it. It exists. It’s a problem, but those other guys are going to pay for it.” It was an effective argument. A lot of people bought that argument. But, in fact, it’s poor leadership. It’s poor government. It’s irresponsible government; that is what it is.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

We’re seeing in this country the effects of climate change in every province and territory. We see the northern Arctic Ocean practically being ice free, and it very soon will be ice free year-round. The Russians certainly know that because they’re rapidly making investments in their northern seaports so that their passage through the Arctic waters will be open year-round, and they’re going to become leaders in that northern cap of the world because of the fact that climate change is changing the sea-ice patterns and there won’t be sea ice in the Arctic.

Our Arctic tundra is melting. We’re having methane gases released that will really exacerbate the problem caused by global warming and multiply the effects of it. We’re going to see the effects of it in our country, in the northern part of the country in particular, more than any other part of the world and more quickly.

I’ve been to Antarctica. I’ve been to the ice shelf on the coast of Antarctica and seen with my own eyes the melting ice and how, in fact, those ice patterns are shifting. It’s a reality that the government says that they accept and says that they realize and boast that they are on top of a plan to fix our reaction to climate change, but in fact it’s really an ineffective one at best. To say that heavy emitters will finance the solution is gratuitous at best. The platform, the arguments that helped get them an election win will not prepare the people of this province to adapt to the certain, huge challenges that we as a people are facing now and will face in the future due to climate change.

It’s been established very clearly that a price on carbon, paid by everyone who uses carbon, is the most efficient way to attack the issue of global warming and climate change. But perhaps there’s another way. I know that the Member for Sherwood Park was suggesting that upward social mobility is a God-given right. Maybe we should tell that to the 1 per cent of the population who have that upward mobility at the pinnacle. Therefore, it must be that those who are in poverty are the work of the devil, I imagine.

In any case, my point on that is that leaving it to the wind is not an option, Mr. Speaker. As a government we have to take responsible measures, not only recognizing and paying lip service to the fact that there is a problem, a global problem, a global warming issue that’s causing us to look at possible consequences that include social breakdown. You know, today on CBC Radio there was a commentator talking about the social consequences, the governmental consequences globally of failing to take action on climate change and what we’re going to be seeing when whole coastlines start disappearing, when major coastal cities start to really, really see the effects of climate change, sooner than one might think possible.

I know that we’ve seen some pretty devastating flooding in New York City not too long ago; Vanuatu, a Polynesian island, disappearing. Our projections about our own west coastline and east coastline are pretty alarming as well, the fact that we have the permafrost melting and causing large difficulties in many of our northern communities. The highway newly constructed to Tuktoyaktuk from Inuvik: I was speaking with an Inuk from that area who was in town to celebrate indigenous days on June 21. He indicated to me that, yeah, they were having significant problems with that highway because of the fact that global warming was melting the permafrost. Notwithstanding the fact that they had new technologies to build that piece of highway versus what was used to build the Alaska portion of the highway during the 1940s, they are still facing significant challenges in maintaining that roadbed because the permafrost is giving way underneath it, melting, and the road is under threat.

8:50

This government struggles with the science of climate change, and really there's no need for it. In fact, it's irresponsible to not tackle this problem head on. They're trying to create enemies within our own society. They want to pit the environment and the economy against one another and, by virtue of that, Albertans against one another, and that is a very, very sad commentary on how this government governs. They choose to seek adversaries within our own society and pit one against the other and try to create – they talk about us as an NDP government trying to pick winners and losers. Well, that's what they're trying to do with our society. They're looking at winners and losers in society. It's a zero-sum game. Some people win, some people lose, and those that end up on the short end of the stick, Mr. Speaker, are those that this government doesn't agree with, and that turns out to be usually individuals who are the most vulnerable in our society. It's really sad to see.

I know that the economy and the environment must be shown to work together. The government pays lip service to this, but – you know what? – in our past government it was proven to be the case that you could do that. You could have the environment and the economy working together, and the proof was our climate leadership plan and the approval of TMX. Now, you know, in the short time after this current government took office, TMX was approved. I don't think that they can take any credit for that. I think that the approval is proof of the effectiveness of what we had in place, the climate leadership plan. By not committing to some pieces of the climate leadership plan, as this government is showing it's going to do, we risk our economic future.

You know, the creation of a war chest, a war room, to vilify people will not work. I know that part of the reason the pipeline got approved is because we were able to move support for TMX from 4 in 10 Canadians to 7 in 10 Canadians. That's what I mean, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about leadership. True strength and quality leadership is about bringing people together. It's not about creating opponents within your own society and bashing them together and cobbling together a winning majority out of the remnants. That's not leadership. That's a way of splitting and dividing a society for your own benefit, and that's a cheap way of governing. The hardest way to govern is to look for ways to bring disparate views together and to have people act in a collaborative way, in a more harmonious way. That's really the government that ends up with a society that, in the long term, looks out for each other rather than attacking each other. This is what we're ending up with in this province, a polarity that need not exist, but this government thrives on that polarity.

They showed that during the election, and that's what they intend to keep on doing based on the type of actions that they argue in Government Motion 21. The resolution is something that I cannot in good conscience support. I don't understand why this government struggles with the science of climate change. As I mentioned, contrary to what they would have us believe, pitting the environment and the economy against each other will not move this province ahead. It will not lead to increased investment. They conveniently forget, of course, what happened to the price of oil shortly after we took office and the fact that we had a huge hole in our budget as a result, and that resulted in the necessity to take some very different actions in order to bridge the gap that we found ourselves in as a government. As has been said before, we made a choice. We did our best to protect Albertans from the job losses that would have resulted had we not invested in public services and in infrastructure to keep people working instead of adding to the unemployment rolls when we faced such a downturn in the economy because of the drop in the price of oil. We understood that

we had to take those steps because Albertans would have suffered even more.

Certainly, we're very much aware of the job losses that occurred in the oil patch and the many that have still not recovered as yet. But the things that we did were always geared towards taking steps to mitigate those things and the concrete steps for the long term that had to be done in order to create value in our resource sector and in the long term make sure that we gained market access and world price for our oil products by such things as the TMX pipeline, by doing things in recognition of the global warming that we faced to have the credibility to gain the approval of the rest of the country.

Once again, bringing people together, Mr. Speaker, is what leadership is all about. Dividing people, as this Premier and this government seem intent on doing, is not going to ingratiate ourselves to long-term success. I know that there are many people in this province who reacted with a rah-rah when the Premier took a stance to argue vehemently and loudly against other people in the country who had a differing view on the pipeline. In fact, it didn't have to be that way. Our former Premier, when we were government, engaged people with cogent arguments.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I believe I saw the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to rise under 29(2)(a) and question the member. You know, what we hear from the other side when it comes to carbon and the carbon tax – the Member for Edmonton-McClung mentioned that he had actually been to Antarctica. I just wonder how much carbon it takes to get a gentleman from Edmonton all the way down to Antarctica just to visit. [interjection] Yeah. Actually, the hypocrisy is thick, thick, thick in this House. Absolutely.

You know, we heard the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview justifying the carbon tax by saying that Edmonton residents and Calgary residents were happy because they saw the benefit of the green line and valley line LRT. Well, that falls right into one of my favourite arguments, that the brunt of the carbon tax was felt by rural Albertans, who have absolutely no choice on their mode of transportation. The valley line LRT, the new one that's going over to the west side of Edmonton from downtown: right now if I'm an Edmontonian or a visitor, I have a choice; I can take a cab, I can take a Uber, I can ride my bike, all on bitumen-supplied pavement roads, by the way. I've pointed out a number of times in the House that every tonne of pavement takes six barrels of bitumen, which is very interesting. That includes bike paths, Mr. Speaker. So if you want your bike paths through the river valley, you'd better be a bitumen supporter because, otherwise, you're going to be riding on gravel.

Another thing, through the chair . . .

**The Acting Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt. I think that we've already come to the decision that we were looking for, at least the idea that we were going to present to the House, so please continue.

**Mr. Hanson:** Oh, thank you very much, and through the chair, sir.

One of the other things I'd like to point out is that when we were debating the carbon tax when we were in opposition, we put multiple, multiple amendments forward trying to get exemptions for food banks, trying to get exemptions for schools, for school boards, for charitable organizations, hospitals, and each time we requested a standing vote so that we could make sure that we got the government standing up and being counted. One time I commented on them being like lemmings jumping off the political cliffs, so to speak, every time that they stood up and were

recognized by Albertans as opposing the exemption of carbon taxes on schools and school boards and food banks.

**9:00**

Another thing. When we talk about job losses due to the carbon tax, I'd like to point out that one of my school boards spent \$300,000 in 2018 just on the carbon tax. That's a lot of teachers. That's a lot of teacher support staff. That's a lot of school books. So when we talk about job losses due to the carbon tax, I think we should maybe look at some of their big supporters, which are, you know, the Alberta Teachers' Association; hospitals, that had to pay carbon tax; all of these organizations that hire and have staff that are public-sector employees, that couldn't afford to hire more people or give them raises because of the carbon tax. I think that's something that we need to look at.

I would be really interested in listening to comments from the member, especially about his trip to Antarctica and how many boats it took him to get there, how many airplane trips, nights in hotels, you know, all those things that are very interesting, and how he feels about his contribution to the carbon footprint and the carbon attack on the Antarctic icefield that he is so concerned about.

You know, just going back to the carbon tax and the effects on the green line and valley line LRTs, like I said, I questioned the Minister of Transportation last week on highway 28. For three years in the NDP's strategic plan highway 28 didn't even show up. That's a single road that goes up into my area. That's their only road of choice other than gravel side roads that are supported by the municipalities. So my argument would be that rural Albertans bore the brunt of the NDP's carbon tax and saw absolutely no benefit from it. They voted very resoundingly, I think, in numbers in April to send a very, very clear message.

You know, I look at something I think I've tabled a number of times in the House. It's called the Leap Manifesto, Mr. Speaker. I'll read you a section of it, and I'll be happy to table it again. I think I've tabled it three times in the House, and I'll be very happy to table it again. It says here:

There is no longer an excuse for building new infrastructure projects that lock us into increased extraction decades into the future. The new iron law of energy development must be: if you wouldn't want it in your backyard, then it doesn't belong in anyone's backyard. That applies equally to oil and gas pipelines . . .

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. members, I believe that the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain has been up a few times, and I see him now ready to speak.

**Mr. Turton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have seen the unfair and unjust treatment that the federal government has imposed on our province, first with delaying pipeline development, creating bills that target Alberta oil, and now imposing a federal carbon tax. The province of Alberta has a constitutional right to make policy choices within our own jurisdiction. The federal carbon tax would disrupt the balance of Canada's federation by undermining Alberta's exclusive constitutional power to manage its own local affairs, natural resources, economy, and greenhouse gas emission plans. We have seen the negative impacts that a carbon tax has upon the people of Alberta, including the increased costs to heat homes and run businesses. We have seen how many jobs were lost because of the NDP job-killing carbon tax imposed on Albertans in the midst of the greatest economic downturn we have ever gone through.

Our platform makes it clear that we're committed to a practical approach that achieves real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. We saw the soaring gas prices, the number of jobs lost, and the

number of homeless people rising. The carbon tax doesn't help anyone but those imposing it. We want to fight for Albertans. This money-grabbing carbon tax is unconstitutional and unjust. We listened to Albertans all across this province. We saw how they voted in this past election. The majority of Albertans do not want a carbon tax imposed on them. Albertans care about the environment, but they also want effective solutions. They don't want to be taxed on ineffective methods of fighting climate change.

This carbon tax is only a tax grab by the Trudeau government, and we shouldn't confuse climate action with a carbon tax. Our government recognizes that climate change is a real and important issue in our province and is committed to working on a climate change plan that strikes a balance between economic growth and environmental protection and achieves real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Our government knows that there is a better way to reduce emissions than this impractical and unconstitutional tax grab. We know we can't have our cake and eat it, too. We know that we cannot impose a carbon tax that kills jobs and destroys our economy and creates a huge deficit, then promise to invest into a project that will combat climate change. We believe that we should talk with stakeholders to discuss a practical and more effective plan of action to reduce emissions instead of rushing into failed ideological experiments that hurt ordinary Albertans.

If the Trudeau carbon tax goes through, Albertans will lose out on 6,000 jobs, \$2.4 billion, see increased food costs and other goods rise, see prices rise to heat their homes and get to work, and less investment will be made in our province, making us less competitive in Canada and around the world. This job-killing carbon tax is a one-size-fits-all solution that doesn't work for every province. The federal government fails to recognize that Alberta's oil and gas industries continue to be global leaders in emissions reductions. But, again, they don't care about Albertans and would rather buy foreign oil that isn't up to the same environmental standards that Albertan producers produce right here at home.

We were elected with a mandate to create jobs, growth, and economic diversification, to help Albertans get back to work and make life easier for families who need to pay their bills, and our first piece of legislation repealed was the carbon tax. Now we face this federal carbon tax. Our government will challenge the federal government's attempts to impose a carbon tax on Alberta. If the Trudeau government will not listen to Albertans' concerns, we will make them listen.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Under 29(2)(a), I see no one.

Therefore, going back to the main motion, I see the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo standing.

**Member Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just rise to speak to the motion before us and make three short points. A part of this motion says, "the government in its efforts to challenge the federal government's attempts to impose a carbon tax on Alberta, which this Assembly views as a clear violation of provincial jurisdiction, including the launching of a constitutional challenge if necessary." I don't agree with that. That's one of the points that I want to make. The other is the positive impacts of the former climate leadership plan. And the last is the need to take meaningful action on climate change.

With regard to the first point, the constitutional challenge, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal has already ruled on this, and Premier Moe has lost in the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal with regard to that challenge. The Court of Appeal underlined the fact that the federal government does have the constitutional jurisdiction to impose a carbon tax. As my colleague from Edmonton-Beverly-

Clareview talked about earlier, it is something that we already know the outcome of, Mr. Speaker, and it is something that we'll lose at when we challenge.

We know that Ontario is in the same place of challenging the constitutionality of the carbon tax, and I anticipate that a similar decision will be the outcome of that challenge. We will be wasting taxpayers' money in that challenge, Mr. Speaker. The constitutionality is clear. Though this government may want to challenge, it likely will turn out the same result as the previous challenge in Saskatchewan and subsequent ones that are coming up. That's the first point.

The positive impacts of the carbon levy that was in place in Alberta are many, Mr. Speaker. They include the greening of the energy grid, including solar panels and wind energy, and those transitions to a greener energy electricity grid are positive, of course, for this province for the reduction of emissions that occurs.

Another important area, Mr. Speaker, that the carbon levy was helping to fuel is to work on the capture of methane, so working with organizations, companies who were looking to capture methane because that gas is highly problematic, even more so than CO<sub>2</sub>. It would leak from well sites and wells, and it would accumulate in our atmosphere and cause the degradation of our atmosphere faster than CO<sub>2</sub> but was happening at a pretty high rate. Anything that works to capture methane is a positive thing.

9:10

Making innovations happen across our economy in the oil and gas sector industries. The carbon levy was funding those kinds of innovations happening as well, Mr. Speaker. Those were positive in terms of our world-leading oil and gas sector and making sure that even more carbon is taken out of the barrel.

The rebating of a portion of the levy back to low- and middle-income Albertans. In the case of low-income Albertans fully offsetting their carbon price cost was something that mitigated the cost for those individuals, whether they were in rural Alberta or they were in urban Alberta.

We know, of course, that energy efficiencies occurred in many public buildings and other institutions across this province as a result of the investment in those institutions and public buildings and other places. Municipalities were working with Energy Efficiency Alberta as well as the government of Alberta to do more, Mr. Speaker. We heard about the town of Raymond earlier today, that is going to be net zero in terms of its electrical energy use, and that's not something that wasn't supported in part by the carbon levy that was previously in place. It was supported in part. The whole movement towards reducing the carbon footprint, whether you're a town, whether you're an individual like myself or any of us, is positive action towards our climate and climate change.

Mr. Speaker, that's the second thing I wanted to talk about. The third thing, of course, is a need to take meaningful action. Taking meaningful action on climate change is something we do for ourselves, of course, in this province and people currently, but we do it for future generations. Many leading experts in the oil and gas sector, economists, and others have endorsed a price on carbon. The TIER approach that the government has taken will capture less of the economy's emissions in Alberta than the previous government's climate leadership plan. The TIER approach is really a step down. It's not as broad based in terms of the emissions that it addresses.

I just want to, of course, go back to the leading experts in the oil and gas sector and economists who believe that the action of a price on carbon is the right way to go, Mr. Speaker. I know the government would say: well, we're putting a price on carbon. Again, I would argue that it's less of a job and fewer emissions are being captured as a result of the work that the government is doing.

A couple of years ago people like the president and CEO of Cenovus said, "We fully support Alberta taking a leadership role in addressing climate change and we believe one of the best ways to do that is through an economy-wide carbon levy as well as by supporting the development of carbon-reducing technologies." How I would interpret what the government today is doing and what Mr. Ferguson was talking about is – of course, I can't put words in his mouth, but we had more of an economy-wide carbon levy, and the government is taking a lesser approach to all of that.

Mr. Hornby, vice-president of government affairs and policy of GE Canada said, "GE supports carbon pricing and continued investment in researching new technologies and digital tools to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." They have a 10-year ecostrategy.

Mr. Speaker, going on here to someone we all know, Mr. Steve Williams, CEO of Suncor. I think he's just in the final days of his tenure at Suncor, and he'll be stepping down. We all, of course, wish him the best of luck in his retirement if that's what he chooses to do. It probably won't be. Mr. Williams said:

We think climate change is happening. We believe a broad-based carbon price is the right answer and we're pleased to see the Alberta government . . .

The previous Alberta government, not this one.

. . . is taking steps to implement [a] climate leadership [plan].

Those aren't words I hear from the other side, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Williams was talking about the previous NDP government, that was here from 2015 to 2019.

Somebody we all know, of course, is Professor Bev Dahlby. He's a distinguished fellow in tax and economic growth at the School of Public Policy and a professor of economics at the University of Calgary. Mr. Dahlby says:

Smart carbon policy means pricing carbon broadly . . .

Again I'd argue that the government is not doing that.

. . . and this is exactly what Alberta's new carbon levy does.

Our carbon levy.

Carbon pricing is the most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and Alberta's strengthened policy will help the province support a strong economy and environment into the future.

He goes on and on and on, and of course talks about some of the things I talked about.

By investing in rebates for affected families, tax cuts for small business . . .

I omitted saying that and the positive impacts. It's still happening, Mr. Speaker, at \$185 million a year, from 3 to 2 per cent.

. . . green infrastructure and clean technology the Government of Alberta has done just that.

I won't belabour the fact except to say that I think that the meaningful action that we were taking was in the right direction.

I will make one final comment. You know, I probably spend too much time online looking at social media, but – there it is – I think many people here do the same thing. I saw something. I'm smiling because it's so silly, but it upsets a lot of people. I think it's a new bumper sticker, and I'll just say what it says. It says: let it idle; support the patch. Mr. Speaker, that seems like a really wasteful thing to do. You're wasting gas when you do that, you're creating emissions, including CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and SO<sub>x</sub>. You're not doing anything positive for the environment, all in the view that you're helping out the oil patch, the oil and gas sector.

Well, I think, reading from some of the leaders in the oil and gas sector, some of the CEOs and presidents, that they don't see things like that. They don't see that we need to support the oil and gas sector by wasting fuel and creating emissions needlessly. I think what we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is to act smarter, take deliberate



action today, work across our economy, and continue to think about future generations and those people who will take over after us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I believe I saw the hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women standing.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to respond. I don't know where to start, actually. There have been so many things that have been said, but in response to what the hon. member said and especially with regard to solar panels, wind, and all of these kinds of things, the thing that the opposition keeps forgetting is that when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine, we still need to make sure that we keep the lights on. More than that, there's an entire double build that happens behind all of these projects that's not taken into consideration when all of these statistics are put forward about how much the REPs cost, what we came in on for wind. None of that is incorporated into any of the amounts of money that we understand are being put forward to taxpayers and what comes off their bill and why it's costing this much.

9:20

Another thing I'd like to bring up, too, is that if you consider, in the previous government, when the previous minister of environment would go overseas to talk about Canada and Canadian energy, it was interesting to me that all of the feedback that came back was about the tar sands and dirty oil and how it was that we produced here instead of standing up for an industry that actually promotes the entire country, about unity, about making sure that we are talking about an incredible energy. Not only to mention that, but on top of that, if we want to talk about leadership or what is responsible, do you know what's responsible? The human rights of other countries that don't have access to our oil and gas as a result of ideological choices from governments that have shut down our prosperity in this country.

Let's look at that for just a minute. I was in India last year, and I'll be going back this year. The air index quality in Hyderabad on any given day is probably well over 195. That's particulates in the air. Part of that has to do with a couple of different things. One of them is that they rely on solid energy – coal, heating fuel, kerosene – but also they use cow dung, the impoverished people of the world. If you ever get a chance, you pick it up, you make a patty out of it, you put it on the wall, you dry it, and then you burn it to feed your family. Do you want to understand what's polluting the world? That's part of it. You want to know why that's happening? Because we can't get our energy to those countries to take women and children out of poverty. That's called energy poverty. Then on top of that, we have carbon leakage from other industries around the world that don't even have close to the human rights that we have here, promoted by the government, by antipipeline activists.

Let's take a look at what actually is going on. You want to talk about responsible energy? That's our province. We are the leaders of that. You want to talk about a few other things? One of the members had mentioned about arrogance. Let's talk about that for a minute. What about when the Premier told rural families to take the bus?

**Mr. Kenney:** Former Premier.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Sorry. Pardon me. When the former Premier told Albertans to take the bus.

What about when the former Premier talked about – I can talk about, in my old riding of Chestermere-Rocky View, the Bears Den.

Because of the cumulative actions of this government of carbon tax, minimum wage increases, all of a sudden the people that ate at the Bears Den were spending \$80 on their meal, but the people who worked there had to go to the food bank. It was absolutely disrespectful and didn't even take into consideration that the carbon tax and all of the policies that the previous government had put on had impacted restaurants, small businesses. You want to talk about businesses and the job-killing carbon tax? I can tell you of several small businesses in Chestermere that were not able to continue on because of the cumulative number of policy decisions that actually shut down small business, which is one of the fabrics of this province. So let's talk about that.

You want to talk about pulling people out of poverty? I'd really like India to be a winner. The Member for Sherwood Park was talking about Prime Minister Modi. Prime Minister Modi has a big problem on his hands with actual pollution in that country. When there's an inversion, people can't walk outside. They cannot function. Yet we can't get our incredible, responsible resource development to those countries because we have governments that would rather use ideological statements like social licence. Because suddenly somehow that's going to make our product better, when, actually, the promotion should have been there.

Where was the former Premier when C-69 was in Parliament in Ottawa or, for that matter, C-48? Both of them are dependent on each other. If the shippers can't get their quantities, it doesn't matter how many pipelines you have if you don't have people who are able to accept the amount of product that is going to go overseas.

**The Acting Speaker:** I believe I saw the hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat standing for the call.

**Ms Glasgo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government knows that taking job-killing policies and taxes imposed on us from another government that is hypocritical with their own ecological footprint is wrong. The Trudeau government imposes unjust taxes and overreaching policies that he himself does not even follow. The Prime Minister should know that the most effective way to make a point, especially regarding a very important and controversial topic such as the environment, is by leading by example. The Trudeau government is all over the place with their environmental policies and impositions.

First, they want to pass bills C-48 and C-69, both of which are bills that hinder Alberta's ability to transport our natural resources. As we know, Justin Trudeau's government approved TMX, and then they delayed for over a year. Next, to gain votes from the environmentalists, he announced that Canada will ban single-use plastics by 2021. In his bumbling he stated, and I will quote: uh, we, uh, have recently switched to drinking, uh, plastic bottles out of, uh, water out of, uh, when we have water bottles, uh, out of plastic, uh, sorry, away from plastic, uh, towards paper, uh, like, drink boxed water bottle sorts of things. Wow. He could not answer a simple question, Mr. Speaker, about how he will cut down on his plastic water bottle use. [interjection] I'm getting there, Premier; don't you worry.

For his information, drinking tap water or using a reusable water bottle would suffice. Then, after his announcement, a report came out that the Prime Minister's family spends over \$300 on plastic bottles. That's a month.

But wait; there's more. While taking a personal vacation out of the country, we know that the Prime Minister flies back and forth on his fancy government plane to take press release photos and the occasional selfie. As I recall, the plane is not environmentally friendly. It actually pumps about as much carbon dioxide into the

atmosphere as the average Canadian in a whole year. But remember: the carbon tax is all about emissions.

In all seriousness, we understand that the Prime Minister needs to meet with Canadians. That is part of his job. But what, then, do you say to Canadians who have a carbon-intensive reality? How do we just expect that someone else will make the needed reductions? We need our leaders to take responsibility and not to be hypocrites when it comes to our environment. How can Canadians expect to take the Prime Minister's policies seriously if he himself is not doing anything, if he still is drinking boxed water bottle sorts of things to the tune of \$300 a month?

Canadians are so sick and tired of hearing about hypocritical actions from the federal and the past NDP government. They voted for a government that is going to produce effective environmental solutions that won't kill jobs and the economy. Trudeau's cash-grab carbon tax is a one-size-fits-all solution that, frankly, does not work for Alberta. We have already seen the negative impacts that the NDP carbon tax did to the economy and jobs.

Not only is this a bad economic plan; it's unconstitutional. The federal government tax is a clear invasion of Alberta's jurisdiction. It is all economic pain for no environmental gain. This federal tax grab will only punish Albertans for heating their homes and driving to work. We are keeping our commitment to defend Alberta taxpayers. A \$50-a-tonne carbon tax would sacrifice over 6,000 new jobs and take almost \$2.4 billion out of Albertans' pockets. The federal government's carbon tax would also increase the cost of food and other goods for Alberta families at the checkout and make us less competitive in Canada and around the world.

Our government has worked hard and kept our commitment to scrap the previous government's carbon tax. Now we have to work even harder to challenge the federal government's attempts to impose a carbon tax on Alberta. Albertans do not get a say in the matter. According to the opposition and their close friend and personal ally Justin Trudeau the carbon tax will not destroy jobs or hurt our economy, but they would rather have a federal carbon tax imposed on us that would do the exact same thing. It's a no-win for Alberta.

Our government recognizes that we need to strike a balance between economic growth and environmental protection while achieving real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Our election platform, that received a massive and historic mandate, made it clear to all Albertans that we're committed to a practical approach that achieves real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. There's a better way for us to reduce these emissions than an impractical and unconstitutional tax grab. No one in this nation or in this Assembly should make the mistake of equating climate action with the carbon tax ever again.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available. I believe I saw the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora standing.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thanks. I definitely don't plan on taking all five minutes, so I imagine there will be time for other members. I want to say, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat that when other Conservative women attacked the Prime Minister – and I'm not a defender of the Prime Minister; I think many people probably know that I am likely one of the last people to defend him – when people attacked him for his stutter and speech impediment, it reflected poorly upon those Conservative women, who were set up to do that. To the Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat: I think she had many really valuable things to say in her comments. I think that attacking any individual for a speech impediment or a stutter is unbecoming of them. Certainly, when you're switching languages, I imagine that it's even more difficult.

9:30

What I wanted to say is that I think the member had many things of note to say. I think that sometimes when people are pushing members to say things, attacking individuals and potentially impediments, it makes it problematic for hearing the message. I know that some people are having a hard time hearing my message now. Certainly, I cede the floor to others. But I just wanted to say that to the hon. member.

**The Acting Speaker:** Hon. members, there are still four minutes under 29(2)(a). I see the hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat standing.

**Ms Glasgo:** Yeah. I think I still have a little bit of time. While I appreciate the comments from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, I will not take lessons from a member who referred to Albertans such as my dad and the people who work in the oil and gas industry as sewer rats. I'm sorry.

Quite frankly, I'm actually really glad that she mentioned Conservative women. We are strong, and what this government seems to have a problem with is strong Conservative women. We see that now, right now in this House, and we see that every day with the Minister of Education. I would just like to say for the record, Mr. Speaker, that I would never make fun of someone for a speech impediment.

This government and this Prime Minister have shown over and over again that he is unable to represent the views of Albertans, and that is why we are challenging him on this federal carbon tax. It is nothing more than a tax grab. I will stand up on the record every single day of the week, and that's repealing the carbon tax and giving Albertans what they asked for in the last election.

**The Acting Speaker:** Two and a half minutes remaining under 29(2)(a).

Not seeing anyone, are there any other hon. members who would like to speak to the bill? I believe I see that the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition and Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has the floor.

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to spend a great deal of time speaking on this motion. I did have a chance to put a lot of my thoughts about the government's resistance to taking meaningful action on climate change on the record when we discussed Bill 1. So I won't do that.

However, as I've said before, there is a growing pattern that we have seen with the Premier and his frequency of saying things which independent opportunities to verify the facts would suggest simply aren't true. So having reviewed his comments from the Blues, I felt the need to get up and just respond to a few things that the Premier said, which were utterly false, and simply to correct the record there. Of course, I'm sure we have to allow – because it's the Blues. Perhaps the Blues inadvertently got it wrong. Nonetheless, going with what we saw there, I think it's important to make a couple of points, about eight or nine. But I'll try to be brief.

First of all, of course, the Premier began with his constant sort of note that somehow we ran in the election in 2015 without talking about what we would do with respect to climate change or without saying to Albertans that we had a very full plan and every intention to combat climate change seriously, and that's exactly what we did. We went off to get a significant amount of expert advice, and we consulted with many, many Albertans. We ultimately were in a position to have key leaders in the oil industry who were definitely not NDP supporters, environmental leaders, community leaders,

aboriginal leaders, indigenous leaders all come together to support the plan that we finally developed after the election but with the advice of a large amount of expertise that we didn't have available to us beforehand.

But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker; we were very clear in the last election that we did intend to take climate change seriously. We did believe that climate change was a real and a pressing threat to everybody in the world, let alone Albertans, and that we had a responsibility to do our part. So when the Premier makes statements like that there was not even a hint that we would be doing something like that, that is simply not correct.

Now, the second thing that I found particularly striking in terms of its disconnect with reality was the ridiculous assertions made by the Premier that the carbon levy and our system of pricing carbon was somewhat regressive. On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. The decision of this government to cancel carbon pricing is itself a regressive decision as far as who benefits and who loses.

The reality is that the way the carbon pricing system works – any economist, anybody who studies these things will tell you that wealthy people pay more. That's the way it works because things that burn carbon, on average, are things that wealthy people are more likely to use more. So if you're in a 3,000-square-foot house, you will pay more of a carbon price than you would if you were in a 700-square-foot apartment. As a result, people with more money paid more.

By cancelling the carbon levy, what we are doing is giving a regressive tax break, one that the rich get a bigger benefit from not only as a percentage but in terms of a global amount. This is further enhanced, of course, by the fact that we did in fact, contrary to statements that I saw the Premier make earlier today, put in place rebates which were very much designed to support low-income Albertans. As a result, low-income Albertans in many cases actually came out ahead with our carbon pricing scheme. We were very intentional about putting it in place that way because we were very concerned about making sure that we adopted a progressive approach. So it is absolutely mathematically incorrect what the Premier suggested, and it's really important that the people of Alberta hear the facts.

Now, the third thing that I'd like to point out is that the Premier has taken to repeating another falsehood, which is this notion that we had decided that should we have ever raised the price of carbon to \$40 or \$50 a tonne, which was a very conditional position on our part all along, we had decided that there would be no rebates going along with that. In fact, that was not true, Mr. Speaker. That decision was never made, so I know we didn't say it because we hadn't made the decision. Yet the Premier insists on carrying on and making this claim, knowing that it's not correct. It's really a thing that I wish he would stop doing because it is not correct. It is a false statement. It is really becoming quite overwhelmingly the comfort level of this Premier with respect to that particular strategy of debate.

Now, another thing that the Premier spoke about was a couple of examples that he suggested where the carbon levy caused huge bills for certain organizations, and he talked about those in his comments today. He talked about suggestions that the Calgary Food Bank had a \$50,000 bill one year because of the carbon levy. Interestingly, during the election some rigorous folks in the media – there weren't a lot of them; there were not very many folks in the media with enough resources to do this kind of thing – set about to do fact checks both in relation to things that those of us in our party said as well as things that people in the UCP said. With respect to the \$50,000 bill at the Calgary Food Bank they subsequently spoke to the executive director at the Calgary Food Bank, who said, well, no; actually, the UCP is completely wrong; that was not true; we never

had a bill like that. It was about less than 25 per cent of the number that the UCP likes to use in its talking points.

Maybe it was an innocent mistake by the UCP, but I would think, Mr. Speaker, that when you have the executive director of the very organization that you are referring to coming out and saying, "No; actually, you are inflating this number by over 400 per cent," that at the very least, I mean, you might actually apologize and say: "Oops; my bad. Sorry. I guess I shouldn't have said that." But even if you don't do that, you wouldn't then get up in the House and speak on *Hansard* and get it on the record again. You know full well that it was wrong. You know that you just inflated the number by over 400 per cent. But there's the Premier happily marching in, saying things that he knows are not true. It just is quite overwhelming, Mr. Speaker, because I honestly have never seen this in politics before. I truly haven't.

9:40

I know I'm getting a little animated here, but I just, in my many years of watching politics – you may or may not know, but I actually was forced to start watching politics at the age of four, when my dad got involved. I was six when he got elected. Honestly, I literally had to watch it on TV once it started, played on TV. I mean, it was really a very tough childhood, Mr. Speaker. But what I will say is that through all that time, going back that far, I never saw anybody so loose with the facts, so willing to come into this building and put on the record things that they know not to be true. It's really disappointing.

Anyway, the next thing the Premier talked about was the bill paid by the CBE. Now, in that case, I think it was more or less accurate. But I think it's really important to put it in context. He talks about, "Oh, there was, you know, two or three million dollars that the CBE might have had to pay in carbon levy." And then he said, "Oh, well, you know, the school buses had to stop, and people were no longer getting to school, and kids would probably" – he didn't actually say, but the implication was that kids were walking 20 miles in the snow because they couldn't afford to run buses anymore.

Let's just be clear. The CBE has a \$1.4 billion budget. Even if the number is correct and their carbon levy cost came to \$3 million, that amounts to .2 per cent of their budget. More importantly, over the four years that our government was in power, we increased their budget by \$100 million, Mr. Speaker. So when we hear them say that because of the NDP buses suddenly screeched to a halt in Calgary, through the Calgary board of education, at the same time that we gave them \$100 million extra, well, that in itself is a little extra. I would say that the member needs to put his comments in context if he wants to be taken seriously.

Another thing the Premier talked about is the matter of carbon leakage. I want to say that that is actually a legitimate policy issue and one with which our government was very, very seized. I'm hopeful that some people over there, probably not the Premier but someone, did actually dig in a little bit to the many elements and complexities of the carbon leadership plan to know that, of course, we had extremely complex and dedicated efforts, consultation with industry, a great deal of economic analysis, more consultation, more analysis, all that kind of stuff, all of which was designed to come up with a very precise and sophisticated set of levers to ensure that we were able to protect trade-exposed industries from the consequences of the phenomena of carbon leakage. There was a lot of work done on that with a number of different trade-exposed industries.

It's just frustrating to see the Premier talk about carbon leakage and then not acknowledge the complexity and the depth of the work that was done to account for carbon leakage and to support industry to ensure that they did not suffer from the matter of the carbon

leakage in a way that would have made them unprofitable or unable to carry on business. There was a highly complex, sophisticated set of deliberations that went into ensuring that that was the case.

Another thing, as it relates – well, let me back up just a little bit. Another thing that I noted that the Premier talked about with respect to the climate leadership plan as a whole and the issue of the carbon tax is this whole argument that: well, other parts of the world create more emissions than we do; therefore, we don't have to do anything. Of course, you know, that form of analysis is a recipe for doing nothing, and heaven forbid that everybody did that. Then, presumably, only the single-biggest emitter would ever have any obligation to do anything, and the second-biggest emitter would never have an obligation to do anything, and the third-biggest emitter and so on, and so on, and so on.

The notion that we have no obligation because everybody else does so much more and we are such a small part of the world is an incredibly destructive, insular, parochial approach to things, and it is something that is better left a century ago. For those of us who are concerned about global issues and the increasing globalization of many, many issues in our world, we need to take this matter very, very seriously. I would go beyond sort of the morality of it all and just even talk about the economics of it. We cannot remove ourselves from a global economy. To approach it this way is just very selfish and negative and, ultimately, illogical. So I won't spend too much more time on that issue.

Of course, the Premier also loves to talk about the fact that, you know, on my eighth interview around Christmas I was unable to remember the exact amount of emissions that had been reduced by our climate leadership plan. Well, good on him. It was not my best interview, for sure. By all means, dine out on that if you like. But I would suggest that it's a bit disingenuous because, of course, the next day we made a point of actually providing that information. Indeed, the information is that we had already in that one year alone reduced emissions by about seven megatonnes, which, just to put that in context, is about one-third of the annual emissions of the whole province of Manitoba. So it's not nothing, Mr. Speaker. It's really quite a bit, actually. So that was there.

Now, was that entirely attributable to the tax as opposed to other elements in our climate leadership plan? It's hard to say. The Premier tries to suggest: oh, it's because you shut down the economy. Well, not really. I think that probably a good part of it had to do with the acceleration of the coal phase-out. But even that, Mr. Speaker, was enabled by the funds that went into the carbon levy, because we were able to ensure a just transition and also a transition that provided a minimum level of investor certainty. So that's what was done with the proceeds of the carbon pricing system, that's what enabled the acceleration of the coal phase-out, and that is probably the single biggest contributor to the seven megatonne reduction in that particular year.

The other thing that I would like to talk about just a little bit goes back to this issue of sort of intellectual honesty when we talk about things in this House. I note that it was referenced in the Premier's conversation about the climate leadership plan. Also, though, it's something that they certainly like to say a lot, a lot, a lot, which is where they make the suggestion that the carbon levy is somehow the cause of the significant job losses that were experienced in Alberta. That, of course, is ridiculous.

What we do know is that the price of oil went from about \$140 a barrel down to \$29. We know that the energy industry itself went into a massive amount of restructuring, which it would have done anyway, to increase efficiency and further shed jobs and probably not bring them back ever. We also know that the U.S. oil and gas market changed dramatically. We also know that our ability to move our product also became significantly constricted. All of

these things – actually, I've described them in the past as like a slow car crash that we could see coming for about the last 10 years, mostly while those guys were at the wheel, and that is the primary reason why we saw these significant job losses and restructuring. It's a little bit like, going back to the CBE example, suggesting that a \$3 million carbon price on a \$1.4 billion budget is why the CBE suddenly can't find enough buses to move people around the city.

9:50

It's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker – certainly, that's exactly what that assertion is – and it's illogical. It's not based on the facts, and there's not an economist in the world that would ever suggest that our carbon levy is the reason why the jobs that the Premier constantly refers to being lost were lost because it's simply not, and he knows it. I think he's sufficiently well read to know that he is, once again, playing fast and loose with the facts. What he doesn't, of course, like to talk about is that for two years during our government's tenure we actually had the fastest growing economy in the country. From the depths of the recession in 2016 to now we've actually created over 100,000 jobs. I know that the facts are, as they used to say, inconvenient. I think they're more than inconvenient. I think they are kind of hostile to them. I think we've moved beyond inconvenience.

The other thing that I would like to talk about just a little bit, though, is that the motion itself refers to many things. There are actually some things in the motion that I don't disagree with, but what makes it difficult for me to support the motion is that it says that we all have to link arms and say that the carbon tax was absolutely bad for all Albertans. I'm afraid that I just can't quite get there, Mr. Speaker. Unlike what the member opposite suggests, that somehow we don't accept what Albertans said in the last election, that's not actually true. I've actually said very clearly on the record that I get that Albertans weren't big fans of the carbon tax, but I also believe that they are actually big fans of doing something to address the hazards and the risks of climate change. I don't think that they're in anywhere near the level of denial that the members of the UCP are.

Either way, though, what I will say is that there has been a tremendous amount of misrepresentation by the government at every opportunity in every setting in every community all the time about what was going on with the climate leadership plan. Indeed, I saw that, unfortunately, extend into the remarks by the Premier tonight. This was not going into a slush fund. That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. The climate leadership plan was constrained by legislation, and the funds associated with the climate leadership plan were very much dedicated to certain projects. One was funding the 33 per cent drop in the small-business tax. Another was the rebates to low- and middle-income families. Another was for investing and incenting renewable energy, primarily renewable energy in the production of electricity for all Albertans on a commercial and utility-based scale, something that has of course generated tremendous levels of economic activity and investment interest in the province of Alberta.

Now, as an interesting side note, Mr. Speaker, I note that the Premier made that comment: well, I don't have any problems if my neighbour wants to put a solar panel on his roof. To be clear, the whole solar panels on people's roofs thing was a very small element, a very small component, of what the climate leadership plan was paying for. Just to back up a little bit, you know, what he said was: bully for my neighbour if he wants to put a solar panel on his roof, but I don't want my dollars to go to it. Well, you know what? A couple of hundred years ago that's what people used to say: bully for my neighbour if he wants to pay for his own fire services, but I don't want my taxpayer dollars to go for that. You

know what ended up happening? If you didn't pay for your own fire services and then your house caught on fire – guess what? – your neighbour's did, too. It turns out that some things actually require people to pool their resources to do the best job on it. That's actually sort of the genesis of good governance.

Now, I know that for these folks over here, at the end of the day, it's not about creating jobs. It's not about supporting entrepreneurs. It's not about any of that. It's about making all the arguments they can, most of which are economically flawed and have been proven to be so over and over and over again. It's really just about shrinking government so that they can pull it back from those who need it most in order to give money back to those who need it least. That is ultimately the fundamental basis of right-wing politics. That's what they're here to do, and that's what they are doing here. But I will say that climate change is actually something that we need to pull together on. If we all live in our little bubbles, there's going to be a problem in the long term.

Let me just go back to the other things that the levy paid for. We have incenting renewable energy on a commercial-wide basis, we have the small-business tax cut, we have a progressive rebate, we have the coal phase-out, and we have a significant investment in innovation funding. The members opposite keep talking as though they are the only ones that ever thought of investing in technology and innovation funding. Quite honestly, the level of resources that were dedicated to our energy industry, to support their bump in innovation funding and reducing the amount of carbon in a barrel, was significant. It was \$1.4 billion over five years. That is a huge bump from what was being directed to the energy industry before.

When the Premier says ridiculous things like he did in question period today, that we have never done anything to support the energy industry and that we hate the energy industry, which is actually something he said, which was, again, another one of those "Why be bothered with the facts?" kinds of statements, in fact, what we did and what the carbon levy was going towards was significantly supporting industry's work that they were already doing but needed more work to do in order to stay ahead of what was happening in the rest of the world and ensure that our product remained the best in terms of taking carbon out of the barrel.

Another thing, of course, that the carbon levy was funding was the LRT. We've had lots of talks about the green line, the LRT here in Edmonton, something that we know takes tens of thousands of cars off the road and, of course, reduces emissions significantly.

The final thing that the climate levy was designed to fund was adaptation efforts. There is a plethora of adaptation efforts that need to be going on across our province which are not happening right now, Mr. Speaker, because we have a shortage of funds. Whether it's accelerating significantly the FireSmart initiatives around rural communities throughout the province, particularly smaller indigenous communities but also other fairly large communities that haven't been able to fully fund the costs of FireSmart, whether we're talking about flood mitigation – and I know the current Minister of Transportation likes to confound the questions of flood mitigation on the Elbow River versus flood mitigation on the Bow, but in fact those are two different projects, and they both need to happen.

Work is, as he's correctly identified, because of the regulatory hurdles – and I'll be the first to admit that that's a very frustrating process – slowly moving ahead with the Springbank, which is focused on the Elbow. There is a whole bunch of work that has to go on with the Bow. It's a whole other financial commitment, and there is no plan afoot. You might have been able to pay for it through the climate leadership plan, but that's been cancelled. Quite frankly, the people of Calgary need that to go ahead, and all we have from the minister responsible for it are sneaky little efforts to

confound the issue and pretend he's talking about one effort when, in fact, he's talking about an entirely different one. Frankly, the people of Calgary deserve far better.

[The Speaker in the chair]

The point I make about describing these programs, Mr. Speaker, is simply this, that the carbon levy was not ever dedicated to an alleged slush fund. It was entirely dedicated to matters that were geared towards reducing emissions or supporting adaptation as required because of the risks associated with climate change. That's all it ever was, and when he calls it a slush fund, once again he is playing fast and loose with the facts, which, again, is something he really needs to stop doing. We know, because they have now cancelled the carbon levy and they've paired that with a 4 and a half billion dollar tax giveaway – read subsidy – to large, profitable corporations asking not a single solitary thing in return except maybe an invite to Brett Wilson's parties. I don't know. The reality is that what we have here, then, is a situation where we don't have an answer to the problems and the questions that are facing Albertans as a result of the threats that are presented by climate change, whether they're the economic threat of losing market access, whether they are the air, land, and water threat just in terms of the degradation of our environment, or whether they are the extreme weather threats that require significant adaptations.

10:00

All those things are things we must address, that we now don't have the tools to address because the government has eliminated both the carbon levy as well as 4 and a half billion dollars in the form of subsidies to wealthy, profitable corporations in return for – wait for it – nothing. Because of that, that part of the motion that is put before us is not something that we can support. That's the difficulty that we have.

Now, on the flip side, the concerns around whether we may or may not end up with inappropriate strolls into provincial jurisdiction, those are issues that, honestly, we could potentially consider supporting. But I think quite clearly we know that this motion was not actually constructed to generate or to secure our support; quite the opposite. It was structured to play a little political game so they could, you know, make it impossible for us to support it and then play games of running around and telling everybody: "Oh, look. The NDP didn't support this thing."

In summary, what I will say is this: there were a number of factual inaccuracies in the comments made by the Premier today.

Two, there are a number of things that are – or there were until very recently – paid for by the proceeds of the carbon levy for which there is now no source of income, and therefore we are not entirely sure how they will be paid unless these folks want to, you know, actually get somewhere close to the alleged \$100 billion in debt they also talk about even though we all know that's not true either. Or, conversely, just not do those things. Because there are important things that are paid for, we need to outline what they were. They are not there anymore, therefore we have difficulty with that element of the motion.

Thirdly, I will say that we, too, share concerns around a little bit of overreach on the part of the federal government, so that is worthy of a measured and balanced discussion. Now, obviously, that's not what's going on here because all of this is really about, you know, the Premier's desire to relitigate the 2015 federal election. I find it very ironic that he refers to us as being angry about losing the 2019 legislation when in fact all of Alberta has been forced to suffer through his anger about the 2015 federal election, but anyhow.

Because of that, I suspect it is likely the case – and as much as we've enjoyed participating in this conversation given the brand

new opportunity provided by the standing orders that were forced through this House by the UCP – that we may consider availing ourselves of the ability to abstain from this particular motion. We shall see what we ultimately do.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this motion, and I look forward to hearing what others might have to say. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I see the hon. Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions has risen to ask a brief question or make a comment.

**Mr. Luan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, listening to all the debates, really I want to have a chance to share my first-hand experience not only going through the campaigns here but also to reflect lots of life experience that I lived from being born in Communist China. I lived the first half of my adult life there and experienced how the system, the policies, impact people's lives. Then in the latter part of my life coming to Canada to witness the beauty of democracy, the freedom, and so forth. I want to tie it to my question of how the NDP's carbon tax is so out of touch with reality, based on ideological differences but causing all kinds of harm.

Let me begin by saying that some of you have probably heard about the Cultural Revolution back in China. It's a period of time when people lived on high ideals. It all sounds wonderful. I was born and raised in a time that we were told we were the richest nation, because we don't have anything, but we have everything. Everything the country has belongs to you. I vividly remember my first 20-some years of experience. I worked hard, you know, I studied hard. I was picked by the country as one of the model citizens to visit Japan when the country finally had a chance to open the door.

I remember that first trip to Tokyo. I kept looking for the 80 per cent of people – according to what we were told, the capitalist society is only good because a small handful of people are living off the large majority. There's only a handful of people who are rich, and the large majority is supposed to be poor. So I was vividly looking for: where are the large majority? Everybody I encountered, I felt like they were all 10 times, 50 times more prosperous than I was, and I came representing the new generation of China, supposed to be the higher end of the class there. I really struggled to the deep core with that, but within months I realized that lots of the stuff that we were led to believe was not true. What happened is that we were so out of touch. Within the circle when you close your eyes, when you don't interact with the world, you think you're the best, but when you have a chance to compare – I went out and I realized that as a nation, as a society we'd been falling behind so terribly because we were so out of touch.

Now, let me talk about the carbon tax and my sort of experience on this. When I campaigned, people said: "Jason, you're a social worker. You're supposed to be more on the left side. Why are you in the Conservative government?" So I told them my personal story. I said, "I reject it when people have sort of stereotyping kinds of thinking like that." I told them about my story.

I also said, "I drive a hybrid Toyota." I said: "You see, it's right here in front of me. I reject people who say that Conservatives are not caring about the environment. I care about the environment." But I said: "Ten years ago I looked at the same car. It's a Toyota Camry. They had two choices; you had the hybrid one, you had the normal one. I chose the normal one because the technology at that time was not mature enough. My calculations and my estimate was that I would spend more time fixing this technology rather than save anything. But 10 years later when I revisited it, when I traded in my

old car, getting this new one, my calculation was that for \$3,000 more, I will save. Within three years the \$3,000 will be back. For the rest of the 15 years that I drive: not only good for me, good for the environment.

I show people now, and I say: "You know, you talk about carbon tax. When we live in an environment like Alberta, Canada, you have no choice; you're going to have to heat your house and drive your car." There is no impact to the behaviour of how the tax will influence how you consume the energy here, but there is a difference. I said, "For Conservatives we have very practical proposals of how we address this." I hear the Premier in this House talk about LNGs, if we supply those to China . . . [A timer sounded] Did I run out of time?

**The Speaker:** You're out of time, yes. My apologies. Your time for debate has expired on 29(2)(a).

I believe the Government House Leader, perhaps, is rising to make a motion.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** I am, Mr. Speaker. Man, you have, like, Speaker senses. I would like to move pursuant to Standing Order 3(1.2), I wish to advise the Assembly – actually, I don't want to move a motion. Sorry. I just want to advise the Assembly that there shall be no morning sitting tomorrow, Wednesday, June 26, 2019.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, if you will allow me, I will move one-minute bells for the remainder of the evening.

**The Speaker:** Well, the Government House Leader will know that unanimous consent would be required for that, so I will ask only one question.

[Unanimous consent granted]

10:10

## Government Motions

### Federal Carbon Tax

(continued)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very privileged and pleased to rise today to speak to Government Motion 21. The motion starts by saying, "Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly express its support for the government in its efforts to challenge the federal government's attempts to impose a carbon tax on Alberta." I rise today to say that I am very pleased to speak to this motion and to speak in support of it.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that \$2.4 billion will be lost if the Trudeau government's carbon tax goes forward, and that much money could go to investments to create a whole lot of infrastructure in this province and to create jobs and investment into effective climate change solutions. Without a strong economy it's impossible to invest in alternative energy projects.

We saw from the previous government, Mr. Speaker, that imposing carbon taxes actually creates job losses. It produces a weak economy for Alberta, which, in turn, is going to halt many of the innovative projects that could be pursued. Projects such as solar or thermal power plants are not economically feasible without having a strong economy to support them. The job-killing carbon tax that the NDP government imposed: well, we know that it created a downturn that made it impossible for projects like Capital Power to be able to run.

We need, Mr. Speaker, to take proactive measures to be able to ensure that our economy is strong enough to fund and to run these types of projects. We need a responsible government that understands economics and that will create economic and

environmentally friendly plans to combat climate change. Now, much like the past NDP government, we know that the Trudeau government doesn't really understand economics and how the carbon tax is actually killing jobs in Alberta. They do not really understand that creating deficits and making Albertans pay out of their pockets is not going to solve the climate problem.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Albertans actually do care about the environment, but many of them don't want to be paying a carbon tax that is not effective. We should have a practical and an effective approach when combatting climate change, not a job-killing tax grab that simply punishes ordinary Albertans. Now, our government made a platform commitment to scrap the provincial carbon tax, and Albertans resoundingly supported this move during last April's election. Now that we've scrapped the provincial carbon tax, we have to challenge the federal one. Both will be ineffective ways to combat climate change.

We saw how our previous government drove our economy down and lost many jobs for Albertans. Homeless rates went up, so did crime. The carbon tax is not an effective way to combat climate change. It is just another way to punish Albertans. We punish Albertans for heating their homes, punish Albertans for taking their kids to hockey practice. It is not an efficient way of combatting climate change.

Our government was elected to fight for Albertans and to fight for their best interests. The Trudeau carbon tax . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I hesitate to interrupt, but the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon will have approximately 11 minutes remaining for his remarks after we vote on the appropriation bills.

## Government Bills and Orders

### Third Reading

*(continued)*

**The Speaker:** In accordance with Standing Order 64(5) the chair is required to put the question to the House on appropriation bills on the Order Paper for third reading.

### Bill 5

#### Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2019

*(continued)*

[Motion carried; Bill 5 read a third time]

### Bill 6

#### Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2019

*(continued)*

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a third time]

## Government Motions

### Federal Carbon Tax

*(continued)*

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon if he has any additional remarks to make.

**Mr. Smith:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to know that the government is going to have the money that it needs to continue serving the people of Alberta.

Thank you for letting me get back to my remarks. You know, our government was elected very clearly. It was elected to fight for Albertans' best interests. The Trudeau carbon tax is not in Alberta's best interests. It is just another way to impose the money-grabbing

taxes that obviously have and will continue to kill our economy. Now, having a \$50-a-tonne tax would actually mean, Mr. Speaker, losing about 6,000 new jobs. It would take \$2.4 billion out of Albertans' pockets. It's going to raise, as we can all see, all of us living in the real world that we live in, the costs of goods, it's going to raise the cost of food, it's going to increase the prices at the pumps, and it's going to make Alberta less competitive.

Our government will not allow the Trudeau government to impose their economy-killing carbon tax without a fight. We are not alone in our fight. We are not alone in our fight against this unjust carbon tax. We are not the only province fighting the federal government on this unconstitutional carbon tax. Alberta, as with the other provinces challenging the federal government, has the constitutional authority to make policy choices within our own jurisdiction. The federal government's carbon tax disrupts the balance of Canada's federation by undermining Alberta's exclusive constitutional powers to manage our own local undertakings, our own natural resources, the economy, and the greenhouse gas emission plans that we choose to put forward.

Our government is determined, Mr. Speaker, to be working on a climate change plan that strikes a balance between economic growth and environmental protection and actually achieves real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. We should not have to sacrifice jobs or economic development and growth in order to reduce emissions and to combat climate change. We know that there are better solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the time tonight to talk just a little bit about some of the things that are going on in my constituency that do exactly that, that actually create jobs, that promote economic development while at the same time reducing emissions and combatting climate change. In the Drayton Valley-Devon constituency it looks very likely that by this new year we will have the first deep-well geothermal project in the history of the world, of anywhere on Planet Earth. We will have the first deep-well geothermal project that will produce electricity and heat from a geothermal loop. It will produce electricity without any carbon emissions while using abandoned and orphaned wells and while producing jobs for the drillers, for all of the people that are a part of my community that have traditionally been drilling for energy in oil and gas. They will now be drilling for geothermal electric energy. This is an example of working towards creating jobs, creating wealth, reducing carbon while working in the best interests of Albertans. I'm very excited, should all of the things come together, that this project will begin in the new year.

10:20

Mr. Speaker, I was talking today with a gentleman that works with Capital Power. He phoned me up – and we had a conversation – to tell me that they are now as a part of the Genesee power plant going to be mixing natural gas with coal and that they will be able to keep many of the jobs, almost all of the jobs, at the Westmoreland Coal plant that has traditionally supported the Genesee power plant. Rather than getting rid of all of those jobs because of some ideological greenhouse initiative, they are going to be using technology and they're going to be using Alberta common sense so that when natural gas is the best alternative for producing electricity, they'll use natural gas. When in the winter natural gas is really expensive, they'll be able to use coal, and when they decide to use both, they'll use both. What a practical, Alberta way of ensuring that we are – and at the same time they'll be reducing their emissions by about 30 per cent. This is how you address climate change. This is how you address being environmentally responsible, where you produce jobs, you produce wealth, you use the technology that's available, and you support the environment at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that I was contacted by the very people that came to the previous NDP government and were asked

to help them put forward the PACE program. They sat down with me and they suggested to me that when they were talking with the previous government about implementing the PACE program, which would allow house owners to be able to put in solar panels and windows that would be more thermally capable of reducing carbon emissions and keeping houses warmer, they would be able to produce that same program not through government subsidies and dependent upon the carbon tax incentives, but, rather, they could produce that same PACE program completely privately, without government incentives, so that we get the same environmental gain without the pain to the Alberta taxpayer's wallet. What a unique idea.

Mr. Speaker, the point of our speech here tonight is that we believe that a carbon tax provides a whole lot of pain without any environmental gain, that the Trudeau carbon tax is no better and no different than the carbon tax that the NDP put forward on us, and that we can move forward in a way that we know provides better solutions. Our platform makes it clear that we're committed to a practical approach that achieves real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. But we want to make it clear to Albertans that our government does not believe that climate action equals a carbon tax. Our government is going to ensure that we fight for Alberta's best interests and that we find a better way to reduce emissions than this impractical and unconstitutional tax grab.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for those wishing to bring a brief question or comment.

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview on the main motion.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm standing today, of course, against Government Motion 21. Certainly, the current UCP government is talking about wanting to challenge the federal government regarding the carbon tax, possibly as far as a constitutional challenge in the courts. We know that the government of Saskatchewan has already made this constitutional challenge and that they have lost. The UCP government following through on this court challenge is a waste of time and resources. Certainly, for financial reasons it doesn't make sense to move forward on Government Motion 21.

It also makes no sense to move forward on Government Motion 21 for environmental reasons. We all know that climate change is real, Mr. Speaker. We know that through many reports. One is the UN report, that was recently released, that says that we've got 12 years to do something or else it's too late. We've heard recently about the Canadian Arctic permafrost, that it's melting 70 years sooner than was anticipated previously. Each year we know more species are becoming extinct. Each year natural disasters caused by human-made climate change are increasing, from fires to floods. We know that first-hand here in Alberta, from the Fort McMurray wildfire to flooding in southern Alberta. These are just a few examples.

We also hear repeatedly from the UCP government that there are no results from the NDP's climate leadership plan. Certainly, the Leader of the Official Opposition spoke about this and did identify, of course, that that is not true. We know that it has made and continues to make an impact, a positive one. Edmonton, which is where my riding of Edmonton-Riverview is situated, actually just released a report about the decrease in air pollution in our city.

I might just take this moment, Mr. Speaker, to talk about some of the positive movements forward that Edmonton is doing in terms of greening our capital city. Certainly, they have been working very hard to make Edmonton a walkable city. We know that the more

people can live and work and go to stores in their communities by walking there, maybe biking there, then we know that they are using their vehicles less. We know that vehicles cause a lot of emissions that, of course, hurt our environment.

Other kinds of alternate transportation – certainly the increase in bike lanes, increasing public transit, and the expansion of the LRT – all have very positive outcomes for reducing climate change. Edmonton is a leader in doing this. Certainly, in my riding of Edmonton-Riverview, because it does sort of hug both sides of the river, there are many beautiful, walkable trails. People in the mature neighbourhoods in Edmonton-Riverview do bike, cycle, take transit, and that's really being responsible citizens themselves to reduce climate change.

Besides the environmental improvements, certainly, that our climate leadership plan did present, it also provided millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, to Albertans to go green, to support the shift to a green economy. As the previous Minister of Seniors and Housing, we had a significant investment in affordable housing in our province that supported our infrastructure to be more energy efficient. The first step in that process was doing energy audits on some of the facilities that were government owned and that provided affordable housing for citizens in our province. We know that many of those housing management bodies that do provide affordable housing to citizens are very aged. You know, a lot of the structures may have been built 30 years ago. They're not very energy efficient.

Our climate leadership plan did afford us the opportunity to be able to put in energy-efficient furnaces, to replace the windows that created a draft or those doors that weren't sealed appropriately so that the elements – of course, we all know that here in Alberta it can get pretty cold and windy and rainy. These funds made a significant difference in terms of how much energy was being wasted or even in terms of the roofs when you had to have that roof replaced on a building so that the heat wasn't leaving through that. These funds were used in a very responsible manner, making a big difference for the housing management bodies across Alberta. We have over a hundred housing management bodies in small communities, in rural Alberta, and also in our larger centres. This fund went back into supporting green infrastructure, making a significant difference for people living in affordable housing and certainly reducing the cost for the housing operators.

**10:30**

A second piece I did want to speak about. Certainly, it has been held up that somehow the NDP government was derelict in our duties to support seniors. I, too, similar to the Leader of the Official Opposition, want to articulate how mistaken the UCP government actually are. The energy rebates: we know that two-thirds of seniors in Alberta received funding from our climate leadership plan. They were better off at the end of the day because of that. They actually came away with more funds than they had previously. This sort of characterization of these vulnerable seniors who were on fixed incomes, that we had no regard for them: of course we did. We made sure that they had rebates. Honestly, they were better off at the end of the day, so how they're being characterized is completely wrong.

You know, even beyond that, there are so many things our government did to support seniors that seem to be forgotten or not understood by the UCP government, and I'm just going to articulate a few of those here. We indexed the Alberta seniors' benefit to the cost of living. It's an income support program for seniors in our province. That's a significant move, Mr. Speaker, because that means that each year when the cost of living goes up – and it generally does – those seniors, those vulnerable seniors on fixed



incomes, actually have their Alberta seniors' benefit go up, too, so that they can better pay for those services that they need. I was very proud as minister of seniors and housing that we did that. That is a significant way that we did help vulnerable seniors.

Besides that, we also substantially increased funding to affordable housing for seniors. You know, when we were comparing sort of the investment that we made with the previous Conservative government's investment – this would have been in the last budget of Premier Prentice – our budget was four times more than the previous Conservative government's. Our investment was significant. Just so members realize, a significant portion of that went to rural Alberta, to a lot of the lodges that are quite aged. We supported Albertans all across our province in areas that had really been extremely neglected by the previous Conservative governments. Mr. Speaker, we inherited a \$1.2 billion hole in maintenance and renewal for these facilities, so we really stepped up and made sure that people had the facilities they need and made sure that they were taken care of.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, that I want to talk about. You know, as a minister you learn things and you think: what can I do to better serve the population I'm being asked to serve? One of the things that was not sort of on the books and where nothing had really been done, as far as I could tell, for the decades that the Conservatives were in power in our province: there was no sort of support to seniors' centres. There was no decision to support seniors' centres in any way.

Seniors' centres are actually a very preventative resource. Sometimes communities would use the funding from family and community social services to invest in them, but sometimes communities didn't do that. There was no sort of targeted funding for seniors' centres, and I always thought that was a bit strange. I thought that these centres oftentimes are gathering places in small communities. They create a social connection. We know that there are issues around seniors and social isolation. We need to support them to be connected to their communities. We know that the outcomes for that in terms of health, both mental health and physical health, are significant. I talked with my department staff, and we tried to devise a plan to support seniors' centres.

Even in very tough economic times we prioritized seniors, and we made sure that they were supported in Alberta. We did not cut programs to them. We created the aging well in community grant program, which supports seniors' centres so that they can receive support for some of the amazing programs that they provide to seniors locally. I've talked in this House already previously many times about the seniors' home adaptation and repair program, where seniors can receive funds.

You know, having travelled the province, seniors say: first of all, I want to age in my own community, in my own home for as long as I can. That's what they want. Sometimes there are barriers to them being able to do that. You know, maybe now they have a walker, and it's hard for them to get around, or they have a rug that, if they move their walker, will trip them up. So they actually need to get rid of that carpet, maybe put in a hardwood floor or linoleum, something that's easier to do. Oftentimes it's not a very large cost, but sometimes it's too big for them. This program helps seniors to be able to make those home renovations, whatever they may be, and to stay longer in that community, in that home that they love, close to family and friends. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of that investment also.

You know, I think there's been significant support that the NDP government did provide to seniors. Certainly, we took considerable effort and consideration and supported seniors in many ways and in many ways that I'm very proud of.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, certainly, I am standing against Motion 21. You know, it's clear. We all know that the Supreme Court of Canada did already reject Saskatchewan's Court of Appeal constitutional challenge, so really Alberta is just throwing good money after bad, making a mistake, and wasting the time and resources of Albertans to pursue this further. Of course, there are also the environmental reasons that I've already articulated, that our climate leadership plan did make a significant difference and continues to.

I'm certainly, as the previous minister, concerned: what's going to happen to that support for housing management bodies who are in the process of trying to green their facilities and, you know, putting in those energy-efficient furnaces and replacing the windows so that they are more air tight, and just in general caring for their facilities so that we aren't wasting energy and we're being much more energy efficient? I wonder what's going to happen with those programs seeing as now the program won't have the funding for that. I think that this well-thought-out plan that the NDP government put forward made a significant difference in the lives of many people, certainly seniors and those experiencing low income and living in the affordable housing system.

I certainly don't support this motion at all, Mr. Speaker, and will conclude my remarks now.

**The Speaker:** Well, thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available to those wishing to make a brief question or comment.

Seeing none, I will recognize the hon. Member for Banff-Kananaskis.

**Ms Rosin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to stand before you today to speak out against the federal government's attempts to impose a carbon tax on Alberta. During the historic provincial election this past April the largest number of Albertans in history stood together and forced the world to recognize our needs. By electing this government, we Albertans took back the right to decide the destiny of our province, and we will relentlessly continue to pursue this vision we shared until we restore our Alberta advantage.

On April 16 the hard-working Albertans that once drove the growth of our provincial and federal economies voted for a provincial government that would ensure that our demands won't be ignored in our time of greatest need. As the government officials that were elected by the people of this province, it is now our responsibility to act as the voice of our constituents. It is also our responsibility to act accountably and in the best interests of Alberta's needs.

For us to properly repay the faith that our fellow Albertans have entrusted in us, our government has resolved in Motion 21 to firmly oppose the imposition of any federal carbon tax grab on our province. Any brief review of the NDP's carbon tax will clearly show the massive negative impact it had on Alberta taxpayers, on families, businesses, and even a greenhouse near my riding, that can no longer afford to grow trees after paying the cost of the NDP carbon tax and, as such, had to burn more fuel to transport trees in from B.C. to meet their demands. Even those trying to help the environment were hindered from doing so by this devastating policy. How ironic. Instead of reducing Alberta's emissions, the NDP's failed ideological carbon tax only increased the financial burden on Albertans, who were already feeling the effects of the worst financial crisis in the recent history of our province.

**10:40**

In the interest of properly keeping the promises that we made to voters, our government will forever oppose any actions that

threaten the ability of our province to responsibly determine our own affairs. Although it may be difficult for our Prime Minister to appreciate, many normal Albertans aren't afforded access to extravagant trust funds. Instead of building their lives by riding the coattails of their family's reputation, most of us Albertans need to spend our hard-earned money to feed and supply the families that we built from the ground up. The carbon tax that the federal government plans to impose on our province directly harms the financial well-being of these diligent Alberta taxpayers. In fact, this carbon tax grab by our federal government effectively takes food right off the tables of Alberta families.

When Alberta voters elected our party, they did so because they envisioned a province with affordable access to groceries, energy, transportation, and other necessities of a happy life. Albertans envisioned a province where our senior citizens would not be punished for heating their homes in the brutal Canadian winter. They envisioned a province where the hard-working workers who were hardest hit by the recent oil crisis would not be punished for simply driving themselves to the jobs that feed their families. The simple fact of the matter is that Albertans need to use oil and gas products to live long, healthy, and prosperous lives, and they should not be punished for the heinous crime of using our God-given resources to sustain themselves.

The proposed federal carbon tax is clearly an affront to Alberta's sovereignty, and it is a slap in the face to every single Albertan that voted against the NDP's failed carbon tax just last April. And let me tell you that that's a lot of Albertans. Meanwhile the establishment, that seems to show such distaste and disregard for everyday working Albertans and our oil and gas industry, allows the Prime Minister to nibble caviar with his silver spoon while he jet-sets around the world in the comfort of his private jet, that he fuels using our taxpayers' money. Simply put, despite the Prime Minister's superficial posturing as an environmentalist, amongst many other things like a feminist and a Bollywood dancer, he appears completely incapable of actually leading by example.

As a result, the proposed federal carbon tax on our province clearly illustrates the federal government's complete failure to hold themselves to the same standards they expect from Albertans. Not only is it hypocritical, but it is a gross overreach by the Canadian federal government into affairs that have been previously settled by our provincial government. This is why our government will finish the job that we started, when we repealed the NDP's failed carbon tax, by continuing to oppose the imposition of any federal carbon tax on our province. Albertans don't deserve to be punished for heating our homes in the winter or charged unreasonable prices for buying our groceries and other necessities. That is why our government is committed to fighting this battle all the way to the courts so that in four years we can proudly announce to all Albertans: promises made, promises kept.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, anyone else wishing to speak to Government Motion 21? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to provide some thoughts on Motion 21. Certainly, this motion is designed in a way for the opposition side to oppose it because it does allow the province a free pass to continue to do nothing about climate change.

There are indeed some things in this motion that we don't have a quarrel with, particularly the last phrase, where we "recognize that Alberta's oil and gas industries continue to be global leaders in emissions reduction." That is, in fact, a true fact. I think we ought

to recognize when the government engages in facts. I do support that part of it. In fact, you know, our climate leadership plan was strategically designed to keep the federal government from colouring too far into the lines of a shared jurisdiction. It is a fact that the environment is not unlike some other areas of the Constitution that are, in fact, a shared jurisdiction.

It is difficult for me to support this motion. Here's why. First, the Premier has indicated that he believes that climate change is real though he says that there is a diversity of opinion tolerated within Conservative ranks. Certainly, so that Conservatives no longer embarrass themselves as philistines, they now just pretend that they think that climate change is real. All right. We'll allow that, but if one doesn't want to do anything about it, then those statements ring fairly hollow.

Second, we have heard it asserted from the government benches and the Premier himself that a price on carbon does not reduce emissions. Mr. Speaker, I think that in a small way I will allow a sliver of sunshine to shine upon this argument. A poorly designed or outdated price on carbon such as we had prior to 2015 will not reduce emissions. That's why industry asked us to update those policies to the specified gas emitters regulation and to ensure that those same companies would be able to raise capital with something approaching a substantive answer on climate policy in the markets with which they do business. They also wanted climate policy predictability. That's why they asked for it, and that's why we delivered it.

I think that overall the statement that the Premier and others are making around this issue of price on carbon not reducing emissions is, in fact, false. The way we know this is that the Premier should have instructed his lawyers to argue the position he takes that carbon prices don't reduce emissions. If he actually believes that position, then the high-priced lawyers the party hired – they didn't use Albertans' money for this; they used UCP donor money for those lawyers that lost the Saskatchewan case – would have contested the evidence before the court, that carbon pricing reduces emissions. But both the majority and the minority wrote that no party before the court contested the evidence that pricing carbon reduces emissions. No one contested that evidence, nor did the minority opinion, that I have heard the Premier now hang his hat on.

Now, I know that the Premier and others on the government benches have been told by lawyers seeking more billable hours that the Saskatchewan decision was actually quite narrow and that if we just put more money into the slot machine, maybe we'll win next time in Ontario or the next time in Manitoba or the next time in Alberta. Well, this is as ill advised as going back to the cashier to get more toonies for the VLTs, Mr. Speaker. Except it's not the Premier's money; it's our money. It's not rolls of toonies; it's wads of hundreds of dollars per hour for expensive lawyers.

Here is why that is ill advised, Mr. Speaker. Both the majority and the minority in the Saskatchewan reference found that carbon pricing reduces emissions. Both the majority and the minority found that the federal government has the constitutional authority to price carbon. Where they disagreed was around the head of federal power, where that authority comes from. The minority found that it didn't meet the national concern test as the majority did find. They did find that if it was designed as a tax rather than a levy to address an issue of national concern, it would be constitutional. Both the majority and the minority wrote that addressing climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. They simply disagreed as to where the federal authority arises from. So when we have statements in this House that people are going to fight the federal government in their efforts to impose a

price on carbon, what the Saskatchewan court actually found is that the federal government has the power to set minimum national standards.

The provinces have latitude in tailoring these policies. That's what the court actually wrote. I still believe in facts, Mr. Speaker. I know that's naive on my part, but when it's written down right in front of my face, I tend to agree. For example, provinces do have latitude. One might develop a methane-offset protocol as a carrot to voluntary compliance, with a regulatory backstop taking effect some years later, incenting early action on one of the most potent greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, some seven times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>. In exchange, there might be an upstream processing exemption for that period of time. There might be investments in technology around methane abatement. One might do that as a provincial policy, for example.

Now, next, certainly the Premier likes to lean on a selective reading of the Leach report. At least, he isn't picking fights with a private citizen on Twitter anymore although that is not a hard-and-fast rule. But every other economic analysis of carbon pricing does take into account this question of competitiveness, and so, too, did the majority and minority positions in recognizing part 2 of the federal act.

It's easy. I have heard the government side many, many times, both when they were in opposition and now, bring a number of unrelated anecdotes into that conversation around international pressures and international competitiveness, but let's absolutely talk about international efforts to price carbon as part of meeting Canada's Paris agreement targets. The Premier, for example, in his remarks indicated that oil and gas investment is going to places like Kazakhstan. Well, they have had a carbon pricing system since 2013, and other jurisdictions have, too. Forty-six national jurisdictions have brought in carbon pricing and 28 subnational jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

Around jobs claims, the fact of the matter is that Alberta led the country in economic growth in 2017 and 2018. We're among the leaders in job growth as well. Again, Mr. Speaker, I know that facts don't matter, but I still do care about them. I still think reason is real.

10:50

Let's talk a little bit about what the future looks like, Mr. Speaker, without climate policy. I think it looks like ecological scarcity. It looks like dividing us from one another. It looks like a world that is more chaotic, where our ambient sense of uncertainty rises, reactionary ideas gain more appeal, our ability to solve problems in a collective way, to get together and solve something so important, is then torn apart. That's why conservatives oppose climate action. We have an opportunity, a very unique one now, to address climate change through very peaceful, co-operative, efficient means. We can only do that if we actually care about this issue.

I was unable during Bill 1 to read into the record what I said on election night directed to my children, so I'm going to read it now, Mr. Speaker.

To my kids, Finn and Hudson: you were four and six when I was elected. You don't remember the first two campaigns, but I know you understand this one. I know you have made sacrifices of your time and some of your childhood to mom's job. I want you to know that your mom knows that, and I want you to have learned at least this: hard things are hard, but the harder it is, the more it is worth doing, like taking action on climate change. I want you to learn this as a lesson. Making the world a better place is always worth it. You will have to live with the consequences of climate change, so I want you to know one more thing: mom did her best.

I won't be supporting this motion because it is a way for this government to direct resources into interfering in an election outside our borders. It is a way to direct Albertans' money into a federal election campaign. It is a way to make excuses for inaction.

It is a way to continue to say things that aren't true on the grounds that they win elections and just continue to build a conservative movement on this tissue of mistruths. It is a way to revisit spurious arguments in front of a court that is likely, on a balance of probabilities, to strike them down.

For those reasons, I will not be supporting this motion, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available.

Is there anyone else wishing to speak to Government Motion 21?

Seeing none, Hon. Government House Leader, would you like to close debate?

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Waive.

[The voice vote indicated that Government Motion 21 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 10:53 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Long	Sawhney
Allard	Lovely	Schow
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Luan	Schweitzer
Barnes	Madu	Sigurdson, R.J.
Copping	McIver	Singh
Ellis	Milliken	Smith
Getson	Neudorf	Stephan
Glasgo	Nicolaides	Toews
Glubish	Nixon, Jason	Toor
Guthrie	Nixon, Jeremy	Turton
Hanson	Orr	van Dijken
Horner	Pon	Walker
Hunter	Rehn	Williams
Issik	Rosin	Wilson
Jones	Rowswell	Yao
Kenney	Rutherford	Yaseen
LaGrange	Savage	

Against the motion:

Bilous	Gray	Phillips
Carson	Hoffman	Renaud
Ceci	Irwin	Sabir
Dach	Notley	Sigurdson, L.

Totals:	For – 50	Against – 12
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[Government Motion 21 carried]

[some applause]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to move to one-minute bells also in committee for the duration of the evening.

[Unanimous consent granted]

## 11:00 Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

**The Deputy Chair:** I would like to call the committee to order.

**Bill 2**  
**An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business**

**The Deputy Chair:** We are currently on amendment A1. Are there any comments or questions?

[Motion on amendment A1 lost]

**The Deputy Chair:** Back on Bill 2, are there any hon. members wishing to speak to the bill? I see the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West standing.

**Ms Phillips:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to rise to move an amendment, if I could, that amends the title by striking out "An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business" and substitutes "Employment Standards and Labour Relations Statutes Amendment Act, 2019," and in the following provisions "An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business" is struck out wherever it occurs and "Employment Standards and Labour Relations Statutes Amendment Act, 2019," is substituted.

I will now table that amendment and just provide some brief remarks to it if I might. Essentially, Mr. Chair, this amendment is designed to help. We know that we have heard many times from the government side . . .

**The Deputy Chair:** I apologize for interrupting.

**Ms Phillips:** Am I allowed to do that?

**The Deputy Chair:** We have to just wait until we've got it at the table so that we can take a look at it, and then we may want to take a minute just to allow members to take a look at it as well. I do appreciate the fact that you did already read it in. We'll just give a minute for it to go around.

We will be referring to this amendment as amendment A2.

Seeing that it looks like we have distribution of the amendment, please continue.

**Ms Phillips:** Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for indulging my relative rookie status on moving amendments.

This amendment is designed to help, as indicated. We have heard from the government side that they prefer that bill titles not be used for communications or other public relations purposes, so we have helpfully provided our input on that in order to simply have the bill do what it says that it's going to do as part of existing statutes, Mr. Chair. Certainly, it is not a universally held sentiment that chasing teenagers around to take toonies out of their pockets or taking people's overtime is in fact a recipe for making anyone really open for business. These are employment standards amendments and ought to be treated as such.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

Any other hon. members looking to speak to A2? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung standing.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise to speak to the amendment, which I think is a reasonable proposal and indeed really reflects more accurately what this Bill 2 is actually proposing to do. I would tell you that taking \$2 an hour out of a young person's pocket isn't a way to encourage further activity in our economy because what it does is takes money out of the pockets of people who actually spend it in the local economy. Indeed, I think it's counterproductive to do that if you're hoping to create economic activity. Just on that element alone it's certainly counterintuitive to the initial title of the bill that the government gave this Bill 2. I think the amendment more accurately reflects the matter at hand.

I know that this legislation is something that the government is proud of. I'd be, let's say, less proud to be standing on the other side trying to argue and defend this piece of legislation, which goes ahead and takes money out of the pockets of, in particular, young, hard-working people who are either looking to pay for their education or perhaps even to help their families out. For those individuals who are in the workforce who are under 18 years of age and are standing beside somebody who is a couple of years older than them and they're earning \$2 less an hour, it must be something pretty hard to take. When the minister of labour stands up and argues, as other members of the government will do and as the Premier, in fact, himself argues, that this wage reduction is better than no wage at all, it is an empty argument. It disregards the fact that a person in this society deserves to earn the same money for the same work regardless of one's age.

I can only wonder what individuals who are in the position of taking a \$2 cut if this bill passes tomorrow, a \$2 cut to their wages – I know that I've suffered a similar fate, as I've mentioned in this House before, where my wages were cut by about \$4 an hour because of a contract that changed from one contractor to another. The workers who drove DATS buses at the time, of which I was one, suffered an overnight reduction of \$4 an hour, and it was a tremendous slap in the face. It was pretty degrading.

The best that the government can offer is a sorry explanation that indeed they think this is going to be allowing businesses and tempting businesses to reinvest and create more jobs, more low-paying jobs, for young people. In fact, that's not going to happen. They know full well that's not going to happen. All this is is a sop to those businesses that believe that paying a wage differential, a lower wage to young people, is an appropriate thing to do. But as far as them turning around and reinvesting that two bucks an hour that they're saving back into creating more positions for young workers, that's not something that's going to come to fruition, and that will be seen and be very evident over the course of the next few weeks if indeed this bill does pass and see the light of day.

There will be an incentive, all right. There will be an incentive for people who are affected by this \$2 drop in wages to become politically motivated and three years from now let the government know in fact just how strongly they feel about the measures that the government is taking against them. I mean, to turn your back on young people and to cynically suggest that this \$2 reduction in your wages is good for you, just to pat them on the back and paternalistically say, "Don't worry; it's good for you; take this medicine; it may taste like cod-liver oil, but it will make you feel better." I don't get that. I don't think anybody who is subjected to this wage cut is going to feel better.

**11:10**

You know what? There are a lot of businesses in this province who don't feel good about it either. There's a website out there right now that is being joined by an increasing number of businesses who publicly are demonstrating their disdain and their lack of taste to participate in this government's decision to roll back wages on young people by saying: "Look, we're going to maintain the \$15 an hour minimum wage. We're not going to cut the wages as the government has proposed we do because we don't think it's the right thing to do. We're embarrassed to know that other businesses are doing it. In fact, we're not playing that game. We're going to publicly demonstrate our disdain for this action of the government by saying that we're a business that will not go forward and put in place a reduction of the minimum wage that we're paying. We're going to maintain the \$15 an hour because we respect our employees. We want to maintain our employees. We think it's a shameful thing for the government to go ahead and try to claim that

businesses are going to create more jobs by taking the money, \$2 an hour, out of the pockets of young people.”

As I indicated before, if you do the calculation, it's approaching \$4,000 a year that this government is taking out of the pockets of young people who are saving to go to university, to help their families out, for whatever purpose they're using it for. It's money that's going to be going into the economy right away again, to circulate again.

It's money that the government, who are supposedly the champions of small businesses and who are the economic gurus of free enterprise, who claim that we across the aisle in the opposition are the ones who have a lesson to learn – those are the individuals who are unwilling to acknowledge that they're countering their own business philosophy when they think that this \$2 an hour savings is going to be reinvested by businesses in creating more jobs. By keeping that money in the economy, by making sure that the \$15 an hour wage is at least approaching a living wage – it's not there. It would be closer to \$17 or \$18 an hour to actually pay these people a living wage as a minimum wage. But to keep that wage at \$15 an hour means that that money, that \$4,000 per worker, approximately, is actually being spent and reinvested in the economy.

The members across the way know full well that the largest percentage of our economy is the consumer economy, that 70 to 75 per cent of your economic activity is consumer spending. This government is trying to convince us that taking that money out of the economy is a good thing and that businesses are going to thrive as a result. It is a confounding argument for members of a government, who purport to understand business, to make.

I've been a small-business man for all of my business career, since I was in my mid-20s, in the real estate industry. I never ever paid anybody minimum wage or, really, close to it. It was a significant amount over because I fully intended to have those people continue working for me for a long while, not just to have them see it as a stepping stone to something better. I wanted them to stay with me and to retain them as workers. So the wages that I paid to the people who worked for me were at a level that I hoped would attract them to stay.

The people that did work for me did stay for extended periods of time. I was proud to know that they were able to go to university in the fall, after the summer employment season was over, if they were working for me on a seasonal basis. I went around my office with my head held high knowing that anybody who worked for me made a wage that they could live on, that they could save for university on. I knew that they would probably tell a friend that, yeah, working for Dach was a respected thing to do and you could expect to be paid a fair wage.

I mean, another thing, too, is overtime. I remember working in the oil patch on a service rig and being paid straight time for all the hours that I worked. It was just the way of the world. There was labour legislation that allowed these employers to get away with it in the '80s. We were working 17 hours a day in some rather rigorous and unsafe conditions on service rigs, but if you didn't like it, you left it. We ended up working long hours at straight pay and basically were being robbed of thousands and thousands of dollars of overtime pay, that otherwise would have been in my pocket and then also into the economy.

Let me tell you, Mr. Chair, that the employer there, in that case, didn't hire another three or four rig hands just to have them sitting around or to get another rig working. They put the money in their pockets as profits, as corporate profits. I can tell you for a fact that they weren't investing in extra safety for their workers either. We were an input cost at best, as a consideration, to those companies that were doing the well servicing in the '80s. It's a wonder that many of us actually lived through the experience. There were lots of people

that I saw in that industry who had injuries that were disfiguring: missing fingers, broken bones. I nearly lost my life more than once in the summer that I worked in that industry. It wasn't a situation where the company was looking to invest in their workers.

Now, there are many, many companies in the province, of course, who obviously do care for their workers. That was a situation where I didn't feel valued in any way, shape, or form. I don't accept the argument the government is making that companies will automatically invest their savings into hiring new employees.

We know that the pick-your-pockets bill, the overtime element of it, will impact roughly 400,000 Albertans working overtime to care for themselves and their families. If you're working overtime, you're getting paid time and a half. If you go ahead and you decide to work that overtime and you wish to take time off in lieu, you should be getting the same rate. The same ratio of time and a half should apply. You shouldn't give that up even though your employer is giving you the quote, unquote, choice to do so. There's no real choice involved, Mr. Chair. The difference between banking that pay at time and a half pay versus straight time is a lot.

Now, if you're an oil and gas worker making average pay, putting in 10 overtime hours every week on a 12-week project, that's 120 hours in paid time off. The difference between banking that pay at time and a half versus straight time is 2,500 bucks. That's a whole lot of cash, and it's being taken right out of the pockets of working people, who don't have the empowerment to oppose this so-called negotiated agreement with their employer. It's a huge difference for working people. We're talking about hundreds to thousands of dollars for people going above and beyond in the workplace day in and day out.

I'm frankly ashamed to know that in this day and age, in 2019, the government in the province of Alberta would see their way clear to going backwards in time, but that's precisely the modus operandi of this government. They think that they have a winning formula in turning back the clock no matter whether it's labour legislation, whether it's gay-straight alliances, whether it's any ministry that you care to think of. Turning back the clock is what they prefer to do.

Liquor server wage differentials: I mean, you're going to end up with a similar situation here. We believe the minimum wage needs to be guaranteed for anyone, for hard-working Albertans regardless of what place of business they work in. We should not be creating different tiers of workers. As I mentioned in the House earlier today, that's exactly what the government is hoping to do, to create divisions amongst Albertans and exploit those divisions for their own political benefit. They don't really care about that. The Premier is certainly using this as a tactic or a strategy regularly. It doesn't really matter what legislation you're talking about; you're certainly looking to exploit divisions, whether it be social policy or economic policy. If there's a political benefit for the government, they think that the damage they do in passing this type of legislation is worth the price because, in fact, the only thing that counts with this government is a political win.

**11:20**

But, in my humble opinion, Mr. Chair, the Premier doesn't care. He doesn't care two hoots about the collateral damage that he leaves behind because, in fact, in my view, I don't think the Premier plans to be here much beyond the next federal election. I think that he's got his eyes on a prize that's further east of this province, and I think that as soon as the federal election is over, should the Trudeau Liberals win, which I think the Premier is counting on, the siren call will be out for our current Premier to go lead the federal Conservatives. I think that's what he's really up to. So we'll see the collateral damage pile up.

Thank you.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Chair:** A point of order has been called.

**Point of Order  
Imputing Motives**

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Mr. Chair, I rise under 23(h), (i), and (j). I know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition continues to do an incredible discredit to the role of the Leader of the Opposition in this place . . . [interjection] She continues to heckle during a point of order, but what else can you expect?

The hon. member just said that the Premier does not care.

**Mr. Bilous:** Point of order.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** You can't have a point of order during a point of order, Mr. Opposition House Leader.

**The Deputy Chair:** I hesitate to interrupt the hon. members, but it is my understanding that you can't call a point of order in the middle of a point of order, so we will continue with this point of order, and should it be completed today or once we have decided upon it, then there will be an opportunity to continue with another point of order should that be the choice.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** That certainly is correct, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much.

The hon. member in his comments just said that the Premier does not care. That imputes false and unavowed motives against him.

In addition to that, though, Mr. Chair, the hon. member then indicated that the Premier is intending to run for Prime Minister and somehow did this bizarre conspiracy process to work his way to become the Prime Minister by going through – let's be clear what that would have taken. That would have taken leaving Ottawa and what was guaranteed, if the Premier so chose, to become the leader of the CPC party and therefore the Leader of the Opposition.

**An Hon. Member:** Guaranteed?

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Absolutely, Mr. Chair, almost certainly.

And he then came all the way back – let's just think about this, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Bilous:** How is this a point of order?

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** This is a point of order because this is what we're talking about, Mr. Chair.

He came all the way back to Alberta . . .

**Ms Notley:** Just because you're talking, doesn't make it right.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, I get that the Leader of the Opposition struggles with her role in this place, which is why she continues to be so rude to the office.

Anyways, Mr. Chair, I'll just stick with this. "The Premier doesn't care": it imputes false or unavowed motives. It doesn't even begin to talk about the ridiculous arguments that are being brought forward by the opposition.

Again, Mr. Chair, I would ask of you to instruct the opposition to actually try to do their job. It's absolutely embarrassing how the Leader of the Opposition continues to allow her members to behave in this place. It's shameful.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you very much, hon. member.  
I will hear now from the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Bilous:** Mr. Chair, I think that the Government House Leader is making a joke out of usage of points of order. He must be very sensitive at this hour of the day.

Mr. Chair, this is not a point of order. This is a difference of opinion. It's the opinion of the hon. member that the Premier feels a certain way. I appreciate the Government House Leader saying: no; the Premier doesn't feel that way; he feels a different way. Well, that's great. That's a difference of opinion and debate. It is not a point of order. For all we know, the Premier could be in Alberta as a stomping ground on his way back to Ottawa. We don't know.

The point is that this is not a point of order, but in the midst of arguing a point of order, what I think is disrespectful is trying to drag the Leader of the Official Opposition through the mud in an argument that this is a point of order, which has nothing to do with the point of order.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you, hon. member. I am prepared to rule.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair:** In committee we often allow a wide berth with regard to the debate that is brought up in committee. As such, I think I also allowed a wide berth with regard to the debate on the point of order.

In this case, I do not find that there is a point of order. I think that the circumstances of the comments would not rise to the level of a point of order, so at this point I will consider that matter closed.

I will also take an opportunity to remind hon. members that when we are discussing an amendment, we should probably stick to the amendment. As we move back to the actual bill, then the breadth of debate will continue.

Please, hon. member, with four minutes on this.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for your considered ruling on my discourse earlier on the amendment. I certainly am of the opinion that the theory that I am speaking about is plausible, and we'll see how it pans out. But we'll leave that for another day.

### Debate Continued

**Mr. Dach:** When I speak to Bill 2 and the proposals in the member's amendment, I am brought to the conclusion that the government was hoping to create an impression that this bill, Bill 2, was actually going to create employment and help the business environment. The title of that is indicative of that intent, but the amendment that we speak to, that was brought forward by the Member for Lethbridge-West, more accurately portrays the true intent of the legislation. It's a bill that changes a number of things in the work environment, particularly for low-wage workers, and is really an attack on young people and people in the entry-level workforce. Whether you're a person under the age of 18 or whether you're working in the liquor service industry, it's a direct attack on you.

Yet the argument the government is trying to make is saying: "Well, yes, we know we're taking money right out of your pocket, but it's good for you. Take it with a grain of salt. It'll get better over time. At some point you will know that that \$4,000 or so that you don't have in your pocket was an investment in the betterment of Alberta, that Alberta is going to be better off, and thank you very much for that contribution to the province of Alberta and our well-being as a society."

That \$4,000 that you would have had: "Well, you didn't really need it anyway because you were simply just going to spend it on frivolous things if you're a person under 18." Maybe you're

working in the liquor service industry: “Well, heck, the children you’re trying to support as a single mom working as a liquor server really didn’t need that extra couple of bucks an hour. You can have a different wage than a person working beside you who’s not actually serving liquor because you’re getting tips. You rely on the charity of others. If you really work your tail off or if you somehow impress your customer, well, then, you deserve to get a little bit more money. Tell you what: we’re not going to insist that employers actually pay you the same as other workers working in the same establishment. You can rely on tips, and you can just go after those tips by hustling your butt and seeing if you can earn something a bit more than your neighbour next door, who’s competing for the same dollar from customers that might come back time after time.”

Once again, pitting people against each other is exactly what this government is becoming famous for, dividing individuals and exploiting those who are least able to stand up to the measures that the government wishes to impose upon them, particularly in the workforce and upon wage labourers in the province.

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. members, we are on A2. I see the hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I’m excited to rise, particularly given the leeway that we have during Committee of the Whole. I’m excited that you were able to bring that up, and I’m looking forward to having a little bit of a conversation about what the hon. member presented today.

It’s quite shocking, again, to continue to watch the bizarre behaviour of the Official Opposition inside the Legislature as they continue to take the level of ridiculousness down to a different level at every moment. I find it humorous to watch the Leader of the Opposition and her caucus continue to heckle during the process there and to say things to people, and then they look. They look over – people at home probably can’t see this – to see if everybody looked at it, just like my kids do when they’re playing ridiculous games and trying to get attention. It’s so disappointing. [interjections] Again, you see the former Health minister – I can’t remember her constituency – going on and on, heckling away, taking the decorum to the lowest level.

11:30

Mr. Chair, what I found most interesting about the hon. member’s comments is comparing records of leaders. I’d be happy to talk about the record of our leader at any time and specifically how it relates to this legislation and his intentions compared to the Leader of the Official Opposition, who, by the way, oversaw a government that saw the largest job losses in the history of this province, who sat here in Edmonton and ignored the people of this province over and over despite the fact that they were having trouble, who called them Chicken Little because they brought up concerns, who told them to take the bus because they brought up concerns about the carbon tax, who sat there without saying anything as their Deputy Premier at the time called them sewer rats. I’m happy to talk about the record of the Leader of the Official Opposition if that’s what the hon. member wants.

I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Chair, was just recently in Ottawa. Is she planning to run for the NDP leadership? Was this her great plan, to get elected as Premier, then become the only one-term Premier in the history of the province, or oversee the only one-term government in the history of the province, lose that after absolutely decimating the province that she lives in and hurting the citizens that she was supposed to govern with her policies, and then go some secret way all the way up to the

federal leadership? That seems bizarre. But if you take what the Official Opposition is saying at face value in regard to the now Premier of Alberta, that would quite frankly make more sense than what they’re presenting.

They’re trying to indicate that the now Premier of Alberta, the hon. the Premier of Alberta, left a high-ranking position within the opposition caucus federally and then came all the way to Alberta and, under tremendous risk, travelled across the province in a blue truck to help unite both the Progressive Conservative Party and the Wildrose Party – I can tell you, Mr. Chair, that all of us that are here in the room that know the process that took place: everybody said that he couldn’t do it. In fact, I can tell you that at the beginning of that he probably wondered if he could. But then he brought those parties together, which ultimately became the demise of the NDP inside the province of Alberta, the end of the Leader of the Official Opposition’s reign of tax increases and decimation of jobs and the way of life in this province.

He then had a leadership race, was able to successfully win that leadership race, and then ran in a provincial campaign and went on to win the second-highest vote percentage in the history of the province and the highest vote total in the history of the province, defeating the now Leader of the Official Opposition, absolutely decimating her and her party in the election, and then made it to here, where he could become the hon. Premier. Now, magically, he’s going to head back to Ottawa. That’s such a ridiculous argument, Mr. Chair. I don’t believe that probably about the Leader of the Opposition Leader either. I certainly know that it’s not true about the Premier. But that’s all the NDP have.

Now, why this is important, Mr. Chair, is because as they rise to talk about Bill 2 and the legislation inside this House – and they continue to do it with Bill 8 as well – they continue to misrepresent the facts, something the Leader of the Opposition and her party are well known for: misrepresent the facts inside this Legislature and then act like they have some sort of credibility. But then when you see the arguments that they’re making, for example, with the Premier, you know, about him taking this bizarre side trip all the way through Alberta, through multiple elections just to make his way back to the election that he should have ran in the first place if that’s what he wanted – it wasn’t what he wanted. He came back to help save Alberta from the Leader of the Opposition and her party, who were destroying this province when she was then the Premier.

Albertans have to look at that and look at the facts that are presented in this House. No wonder the majority of Albertans have rejected the NDP Party. They don’t trust the NDP Party. They, frankly, don’t believe the NDP Party, Mr. Chair. They don’t believe them because they prove it time and time again that they cannot be trusted. They cannot be trusted. The Leader of the Official Opposition and her party cannot be trusted. They misrepresent facts, and they cannot be trusted to be able to do things for Albertans. Again, the Leader of the Opposition, who still continues to smile and laugh about the fact that she told my constituents to fund raise to pay for her carbon tax; smiles and laughs at communities like Drayton Valley that were decimated because of her decisions when she was the Premier of Alberta; probably smiles and laughs, for all I know, Mr. Chair, when she looks at the electoral map and watched how her party was completely wiped out, solid blue across every corner of the province, most of our constituencies rejecting, my constituency rejecting the NDP by something like 86 per cent – rejected the NDP and said: we won’t put up with that anymore because of the ridiculous behaviour of the then Premier and her party. Those are the facts.

Then they find themselves in opposition, and rather than showing some humility on how they ended up in that spot, they continue to stand up here day in, night out and say ridiculous things to the

Chamber. That's all they say, Mr. Chair, ridiculous things to the Chamber. Over and over, one ridiculous argument after another because they can't put together any argument. They can't. They're completely stuck on the fact that they're mad at Albertans. They're mad at us for winning the election. They're mad at Albertans for making a decision to fire them and to make them the only one-term government in the history of this province. They're just mad, maybe mad at themselves, for all I know. So they should go and deal with that, take some time to examine how they ended up in this situation, maybe learn from their situation instead of coming here and continuing to laugh and smirk at the people of Alberta.

But what else would you expect, again, from the party that called them sewer rats, that told them they were Chicken Little for raising concerns, that told them to take the bus, that told fixed-income seniors to fund raise to pay for their carbon tax, that brought in the largest tax increase in the history of the province that increased the prices of everything, that ignored all of Alberta, that went out of their way to start a fight with farmers and ranchers across this province as one of their first bills inside this Chamber by refusing to consult with them at all, jamming through legislation and ultimately causing the NDP – who, by the way, was born in rural Alberta, or in this province anyway, who has now been for many generations wiped out in rural Alberta. All of us from rural Alberta know there's no coming back for the NDP because of what the former Premier, now Leader of the Opposition did with her time in leadership of the NDP when she was in government. That's what the real situation is here, Mr. Chair.

So to stand up each and every day and say such bizarre things about other people – you saw it today in question period, the bizarre attack on the hon. Finance minister, going back to the politics of fear and smear. That's all they could do during the election, that's all they could do before the election, and that's all they can do now. That's why they're on their way from being government to a 27-some seat opposition and ultimately back down to probably a three- or four-seat third or fourth party inside the Legislature, because Albertans are not going to put up with this behaviour. Use your time in opposition to actually do something constructive and help the people of Alberta. If not, shame on them. Shame on them for using their time in this way inside this Chamber.

Oh, I understand that the Leader of the Opposition is angry. I understand that she is frustrated that Albertans fired her and rejected her behaviour and her policies, but that is what happened. If she truly cares about her party or her role inside this Chamber, she will instruct her caucus to actually take it seriously, to stop playing the politics of fear and smear and personal attacks on people and spend time actually doing something constructive. But you know what? I

doubt they will, because you know what? For the entire time that I've seen the NDP in public life, they can't do it. They're not capable of doing it. They're only capable of insulting people, making up ridiculous arguments, and acting the way that they have.

With that said, Mr. Chair, I think we've all had enough of listening to it for tonight, so I will move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Chair:** Hon. Government House Leader, just to confirm, as there's no other bill to debate as far as I understand, then, are you looking to rise and report progress?

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** That would be a fair point, Mr. Chair. Yes. I move that we rise and report progress.

**The Deputy Chair:** Yup. Just to confirm, rise and report progress on Bill 2, An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business?

11:40

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** That's correct.

**The Deputy Chair:** Thank you.

[Motion carried]

**The Deputy Chair:** The committee shall now rise and report progress.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

**The Acting Speaker:** The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 2. 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 Acting Speaker:** Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, say aye.

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed, say no. Carried.  
The hon. Government House Leader.

**Mr. Jason Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn the Assembly till tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 11:42 p.m.]







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