Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday morning, October 17, 2019

Day 29

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature
First Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m. Thursday, October 17, 2019

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Deputy Speaker: Good morning, everyone.

Let us pray. Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. May Your kingdom come and Your name be hallowed. Amen.

Please be seated.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading

Bill 17
Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act

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

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill 17, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act.

Madam Speaker, Bill 17 supports our government's core belief that we need to prevent domestic violence from happening in our province. If passed, Alberta's version of Clare's law would give people at risk of domestic violence the information they need to make informed decisions about potentially harmful relationships.

Today I would also like to share a quote I received from my dear friend Tamara Monilaws last night as she poignantly expressed her support for this bill. She wrote: if this law was implemented 21 years ago, it would have saved my son and I from many counts of violence, sexual assault, criminal harassment, unlawful confinement, broken bones, almost losing our lives; this is simply huge; what a positive day for so many. Madam Speaker, Tamara's terrible ordeal made national headlines, and she readily shares her experience to spread awareness. The reality, however, is that in so many cases these stories remain untold. We believe people at risk have a right to know if their partners have a history of violence and abuse, and we believe this preventative measure could help save lives.

Madam Speaker, last week we celebrated the international day of the girl. We celebrated a day that recognizes that girls have vast potential, promise, and every right to be heard, to be free, and to be empowered to reach the pinnacles of that potential. Next month we will acknowledge Family Violence Prevention Month. In the same breath, mere weeks apart, as we celebrate girls, we also spread awareness about family violence, knowing that these same girls and women continue to be victims of domestic violence and victims of physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse.

As a society we have fallen far short of the mark in protecting our own. Domestic violence doesn't discriminate. It affects people of every age, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, and it endangers the survival, security, and well-being of its victims. We know that women and girls are the main victims of intimate partner and spousal violence, and this act is focused on preventing domestic violence between romantic or dating partners. Let me share with you just a few disturbing facts. Females are victimized in 82 per cent of police-reported cases involving opposite-sex partners. In fact, more than half of women who are murdered across Canada lose their lives at the hands of an intimate partner. Indigenous women are disproportionately represented in these numbers. Alberta's domestic violence rates are third-highest amongst the Canadian provinces, and in 2017 alone police in Alberta reported more than 10,000 victims of intimate partner violence.

Madam Speaker, we believe these statistics are unacceptable and are a sad reflection of how far we still need to go. We need to address the prevalence of domestic violence here in our province. The value of prevention is undeniable, but there are no definitive ways to quantify what prevention looks like with any precision. That's a statistic that is difficult to track, but nonetheless it's an outcome we must pursue. We know that if people have information to make an informed decision, particularly as it relates to a potentially harmful situation, they might choose a different path, and we need to give them that opportunity.

Our government made several important promises to Albertans to combat domestic and family violence, including legislation and increasing support to specialized agencies. These promises include committing $2 million to expand the use of specialized electronic monitoring technology to prevent individuals serving sentences from having contact with those they were convicted of victimizing. It includes committing $5 million in new funding directed to sexual assault service centres that provide counselling, support, and advocacy. It includes maintaining the 24-hour crisis line that monitors a sexual assault nurse examiner. It includes immediately reviewing what improvements to medical and forensic evidence gathering is needed in rural communities. It includes developing and implementing a specific repeat-offender policy with both provincial and federal components.

Madam Speaker, our government is taking action on domestic violence in several ways, but this legislation is a milestone step in helping the women and girls in this province. We offer supports and services for victims of domestic violence, but tools like this piece of legislation will help us deal with the issue before it begins. We committed to the prevention of domestic violence not only through services and supports but through legislation. By putting forward this crucial piece of legislation, we are keeping our promise.

The story of Dianne Denovan's experience was brought to our attention in recent weeks through the media. Our office has had the pleasure of speaking with her, and we look forward to including her in the consultations for this legislation. Her friend Krista put forward a petition to bring Clare's law to Alberta based on Dianne's experience. Dianne was in a relationship with a man she met online for seven months before he attacked her after a concert they had attended together. The man assaulted her for nearly four hours, leaving her hospitalized for three weeks and finding refuge in a shelter until the man was arrested nearly five weeks later. Dianne had no idea that this man had a criminal history dating back to 1987 with several convictions for assault, uttering threats, assault causing bodily harm, and other domestic incidents. Had she been able to request information, this experience in her life could have been prevented. We're very grateful to Ms Denovan for having the courage to share her story in the media and for being such a strong advocate for domestic violence and supports in this province.

She is not the only real-life story we've heard of. Jasmine Lovett and her daughter Aliyah Sanderson were killed in a domestic homicide by Ms Lovett's romantic partner, and it was later released that her partner had previously been married, with a restraining

order against him granted to his ex-wife, who feared for her and her child's safety.

Madam Speaker, these are tragic cases, and we must learn from these to ensure that we do whatever we can within our power to ensure that we protect others from a similar fate. I've personally spoken to many women over the years in my volunteer capacity that have suffered from domestic violence. Like these women mentioned today, some didn't even realize that they were in an abusive relationship until the abuse had already occurred. There are the very real cases of newcomers who have arrived in our province who often don't know where to turn when they experience domestic violence because of cultural barriers, language barriers, and customs and traditions that make it taboo to ask for help. I would venture to say that my experience is not unique, that we all know somebody who has experienced domestic violence, and this an untenable reality. It's a reflection of how prevalent domestic violence is in our society.

The women I've mentioned today have experienced the tragedies that we are working to prevent. I am certain that their families wonder every day if the abuse or, in some cases, their deaths could have been prevented if they had access to more information. We are proposing a way to help prevent domestic violence from happening. Alberta's version of Clare's law is about making sure that people are informed. It's about enabling the right to ask and the right to know for people at risk, making sure that those at risk have the information they need to make a decision that is right for them. Our version of domestic violence disclosure legislation was modelled after Clare's law in the U.K., also known as a domestic violence disclosure scheme. It was named after Clare Wood, a young woman who was killed by her intimate partner, who had a history of violence towards women. Had Clare had the opportunity to find out about her partner's past, she might be alive today.

9:10

Clare's law was first introduced in England and Wales in 2014, and it allows people to check if partners pose a risk or have a history of domestic violence. The first year Clare's law came into force in the U.K., police received over 4,700 applications, which led to almost 2,000 disclosures. That's 2,000 instances where people at risk of domestic violence had information that they could have used to protect themselves. The government of Saskatchewan passed similar enabling legislation in May 2019, and while it hasn't yet been proclaimed, they're working hard to define the regulations. Newfoundland and Labrador are also working on a version of Clare's law.

Madam Speaker, we have the opportunity to join these few jurisdictions and make Alberta a leader in the prevention of domestic violence rather than a leader in the number of cases. We have been assessing each of these approaches to domestic violence disclosure and have been using them to inform our own approach to the law. We want to make sure this law can be as effective as possible. We're committed to making sure it works for Alberta. Looking at its application world-wide has helped us to define our current proposed legislation, and it'll continue to help us as we define the regulations.

Once Bill 17 passes, we'll have the opportunity to begin our second phase of stakeholder consultations. It's critical to get this legislation right, and we have an incredible lineup of expert partners and stakeholders who will provide input every step of the way. That's why in July we hosted two significant stakeholder consultations, one in Calgary and one in Edmonton. Together with the ministers of Justice and Solicitor General and Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women we met with key stakeholders in domestic violence prevention, and we asked them to share their views and perspectives. The stakeholder participants included those with experience delivering services to victims and offenders of domestic violence, Alberta police agencies, and the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We also included LGBTQ and multicultural organizations, indigenous communities, and academics. We've included the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner during stakeholder engagement to make sure we understand the privacy implications of the proposed legislation. Likewise, all Alberta police agencies provided written feedback to the questions posed in the consultations.

Specific consideration was also given to concerns about potential liability and resourcing issues. These consultations allowed us to gather a variety of diverse perspectives on things like who can request information, how much information should be shared, and how to protect privacy. The feedback we gathered was helpful to our understanding of what Albertans want to see in this legislation. All of the perspectives shared at the consultation sessions will inform our strategic and regulatory development of this legislation. It is worth mentioning that the purpose of the consultations was not to establish consensus but, rather, to gain as many perspectives as possible to gain a comprehensive view of what this law might look like as we apply it here in Alberta.

If this bill is passed, we will continue our stakeholder engagement at phase 2 early next year. The second phase of stakeholder engagement will include a broader range of participants, including people with lived experience. We want to make sure the law's development takes into consideration the perspectives of those who have experienced domestic abuse, whose lives could have been changed by a law like this. The second phase stakeholder engagement sessions will help inform the law's day-to-day application, and this will include how someone can apply, what situations are eligible for disclosure, whether someone can apply on behalf of another, and more. These kinds of specific details will be built out in the act's regulations.

For now the proposed bill in front of you today is enabling legislation. It will enable the right to ask in Alberta. This will allow people at risk of domestic violence to submit applications for information on an intimate partner's history of domestic violence or related acts, and it will also enable the right to know. This will allow police to proactively disclose relevant information to those at risk of domestic violence without an application.

The act will also prohibit the sharing of information for purposes outside of the act. We know that there will be concerns about what this act would mean for personal privacy and what implications would follow a disclosure, but we are committed to making privacy a priority as much as possible while still protecting the victims of domestic violence. We have been taking privacy matters into consideration every step of the way, and we will continue to do so as this legislation passes. The legislation will work in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which allows for disclosure if another act authorizes it, and we will continue consulting with partners like the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to make sure that our approach takes privacy concerns into account.

We also plan to co-ordinate wraparound supports to go alongside disclosure. We believe that these are necessary for those who receive a disclosure and might not know where to turn for help. These supports will be an important part of the implementation and may include supports for domestic and sexual assault, housing and homelessness, health, mental health, and justice. Further details on supports will be identified in the regulations and plans for implementation once we complete the consultation phase. There are many situations to consider, and we want to continue consulting

with experts to make sure that the regulations are as inclusive as they need to be for the purposes of this act.

I'm very thankful to have support from our ministry co-lead, Justice and Solicitor General, and the teams in Indigenous Relations as well as Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women. I would also again like to thank the stakeholders who participated in the first phase of consultations. We're all working together to make sure this legislation will be effective in preventing domestic violence. This legislation will provide us with a new tool to help in preventing domestic violence and making services available for vulnerable Albertans. It's also important that this legislation works not only for Albertans who are at risk but also for the staff who would be involved in implementing and managing the application process.

I'm very proud to support this legislation and its ability to empower Albertans at risk of domestic violence. Madam Speaker, we have the opportunity to save lives, to help make life better for some of our most vulnerable people. This is what our version of Clare's law is all about: giving people the chance, the opportunity, to stay safe; the chance to protect themselves from harm; the chance to choose a different path. We're hopeful, intentional, and determined to reduce the rates of domestic violence in our province, and that is why the support of this House is essential in moving this bill forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Minister of Community and Social Services has moved second reading of Bill 17, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act. Are there any members wishing to speak to the bill in second reading? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm rising in the House today to declare my complete and total support for the bill before us. I'm proud to stand with the Minister of Community and Social Services as she endeavours to make Alberta better and safer. Bill 17, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act, directly addresses an issue that we must bring out of the shadows and into the light. Domestic violence is an issue that is uncomfortable to discuss and difficult to legislate. It is undoubtedly hard for many to speak about and even more challenging to address to its fullest extent as legislators. The effects and impacts of domestic violence and intimate partner violence are often long lasting, intergenerational, and hidden by unjustified shame.

However, Bill 17 provides a direct pathway to addressing this heinous issue through taking common-sense steps towards creating a safer Alberta for all. Modelled after Great Britain's Clare's law, this new piece of legislation will better protect individuals from domestic violence in a way never seen before in this province.

9:20

The original Clare's law is named after Clare Wood, whose life was cut short by a disturbing act of violence inflicted by a partner who had hidden from her a six-year jail term he had served. The term he'd served was for holding a woman captive at knifepoint for 12 hours, an absolutely inexcusable and unjustifiable act. Experiences like these are difficult to recollect but are crucial to ensuring that incidents like these never happen again. This bill will reinforce this government's commitment to creating a province where domestic violence has no home or place to hide. Had Clare Wood been able to know the truth about her partner's violent past, her life could have been saved.

When it comes to domestic violence, one incident is too many. However, we also know that these incidents happen all too frequently throughout our province. We cannot ignore them or their impacts on families and our communities. As ugly as these crimes are, we must not fail the survivors and victims of these crimes by keeping their stories hidden or downplayed due to their disturbing nature. We know that, on average, a dozen Alberta women are murdered every year in domestic disputes. Each of these individuals harmed is a pillar missing from our communities. They are not just mothers, sisters, and wives; they are educators, artists, entrepreneurs, and so much more. They are their own persons with hopes and dreams and aspirations, which can go unrealized due to heartless violence. Stalking, intimidation, abuse, and other forms of violence are never acceptable and never excusable. These acts cut lives and futures short, before they can even begin.

Our government will set a clear path towards reducing these incidents through measures to increase funding for law enforcement agencies focused on stalking, child exploitation, and intimate partner violence as well as initiatives intended to deal with the unique circumstances of rural women, all introduced through this bill. Further to this, Bill 17 will provide a mechanism for a person at risk or their family members to apply for information regarding an individual's history in domestic disputes. This crucial information can and will save lives, Madam Speaker. This is not an instance of Big Brother government impeding a person's or individual's personal freedoms. This is a mechanism that will be used to prevent abusers from hiding behind smoke, mirrors, and lies. No one should be allowed to continue to hurt others without consequence due to the failings of the law to fully expose their repulsive actions. We cannot stand idly by while harm is being done to one of the most vulnerable sectors of our society.

I am proud of this government for introducing this groundbreaking piece of legislation, and I am firm in my belief of its necessity. We have an obligation as legislators to act in the best interests of all Albertans. This includes Albertans who are the most at risk for this specific kind of violence. Our province is only strong when every person that makes up its population is both free and safe. Through introducing bills such as this one, we are sending a clear message to criminals and perpetrators that their actions are not welcome here. Their behaviour and their violence are not welcome here ever, Madam Speaker. The conversation we are having today is likely difficult for some to listen to, but the weight of this discomfort is important for us all to notice and respect. To those of us who know a survivor or are one ourselves, this government will not fail you, not when bills such as this one are supported, passed, and enforced.

I invite all members of this House to send a resounding message to those who are survivors and in the name of victims such as Clare Wood through unanimously supporting this legislation. We will not allow these crimes to go on without consequence, not here, not now, not ever.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to second reading of Bill 17? The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the minister for moving such an important bill. I know that when I saw this in the platform, I was very happy to see such important and, I think, needed legislation coming forward from our government.

Today I speak to Bill 17, also known as Clare's law. Before I dive into why I support this bill and why it's a much-needed piece of legislation, I want to provide some background as to why we are speaking about it today, not just the reason why we're here, Madam Speaker, but who is the reason why we're here. That person is Clare

Wood. A little forewarning here to those who are in the Chamber and those who are listening online that we will be discussing domestic violence, which might be emotional for some, and if you need to recuse yourself, I would understand why. This story is troubling and disturbing, but it did happen. I think we have to talk about the reality of domestic violence because it is a reality for far too many people in this province.

In 2007 Clare Wood met a man on a dating site, a man whose name I won't say because, quite frankly, it does not deserve to be said. After a year of dating and discovering that her partner had been unfaithful, Clare ended this relationship in 2008. Almost immediately following the breakup, Clare's now ex-boyfriend began harassing and threatening her. Clare went to the police. They took note of her complaints and escorted her back home to make sure she got there safely. The man was twice arrested for harassing Clare and posted bail each time. After one arrest Clare thought the man had changed and that he had become less aggressive since he allegedly stopped doing drugs, and she actually spoke in favour of his release. Two months after he was released, Clare called the police claiming that her ex-boyfriend had sexually assaulted her. Following this, Clare's ex-boyfriend was repeatedly arrested for harassing Clare but was released either on bail or due to insufficient evidence. On February 2, less than a month after Clare reported having been sexually assaulted, Clare was brutally murdered by her ex-boyfriend. Her body wouldn't be found for four days.

What Clare didn't know, Madam Speaker, is that the man she had dated, the man who stalked, harassed, assaulted, and murdered her, had a history of violence, violence against women. He had previously served a six-year prison sentence for holding a woman at knifepoint for 12 hours, but Clare didn't know that. Clare's parents believe that had she known, Clare likely would not have suggested that her abuser be released on bail. Perhaps law enforcement would have done something differently or taken bolder or more decisive action to make sure that Clare's ex couldn't hurt her and ultimately take her life. We are here because of Clare and because of the way that the system failed to protect her. While this incident happened thousands of miles away, we have seen similar examples of systemic shortcomings right here in Canada.

I think of a case in Ontario in September 2015 when Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam were murdered by a man that all three had dated at different points in their lives. The man in this case had been repeatedly charged for domestic violence, but he had repeatedly managed to evade conviction. This man's history of domestic violence should have been a red flag, and I believe it would have been had these women known their abuser's history. Something should have been done before things escalated to this point, however, the point where three innocent women lost their lives at the hands of a monster.

There are stories that don't make the headlines, stories of women who this bill could also be named after. Many women do not report domestic violence or abusive relationships due to fear of not being believed, lack of enforcement, or even societal stigmatization. This is wrong. As legislators we need to right this wrong. It is incumbent upon us to act when there is an obvious problem ahead of us, Madam Speaker. With such an obvious solution, there is no reasonable decision other than to act, in my opinion, and that's what our government is doing right here with Clare's law. Our government recognizes that domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence is a persistent issue in our province and across the country. Some organizations say that there is an epidemic. When there is an epidemic due to illness or disease, governments are quick to act in order to save lives. It only makes sense that the same approach be applied when it comes to domestic violence.

As a society we don't give enough attention to signs of abuse. In fact, we usually turn a blind eye. The old saying, "What goes on behind closed doors," tragically, holds true. We don't see the same level of action from lawmakers and community organizations targeted at issues like addressing domestic violence, but we do have amazing advocates across the province who do incredible work providing supports to victims of domestic violence, organizations like WIN House here in Edmonton, which has a long history of supporting women fleeing from abuse right here. Closer to home I have the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter, which I was proud to visit just a few short weeks ago. I stand in awe of those who give their time and resources to aid these women and some men, too. The Women's Shelter is an inclusive space that welcomes all who need refuge from abuse and from those who have hurt them and their families. I'm so proud to have them in my community. But these organizations can't end domestic violence alone. More needs to be done to prevent this violence before it happens.

9:30

Another incredible story is the Sagesse Domestic Violence Prevention Society. Their mission is to empower individuals, organizations, and communities to break the cycle of domestic violence. Their director, Andrea Silverstone, has voiced support for Clare's law. Yesterday she said, quote: this law will be an important tool in breaking the cycle of domestic violence here in Alberta; it gives people a greater chance of safety from violence by providing access to resources and supports they might not know about.

Another incredible woman and a strong survivor and actually a friend of mine, Kristin Raworth, said, quote: safety is paramount; this law could save lives; it could make a difference for so many vulnerable people; these people have a right to know what the risks are.

Madam Speaker, domestic violence is cyclical, and the issue isn't new. It's been happening for years. We know that domestic violence impacts everyone. It disproportionately impacts women in heterosexual partnerships, but it also impacts men, who are often left out of the conversation about intimate partner violence. Domestic violence occurs amongst all people, races, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

You know, the start of a relationship is often referred to as a honeymoon phase – you feel like your partner can do no wrong – but as time goes on, things can change, and you might start to see a side of them that you didn't even know existed. This is exactly what happened to Clare Wood. The man she thought she loved had a whole other side to him that she didn't know about until it was far too late. That, Madam Speaker, is why we need this legislation. We need to empower people to take control over these situations by arming them with the knowledge of who their partners are so they can take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

I want to stress, Madam Speaker, that this legislation, while incredibly important, is not a magic bullet when it comes to domestic, family, or gender-based violence. Domestic violence is a deeply complex and convoluted issue, and we understand that there's more that has to be done. There are so many other factors at play that desperately need to be addressed. Our government made addressing sexual, domestic, and gender-based violence a priority during the election and in this House today. It's time for action, and quite frankly the time for action was long ago. We know, now that we're in government, that we are not going to waste the opportunity to implement reasonable, effective policies that will have a real, positive impact.

This bill is a step in the right direction. We know this legislation would have helped Clare. It would have helped thousands of other people, and we know that it'll be instrumental in helping those in

the future to protect themselves. If Clare's law can help one person get out of an abusive situation, if it saves even one life in this province, then that is the reason why I need to support it.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Are there any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to second reading of Bill 17? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 17, disclosure to protect against domestic violence act, also known as Clare's law. I want to begin by thanking the government, the Minister of Community and Social Services for bringing forward this piece of legislation. Certainly, we support this legislation and this bill and its intentions in principle.

We do know that gender-based violence, domestic violence is an issue in our province, in our country, and, quite frankly, everywhere. If we talk specifically about our province, I think that in Canada Alberta ranks fourth highest when it comes to gender-based violence, domestic violence. The Family Violence Death Review Committee: according to their numbers, from 2008 to 2017 there were 166 incidents where women were murdered by their partners. There is also enough evidence to suggest that, for the most part, in these incidents the perpetrators in general have a history of domestic violence or they have some convictions beforehand. Certainly, having that disclosure available will be a good step in the right direction, and it will make sure that that information is available to individuals about potential dangerous partners.

As was described, this act was introduced in the U.K. after the woman named Clare, and that was discussed in detail, so I won't go into much of that detail. What we see here, as the minister also mentioned, is that it's enabling legislation. More information will fill the regulation after the consultation.

I think what's also important is that whatever we do, we also fund these services, fund these actions so that the police have the resources to provide that service, so that social service agencies, nonprofits, and the organizations who are working in this area have the resources to provide that support. Otherwise, just legislation alone won't cut it.

If I talk about when we were in government, certainly this was a top priority for us as well, and I think I can point to a number of different actions that we took in this regard. I can start with a private member's bill from one of my colleagues, the MLA for Calgary-Bow, Deborah Drever, who brought forward a piece of legislation, the safer spaces legislation, that allowed the victims of domestic violence to break leases in situations where their safety was at risk. The Ministry of Community and Social Services was responsible for the implementation of that legislation and in the first year helped almost 400 Albertans to end their leases. That action certainly was backed with the proper funding, and almost, I think, $4 million or something was added towards that.

Then we also knew that there was a huge need for an increase in services through women's shelters, so we increased funding by $15 million. That alone in 2017 helped 17,000 women and 14,000 children across this province. Also, in 2018 nearly $6 million was provided in emergency financial support for 5,400 Albertans who were fleeing domestic violence and abuse. Then we also introduced changes to our limitation period regime, where the limitation was removed for those who are the survivors of sexual assault so that they can bring forward their claims whenever they feel that they're ready to bring that forward.

There were other things. Like, we also added and supported communities through FCSS programs. Like, in Edmonton and Calgary FCSS may work differently, but in rural Alberta FCSS supports all kinds of grassroot initiatives, which include healthy relationships, which include services to women and children, including services relating to domestic violence and gender-based violence. In four years, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services we also added $38 million through family and community support programs grants, which were focused on building healthy relationships, which were focused on addressing gender-based violence, which were focused on providing supports to the survivors of domestic violence and family violence. Through that program I think we were able to support many grassroots initiatives everywhere, including in my own riding. We made sure through those grants that these services are available all across Alberta and also in a manner that people can receive those services in a culturally appropriate manner.

9:40

Certainly, when we were in charge, this file was a priority for us. We believe that no one – no one – should ever face violence in any shape, form, or manner, and when that happens, I think it's the obligation of the government, it's our obligation as society to make sure that all the supports are available to them so they can rebuild their lives. That was the reason that we worked with women's shelters and supported their programming. This was the reason that we worked with many community-based organizations and supported their initiatives around gender-based violence, domestic violence, and sexual violence. That was the reason that we worked with the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Services and funded them. They made a case for $8.1 million, and their entire ask was funded in 2018 to address the wait time issues, to make sure that counselling services are available to the survivors.

All I'm saying is that, yes, it's a good piece of legislation. It's needed, and if it's properly funded, if this legislation is backed with money, the needed funds, the needed resources, that will certainly help us make this province a better place. It will help us address and curb and eliminate domestic violence. But I think it's short on details, and there will be further questions that we can ask and discuss during the committee stage, when the government intends to share further details: what regulations they intend to bring forward, what will be the timelines, and what resources they are committing to support this legislation. Also, I think that earlier the minister mentioned that this legislation will work kind of like the freedom of information and protection act, so we would want more details around that, how it will interact with the FOIP legislation.

If the consultations are ongoing – I think domestic violence, gender-based violence is by no means a partisan issue for any of us on this side of the House – if there is any room for us to provide feedback on those consultations and on the various aspects of this piece of legislation, I think we are here to help make this legislation better, and we are here to work with you on this piece of legislation and the regulations that will follow this to make sure that our province is a safe place for everyone.

Again, thank you to the government. Thank you to the Minister of Community and Social Services for bringing forward this important piece of legislation. I look forward to the further discussions at the different stages of this debate.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, any members wishing to speak to second reading of Bill 17? The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, it's my pleasure to get up today and speak to Bill 17, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act. I think that somewhat the title of the bill says it all. It's about protecting against domestic violence. When we look at what Bill 17 does, Bill 17 allows people at risk of domestic violence to obtain information on an intimate partner's previous history of domestic violence or other relevant acts. I think it's important to realize just how encompassing that can be and how important that can be to people getting into new relationships and meeting new people and having that opportunity to see if the person that they're with is the person that they believe they are.

Domestic violence disclosure, also known as Clare's law, was first passed in the United Kingdom in response to the death of Clare Wood, who was killed in 2009 by her boyfriend. Her boyfriend had a pre-existing history of violence against women, of which Ms Wood was, of course, unaware. In the first year there were over 4,700 applications under Clare's Law in England and Wales. I guess that nationally this led to nearly 2,000 disclosures. That's 2,000 women that had an opportunity to know what their partner's past history had been, you know, in dealing with the law and, of course, domestic violence.

There are some important facts, and I guess they're somewhat disturbing facts. Half of all young women and girls who were victims of domestic violence homicide in Canada were murdered by someone with a prior conviction. Of course, this is exactly what this legislation is to combat. Most often this conviction was for another violent offence such as sexual or physical assault. Those were young women and girls who, had this legislation been in place, would have had the opportunity to know what their partner had done in the past and would have been able to make a decision based on that information.

Another disturbing fact is that Alberta has the third-highest rate of police-reported intimate partner violence of all the Canadian provinces. It's sad to say that, of course, in Alberta we have this situation, and it's not a good situation. Another disturbing fact: from 2008 to 2017 there were 166 deaths in Alberta due to family violence. That's an alarming statistic and a statistic that just doesn't need to be. There's no reason for these situations. There's no reason for this kind of violence. There's no reason for those young women and girls to have died.

Now, we know Saskatchewan passed a similar law in May 2019, and we know Newfoundland and Labrador are currently developing their version of Clare's law. This bill will allow people at risk of domestic violence to obtain information on an intimate partner's previous history of domestic violence or other relevant acts. This could save lives. This law would allow people at risk to make an informed choice about potentially harmful relationships. This is another tool that could help prevent domestic violence in Alberta and empower people who may be at risk.

This legislation will act as a preventative measure for those at risk. I think that's the important part of it, that this is a preventative measure. People can, again, make informed decisions as they go through their lives. The consultations that the government has undergone here have included privacy considerations, including input from the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Obviously, we've taken privacy matters into consideration every step of the way. We want to make sure that we are safeguarding personal information.

Now, it is a priority for our government to address domestic violence and provide preventative measures where possible. Domestic violence refers to abuse against spouses and dating partners in current and former relationships. Spouses are current or former legally married, separated, divorced, and common-law partners. Dating relationships involve current or former boyfriends, girlfriends, or other intimate relationships.

9:50

Other acts in Alberta have defined relationship violence such as the Protection Against Family Violence Act and the Residential Tenancies Act. We are using these to inform a definition for the Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act. We want to validate a definition with stakeholders to ensure it is the most appropriate one for the purposes of this act. We will continue involving stakeholders to define the regulations for this legislation. It's important to know that the work is ongoing. We need to make sure that we get this right, both to protect the people that it is designed to protect and also to protect the privacy of those people, too.

If we look back to the definition of family violence in the Protection Against Family Violence Act, it does not include dating relationships, which is the primary focus of this proposed legislation. The PAFVA and the disclosure to protect against domestic violence act will be complementary tools to address domestic violence. The disclosure to protect against domestic violence act will help prevent violence within a dating relationship whereas the other will address violence within the context of a family relationship.

When it comes to who can apply for a disclosure, people in defined circumstances who are at risk of domestic violence can apply for disclosure. Further details as to eligibility will be defined in the act's regulations. There are many different situations to consider, and we will consult with stakeholders further on this to make sure that the regulations are as inclusive as needed for the purpose of this act. Applications will be reviewed by a panel to determine whether the risk warrants the disclosure. We have some safeguards and, you know, things that we are working with to make sure that the disclosure is warranted and to make sure that the disclosure, if warranted, happens.

This legislation is being developed with considerations for privacy and the FOIP Act. The legislation will work in accordance with FOIP, which allows for disclosures if another act authorizes it. We have been consulting with the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to make sure our approach to the legislation takes privacy concerns into account. Now, FOIP enables the disclosure of personal information under certain situations. Bill 17 will define the circumstances by which personal information can be disclosed, in this case to prevent domestic violence. The legislation will also prohibit the sharing of any disclosed information and will ensure this information is safeguarded and cannot be used outside of the scope of the act.

When we think about the young lady that is somewhat the namesake of this act, Clare, and when we look at her situation, had she known about her partner's violent past, her murder could have been prevented. It is utterly tragic. Our goal is to prevent similar tragedies here. I think it's sad that we need legislation like this. When I've been to openings of women's shelters or visited women's shelters, I often think about how great that we have those places, places of refuge for people in dire circumstances, but it's even sadder to think that we actually need it in a society that we have right here, a free society where we have laws, where we have protections, yet we still need these safeguards.

But, again, where we need them, we have to have them. That's why we're here today. We're here to make sure that more situations like the one that Clare suffered don't happen and don't happen in

Alberta. We will do our best, as we continue on, to make sure that these acts don't happen and that we protect the vulnerable in our society.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I guess that for anyone who's listening at home, of which I don't have high hopes, I will begin by saying that this is one of the rare things on which we agree. We absolutely think that in principle this bill is an incredibly good thing. But in order to be an incredibly good thing, it needs to work, and I think we're a little bit short on details.

Now, when in government, I endured countless lectures from the opposition on bills with significantly more substance than this in them about the number of things that were going to regulation. I'm not going to give such a lecture because I actually think that it's often the case that things are correctly placed in regulation although I would have liked to have seen just a little bit more of the substance in the bill just because it makes it more difficult to change and it makes it a little bit more transparent for the public. I think that in principle, still, this is an absolutely good thing to move forward on. I think that it's absolutely necessary. Both parties committed to it in the election, one of the very few things, I think, that we agreed on, so that's really good.

I think that in order to work, some of the critical things that this bill needs is to deal with who holds the information and how we ensure it flows between people adequately. It could be the case that the police service holds it. It could be the case that a ministry within the government holds it. In that case, how is information flowing either between police services or, potentially, between provinces in the country? That's one big question.

It's also important to know who it is that can make an application, including who it is that an applicant can give consent to to make an application on their behalf. I think it's also important to understand how risk is being assessed, which, again, will be left to regulations. Because, obviously, someone somewhere is going to be seeing this information, they're going to be making an assessment on whether it ought or ought not be disclosed to the individual in the circumstances. So those details are really, really important. It's also important to talk about who handles the information, who they give it to, how quickly it moves, and what the assessment on how that's done is based on.

Now, all this talk about the movement of information – and this is a bill that primarily talks about the right to know, so primarily what we're talking about is a right to access information. This stuff is important. It doesn't seem like it's important, but in order to achieve the result of actually making women safer, we need to ensure that it happens effectively.

When I first came into government, one of the first reports that landed on my desk was a report having to do with the tragic death of Constable Wynn. He was a police officer who was murdered by a person who was out on bail. The reasons for that were many and complex, but one of the biggest reasons was that the information about the accused individual wasn't placed before the decision-maker. As a result of that information not being placed before the decision-maker, the wrong decision was made because it was made without information, in the absence of information, and that had a tragic result. I don't want to see that happen here. That's why I think it's really important that we're able to move forward with this.

I also think that it's important that we see what kind of supports come with this. You know, obviously, I think that investment in these sorts of things is very important. When our side came into government, we made a historic investment in domestic violence shelters. I was so proud to see the former Member for Calgary-Bow – not the current member – introduce a bill that helped women break their leases. There's a lot of this that's very, very important. At the end of the day, some of this is going to cost money. What I'm hoping is that we will see in this upcoming budget that someone will be able to point us to directly where that money is because there'll need to be money for supports. There'll need to be money for counselling services. There'll need to be money, potentially, for the implementation of the necessary information systems.

One of the other big things I'd like to see is a timeline on how this is going to be developed. This can't be implemented, it can't be proclaimed, it can't do anything until such time as the regulations come into force, so I'd love to see sort of a working timeline of when we're going to get that information.

10:00

That being said, and before anyone thinks that I'm trying to drown the poor minister in questions, there actually are a whole bunch of delightful humans who work in departments, who are listening to this or will later read it, who will write a series of questions down that have come from the opposition, seek out answers to those questions, and then provide the minister with speaking notes for the subsequent reading. They're very hard-working, lovely humans. Hello.

I have a couple of different questions about this. Specifically, there are situations in which police are going to be permitted to disclose when no application is made. I would be interested in how we're sort of going to develop, you know, who's going to make that determination. If there's no application, but there's someone in the police service that for some reason feels they should disclose proactively, the question is: how did they get that information? Is there someone who is sort of constantly gathering that information, or is it based on the knowledge of the individual officers because they know of certain chronic offenders, shall we say, and they, therefore, go out to make that disclosure? I'd be interested to know how that's going to work.

I'd be interested to know the timelines for setting up the disclosure protocol and whether or not we think we're going to be working through, say, something in the ministry, like JOIN, justice online, or whether we're going to be working through CPIC or something in the police services. That would be really interesting to know.

Also of concern, I think, is that there are provisions in here that deal with the fact that an applicant – that's someone who thinks that they may become the victim of domestic violence who's applying to receive this information, probably a woman in most cases – makes an application, and the name of that applicant is privileged. I think that that's important although I'm trying to remember a time in which I've seen legislation just deem something privileged without an analysis occurring, but hopefully that works okay.

That information is privileged, but at the same time there's a provision, section 6, which says that this doesn't detract from anything that the Information and Privacy Commissioner does. One of the things that the Information and Privacy Commissioner can do is essentially disclose what personal information the government has about you, so even though the name of the person who made the application is privileged, I'd like to ensure that the fact of an application is also privileged because potentially, depending on the timing of the application, that individual could figure out who made the application. I'm sure that these things are being considered. I'd just like to see these answers for greater clarity, if you will, for purposes of debate in this House.

I'm a tiny bit concerned. I understand the reasons for the immunity provision. The provision essentially says that if anyone who's sort of operating in this disclosure protocol, whether in government or whether with the police service, if any of those individuals make an error, they're immune from any liability for the consequences of those actions. I get the reasons for this, especially if they're acting in good faith. I'm a tiny bit concerned about the message that that sends in terms of their need to do things carefully, because if someone makes an error here, it could have really grave consequences.

The other provision I had a question about was section 10. Section 10 refers to the nonapplicability of the act. What it says is that, essentially, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, who's cabinet, can designate a person or a class of persons or circumstances in which this act won't apply. I'd be interested to know why that's necessary because nothing springs immediately to mind in terms of a person, a class of people, or circumstances in which this act ought not to apply. So I'd be interested to know what the theory behind that is.

Most of the rest of this actually looks pretty good. Yes. I think most of my questions continue to be around, as I mentioned, in what circumstances an individual can grant consent to a third party to make an application on their behalf. I can think of instances in which this would make sense. Yeah. I'd just be interested to see how that's going to move forward.

I guess with that, I'll probably save the rest of my questions for the next reading of this bill, but I think it's worth summing up by saying again that I applaud the minister for this. I think that this is a great move. I think it's absolutely a necessary move forward.

In order to be in full support, I would like to see a little bit more detail around, specifically, what the timelines are going to be – when they intend to meet, when they think regulations are going to be published, when we're expecting this act to be proclaimed so that it can actually start doing the wonderful work that it's intended to do – and in terms of money for the supports that we'll need to surround this act, and most specifically again in terms of what the information systems are going to look like and how that's going to flow. Of course, the U.K. is a very different circumstance legally with respect to a number of factors than it is here in Canada. My understanding is that Saskatchewan passed legislation similar to this, but that legislation, too, is awaiting regulations. It hasn't been proclaimed yet, so we haven't actually seen what any of those outcomes are or where it is that the rubber meets the road, so to speak.

So with that long and somewhat intense, I suppose, foray into the legislation, I will take my seat and again just thank the minister for bringing this forward. I think this has the potential to be amazing.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, any members wishing to speak to Bill 17 in second reading? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to echo what my colleague said. This is encouraging, actually, to see legislation like this, but of course our job as opposition is to make suggestions and ask questions. I certainly have some questions to ask, so I'm going to spend a little bit of time doing that.

I do, first of all, on Bill 17, Disclosure to Protect Against Domestic Violence (Clare's Law) Act, understand that it is enabling legislation, but I think that everyone in this House can appreciate the fact that in this short time that we've had this government, there have been a few pieces of legislation that appear to be somewhat enabling because they're short on detail and they're short on answers to our questions. So, you know, I'm a little bit skeptical that – actually, let me rephrase that. I'm going to be hopeful that all of the questions that we'll ask will be answered fairly so that we can all work together to make sure that this is the best piece of legislation possible, because I don't want this piece of legislation or this work to end up with the kind of questions we see around some of the decisions that the government has made; for example, the piece of legislation called job creation, which is really a large corporate tax credit. You know, we're told to just have faith that it'll all work out, people will benefit, everything will be wonderful, and so far we've not seen that. So, of course, you can understand some of my cynicism.

Anyway, I do have some questions about this legislation. I understand that there'll be another phase of consultation, and of course I'm really curious about who the stakeholders will be and what that consultation will look like. We've seen a few things online that have popped up, where people can weigh in and add their comments. You know, there were face-to-face meetings, which is great, but it would be really great if this government would really look at ensuring that all stakeholders are invited to the table, to maybe make that process in itself a little bit more public so that we can share our ideas about it. There are perhaps groups of people that haven't been included that would bring some really great information or ask some good questions.

You know, some of the documents, one of the supporting documents that I read: obviously, we have questions around the process that will be used once the request is made for things like a risk assessment to determine whose information will be shared and when. Obviously, I have a great deal of faith in our law enforcement and the tools that they use, that they'll make the best informed decisions, but perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea to look at that risk assessment process in itself.

10:10

I think some of the other jurisdictions that the government talked about in some of their supporting documents, you know, really leave a lot of questions about the number of requests that were fulfilled. For example, in Saskatchewan The Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol (Clare's Law) Act: I note here in the report that about 80 applications for information were made each year once the legislation was implemented, with disclosures happening in less than half the cases. I'm assuming that had something to do with their risk assessment process. In British Columbia the bill was only introduced in May 2019. Again, looking farther away, in New Zealand, the information in this document shows about 75 per cent of the cases where the disclosures were approved or passed on.

So, obviously, there are some different tools for assessing. Again, as I said earlier, I have complete faith in Alberta's law enforcement, that the tools that they use are current, up to date, and thorough. But perhaps in an effort to always make things better – that's something that we talk about because things are always changing – maybe there are some things we can add to that.

I know that in a quick meeting that we had yesterday about this, one of the things that I was thinking about was that any time you're adding more responsibilities to any kind of department, you know, it requires humans to do that work. It requires effort, and sadly that effort always translates into resources, so I think it's really important to talk about the workloads that will be impacted by this legislation and the processes that are involved to make this happen. But in a time where municipalities are not sure about funding – well, of course, we are all not sure about funding because we don't have a budget – where smaller municipalities are worried about some of the costs being deferred to them or them having to take on more responsibility to pay for policing, this is a concern for them.

We certainly don't want people that are impacted by this in larger areas, that are better funded, to be more safe than in rural communities because of lack of resources. So I think it's important to talk about that.

The other thing that I did want to talk about is that – and, you know, maybe it's just something to think about. When legislation is crafted, you're always using the most recent examples that we might have or whatever research that we might have, but maybe we can look at: is there a way to expand this even further? I appreciate that this legislation focuses on letting people know in certain cases in intimate relationships – whether they're married, separated, divorced, other kinds of intimate relationships – but in my previous work I worked with people with disabilities, and very often people with profound disabilities are in intimate relationships that you wouldn't think are the typical definition of intimate relationships. Very often they're reliant on just a couple of people to provide the very necessities of life, whether that's feeding them, bathing them, whatever that might be, helping them with banking, all of those things that although it's a work relationship are very similar.

I can tell you that with the hundreds of people that I had overseen their hiring and sometimes firing, we did, you know, request criminal record checks and as much information as we could. We did our best to check references, all of those things, but sometimes the really important information like the information we're talking about isn't easily accessible depending on where they are in the system or where they are through that process. I think, you know, maybe it's worth having the discussion that we expand the definition of intimate relationship and expand the definition of who we can further protect. I just wanted to talk about that a little bit.

But most important – and, again, this is a great step. If I'm sounding awfully negative about this, I don't mean to be. I'm actually trying to make suggestions that would make this better or to add some questions to what I'm sure is a growing list of questions. But the thing that struck me the most is that this legislation is great, but what will always be more important than this is prevention from this ever happening.

I can only use the examples in my constituency and my community of St. Albert. We have some community groups that are funded by FCSS. I'm sure you've heard us talk about this before. One of those groups does some really amazing work. The acronym is SAIF Society, and it stands for Stop Abuse in Families. This group does a number of things. They offer free counselling to people who sometimes are still in those relationships and trying to make a plan to leave. Sometimes people have left, and you can imagine all of the things that go on there. But, more importantly, they go into schools and talk to students and do presentations. They really have a sharp focus on prevention because they understand that that's key. They also do quite a bit of counselling with the children of people that are impacted by domestic violence who have left a violent situation. They really do a lot of support work with those kids, and it's all free. They do this because they understand the cycle of violence, and they understand that without the proper intervention, this problem can manifest itself and most likely will manifest itself in some way.

The reason I'm talking about the SAIF Society is because they are reliant on FCSS funding. I'm sure you know that FCSS funding is an 80-20 split with the province and the municipality. What was interesting, while we were in government, is that every year I think we added an additional $24 million to that fund, and municipalities started to step up and actually add more funding to those programs as well. Now I am hearing from municipal leaders in my community that they're seriously concerned that this government is going to cut some of that funding. I understand the talking points that the government is saying, that "We have hard choices to make," because, you know – I won't even go there. I had a really hard time with watching legislation pass that would give a huge corporate tax break to profitable corporations, and now we're having this discussion that's framed around: you know, we have hard decisions to make. Well, we should have made those hard decisions before. In any case, one of the decisions that I'll be looking at is the FCSS funding.

If we're going to stand up and say, "Hey; we're supporting this legislation because we want people to be safe," and of course we do – of course we do – you have to do the other work, and the other work is prevention and supporting people that are leaving situations, or supporting people so that they can leave situations. Sadly, I'm sure every single one of us in this place knows of somebody who has had to deal with this, who has had to deal with a violent domestic situation, and it's horrible. The impact is so far-reaching and so devastating. The supports have to be there for the people to be able to leave and then pick up the pieces and start life. That means affordable housing. That means safe housing. Believe it or not, that means affordable child care.

When you have, for example, a family that is splitting up or you have a spouse that is leaving, often with the children, often without a lot of notice, often without a lot of money or possessions, they're struggling. They're really struggling and struggling to move. I'm sure some of you have had to recently look for child care. The wait-lists are enormous for child care. It's very sad that I hear people talking about getting on wait-lists for quality child care soon after their baby is born. We've heard again and again that the cost of child care is equivalent to a mortgage. So affordable child care, believe it or not, is an essential support.

10:20

In this document released by the government, they talked about the essential wraparound services. I believe that. I read that and thought that absolutely – absolutely – wraparound services are essential. While this legislation is great – it's great because information is power, and information in the correct hands is power for people to make good decisions for themselves and their families – you have to have the other pieces. You have to have the prevention, and you have to have the follow-up.

Just to summarize, I, like my colleague, have a number of questions about how the next phase will proceed. Who will be invited to those tables to offer suggestions and ideas? Is there a way to expand this scope when we define what an intimate relationship is? In 2019 we have some very complex intimate relationships that perhaps we've overlooked, so let's make sure that we get it right and invite everybody to the table. You know, let's also look at: what are the tools that we're using to make those assessments? Is there a way at all that we can support law enforcement or the officers that will be making the decisions around disclosure? Is there a way to look at assessment tools? Like any tool, sometimes they need to be sharpened. Is there a way that we can look at the assessment to make sure that we've not missed anything?

Most importantly, more important than anything else, is that we need to invest in the wraparound supports for people that are impacted by this kind of violence. We need to invest in prevention, and we need to invest in wraparound supports. Just like the documents says, we need to invest in wraparound supports, and that means housing, that means income support, that means child care, and that means affordable transportation. That means all of those things.

I look forward to seeing this government's budget. I look forward to seeing how much you're going to invest in wraparound supports to support this piece of important legislation that you've brought forward.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Are there any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to second reading of Bill 17?

Seeing none, would the hon. minister like to close debate? The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to start off by saying, first of all, that I'm really heartened to see that there is consensus on both sides of the House on the importance of this piece of legislation and the impact it could have on potentially preventing harmful relationships from taking place and actually reducing the rates of domestic violence in our province.

I also want to talk a little bit about some of the horrible statistics that we've shared today. We've talked about the fact that 82 per cent of women are the victims of domestic violence in all police-reported instances, and we've talked about a number of other statistics. I think it's really important that we don't become desensitized to these numbers. As part of my background before I became an MLA and minister, I worked as an economist, so I dealt quite a bit with numbers and data. What does get lost in this whole conversation is that there are so many instances of domestic violence and abusive relationships that never get reported, so those numbers that we talk about, as horrible as they are, don't reflect the true reality and the true picture of what the problem really is within our province.

I also know that there are a number of questions around how this legislation is ultimately going to work. There are questions around who is defined as an applicant. There are questions, obviously, around wraparound supports, risk assessment, and timelines. The intention is to implement this legislation fully with fully fleshed out regulations by the spring of 2020. We are committed to ensuring that we have diverse stakeholder engagement as we move through operationalizing the regulations to make sure that we capture all the voices that need to be at the table and to ensure that as we operationalize the regulations, we've heard all of the different perspectives that need to be heard.

I do appreciate all of the input that I've received so far, particularly in the first stage of stakeholder engagement. I will emphasize again that this is an important commitment from our government, and it's an important promise to Albertans that we are taking action on domestic violence. I personally don't think it's aspirational to say that we should aim to eliminate domestic violence in our province. I do look forward to including everybody's comments and concerns and suggestions in the next phase of consultations as we build out the regulations. As everybody has heard today, this legislation will empower those at risk of domestic violence with the right to know and the right to ask so they can make informed decisions about potentially harmful relationships. We have to work together to get this right, and I'm committed and this government is committed to making sure that we get this legislation right.

With that, Madam Speaker, I move to close today's debate. Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 17 read a second time]

Government Motions

Interprovincial Infrastructure Projects

34. Mrs. Savage moved on behalf of Mr. Jason Nixon:
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly denounce all federal political parties that would enable a provincial government to unilaterally prevent the construction of interprovincial infrastructure projects of national importance, including natural resource pipelines.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak to the motion? The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Mrs. Allard: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in the House today in support of this motion to denounce all federal political parties that would enable a provincial government to unilaterally prevent the construction of interprovincial infrastructure projects of national importance, including natural resource pipelines.

While my constituency of Grande Prairie is fortunate to benefit from a diversified economy, the area relies heavily on the oil and gas sector for our viability. We recognize the significance of pipelines and interprovincial trade, co-operation, and economic development. Without co-ordination among provinces Alberta would not have an efficient and effective way to transport our oil and gas to market.

Allowing a province, Madam Speaker, any province, the unilateral decision to prevent the construction of interprovincial infrastructure – for us here in Alberta at this time in particular, pipelines – would be devastating to our province and also to our country. Our oil and gas industry stands on a remarkable record of clean, ethical, and efficient production. Alberta has long served as the economic engine of Canada, and we must not be crippled economically by unbalanced and ill-informed policies that land-lock our resource-rich province. Alberta and Canada have an abundant endowment of resources, and our nation has built its standard of living on the ethical extraction of these same resources within our provinces. Our national economy is dependent on creating value by delivering key resources to the world. The rising demand globally for fossil fuels is an opportunity for Alberta and for Canada, in fact, to continue to lead the way in ethical and sustainable resource extraction and technological advances, which very much include Alberta oil and gas.

Resource export economies rely on efficient transportation to reach markets between provinces, to the U.S., and overseas. Canada's energy industry has been built on supplying Canadians, Americans, and the overseas markets with reliable, ethical, and affordable energy. We need to continue to build new transportation facilities, pipelines, and other production facilities to serve those markets in an open and competitive way. Madam Speaker, this includes all provinces, not just Alberta. At this time the pipeline issues are paramount to Alberta's economy and growth, but other provinces will foreseeably require interprovincial infrastructure in the future for their growth and development. This goes both ways. We are a federation, a nation, and we must work together and not against ourselves by permitting any province the power to block critical infrastructure projects going forward. Beyond North America the strongest growth market in the world is Asia, where Canada and Alberta can play an important role in providing responsibly developed natural gas and oil.

10:30

We need to be ever vigilant to ensure that we have free trade across provincial and international boundaries and ensure that Albertans and Canadians continue to benefit from our resource base. This is true today, and we have a responsibility to ensure market access and economic viability for future generations as well. This was a significant driver for me personally in my decision to step into the political arena, to ensure that we leave our province in good shape, poised for growth for future generations. I believe we have a responsibility to get our fiscal house in order and not live today by mortgaging the future of our kids and grandkids. That is why I wanted to speak to this motion, Madam Speaker. I believe

that it is incumbent on this Legislature at this very time in history to stand up for Alberta and for Canada.

The egregious bills C-48 and C-69, both imposed by the federal Liberal government, have proven to be devastating to Alberta. Tanker bans and no more pipelines: really? Is that what we have come to in this country? It is a sad day to have to stand up and move what should be a given, that we must support each other in Canada for the greater good of our country and its people. The track record of the federal Liberals under Justin Trudeau shows the flagrant disregard for the men and women who work in oil and gas and for their families and, frankly, for those men and women in Saskatchewan and those men and women in British Columbia. I could go on, Madam Speaker.

The Trudeau Liberals have revealed their lack of leadership in this flagrant disregard and their gross misunderstanding of the reality of oil and gas production in Canada. It is time to relieve them of their duties and send them a clear message, not just to them but to all federal political parties, that we will not stand idly by while we are economically crippled and ideologically attacked. We will get Alberta and Canada back to work. Bill C-69 and Bill C-48 and their ideological underpinning cripple our industry and the free and efficient movement of goods and services across Canada, also with our international trading partners. If provinces continue to have the ability to unilaterally prevent the construction of pipelines, Alberta would be at a standstill. Alberta at a standstill means Canada is in economic crisis.

I have sat in this House, Madam Speaker, and I have heard questions and debate over other policies; for example, pilot projects around $25-a-day daycare. This sounds helpful for families. I'm not intending to debate the merits of this particular pilot either way, and I don't purport to have studied it enough to have an informed assessment of this pilot. However, I do want to say that we here in Alberta are forced to make challenging decisions regarding our upcoming budget, and we may not have the luxury to offer programs like this or expand them. I'm not sure what will happen in that regard, but while we debate this one policy, it is my understanding that Quebec continues to offer $7-a-day daycare across the entire province. I just have to wonder: where is the money coming from to support $7-a-day daycare in Quebec? I find the hypocrisy shocking, that our oil and gas revenues are welcome in other provinces but our pipelines are not.

We need to continue to build these new pipelines in order to bring our oil and gas to the global market. As I already mentioned, our federal Liberal government has taken multiple steps in order to try to prevent this from happening. This Monday is a clear opportunity to make a change, and I implore every Albertan and every Canadian, for that matter, to really consider this when you make your choice at the ballot box. Alberta and Canada need to create the conditions to efficiently and safely build pipelines for the future, LNG plants, and ports to ship to overseas markets. By supplying responsible energy to Asia, Canada can grow its economy, create prosperity in our communities where energy is produced and along transportation routes. This development will also greatly help indigenous communities build the capacity of their youth as valuable contributors to society and as potential owners in Canada's energy production. Delivering responsibly produced Canadian energy to Asia can also help lower global emissions. By displacing coal for electricity in Asia with Alberta's natural gas, we can cut carbon emissions in half and reduce the well-known health hazards that result from coal-fired power production.

I also just want to say that these projects of national importance, infrastructure that's required interprovincially, allow for industry and economic development. I think that sometimes in our communities we forget that when we have economic development, it benefits everyone. It benefits people outside of that sector. It supports schools, roads, hospitals, bridges, other critical infrastructure that we need to live in a first-world economy, and I think that we need to remember that when we look at this.

I definitely support this motion, and I thank you for your time today, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to the motion? The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my pleasure to speak to this motion. This motion is crucially important for our government and our relationship with our federal counterparts going forward. While our relationship of late with Trudeau's Liberals has been less than ideal, we must strive to condemn any political party allowing provinces, on their own, to prevent infrastructure projects that are of national importance. This could be anything, but the most recent example would be British Columbia filibustering Alberta and the federal government on getting our pipelines through.

This motion is less about preventing provinces from bullying or blockading other provinces and the federation. What this motion is about, though, is ultimately promoting unity and allowing for a cohesive and comprehensive vision of what Canada should be to shine through. The importance of the federal government being able to collaborate in a seamless and constructive manner with the provinces in order to have goals met is very important. It is important for advancing our national interests, ensuring economic success for the country, bringing investor confidence back to Canada, ensuring all provinces are successful and profitable, and generally increasing the quality of life for Canadians.

It is very easy to allow ourselves to be divided by regional differences. All of our provinces have unique flavours, with vastly different economies, whether they be resource based like Alberta or manufacturing based like Ontario. With so many differences, it's no wonder that provinces bicker with themselves and the federal government to further their own interests. We have seen these differences in government.

We've seen these differences manifest with difficulties Alberta has had in getting our oil to market and pipelines built. Some provinces have taken issue with our oil and taken issue with allowing pipelines that transport our oil to be built through their province. They fail to realize, though, that our oil and pipelines do not just benefit Alberta or Ottawa; these infrastructure projects benefit all of Canada. This is because oil constitutes 10 per cent of our total GDP as a country and is used in virtually every industry in some respect.

In addition to the benefit oil gives, it also attracts investor confidence to bring money into the country. This also provides us with greater capacity to provide goods and services to all Canadians.

The reality, Madam Speaker, is that we can accomplish so much more when we work together. A shining example of this, of course, is the Trans-Canada highway. This highway was approved back in 1949 and dubbed highway 1. It required the support and the effort of all provinces to eventually get it built. Construction commenced in 1950, and it was officially opened in 1962. The construction would finally be complete in 1971. This 21-year effort is the greatest highway in all of Canada, running coast-to-coast and being used by millions of Canadians each year. The Trans-Canada highway is a testament to what the provinces can do when they work together with the federal government to accomplish a task for the betterment of this country.

Being part of a federation means working together to ensure all Canadians, regardless of which province or region they hail from,

have a superior quality of life and access to excellent goods and services. As Albertans we feel the sting of this unwillingness to co-operate the most right now with our oil industry, but soon it could be any other province. It could be Quebec with their lumber, agriculture in Saskatchewan, fishing in the Maritimes, mining in the north, steel and auto manufacturing in Ontario. Any of these industries could be next to face blockades similar to what we are facing now.

This is why we are bringing forth this motion. As Albertans we have historically been trendsetters and leaders in Canada's energy business. So, too, must we rise up and be leaders on this front as well. We must show that Alberta, despite our current economic turmoil, is willing to take the first step towards conflict resolution and moving forward together as a cohesive unit to the benefit of all Canadians.

10:40

Albertans have always had the mentality that when the going gets tough, we pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, disregard what makes us different, and knuckle down and get the job done. We are calling on all provinces and the federal government to recognize that this is a necessary step and for them to do the same.

If this motion is undertaken and becomes successful, the potential gain is massive for our country. Bringing investor confidence back would cause the value of our dollar to rise, giving Canadians more international travel and buying power. A well-thought-out and implemented plan would also bring many jobs back not only to Alberta but also to other places where jobs are so sorely needed such as the east coast. Bringing these jobs back would alleviate many of the struggles faced by a great number of Canadians. This would improve the economic well-being of every Canadian, which would be a huge boon to our economy. This would mean Canadians buying homes, investing, starting small businesses. The entrepreneurial spirit that made this province and this country great would flare up once again.

This is why I'm proud to stand and support this motion. The benefit far outweighs the cost. It is time to move past our differences and put our heads together like we did in the past. This motion will foster stronger bonds between the provinces and greater camaraderie with our federal counterparts. Our interprovincial infrastructure must be allowed to go forward. This is how Canada will move forward and compete in our ever-growing, ever-changing marketplace. I would ask that all members, on both sides of the aisle, join me in recognizing the importance of this challenge.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is applicable. Are there any members wishing to speak?

Seeing none, are there any other speakers to the motion? The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to this motion on the floor, which I believe is a ridiculous political stunt that makes a mockery of this legislation, and I will explain why. The government called us back early because they apparently had such a robust legislative agenda that they couldn't wait to get back to work here, but what we have seen in the past two weeks is that they are filibustering their own bills, filibustering their own motions, and essentially bringing forward legislation that has been unanimously supported by this House. Now, when they have nothing left, what they are doing is bringing this motion to discuss federal politics in this House.

I think that this Thursday, instead of discussing federal politics, I would rather be discussing the budget, that Albertans have been asking for for a while now, waiting for for a while now. We know that our school boards across this province are waiting for that budget. They don't know what numbers they should be working with. In Calgary there are reports that schools have put students in hallways. There are reports that kids have been put on buses for two hours. Those are the things that Albertans elected us, that Albertans elected me to discuss and represent on their behalf here. Instead, we are using this House again as a launching pad for the Premier's bid into federal politics and the Premier's bid to support his friend.

I think this government has completely lost focus. If, I guess, they want to do federal politics – I think the Premier has campaigned in Ontario – he's more than welcome to go again. But this House, I think, should focus on the needs of Albertans, on the challenges Albertans are facing. In the last two months we have seen that as soon as they became government, they rushed to give a $4.5 billion handout to big corporations, and Albertans were promised that that will create jobs. In the last two months in the resource sector alone we have lost 14,000 jobs. Albertans are looking for action from this government so they can get back to work, so they can get jobs, and here we are seeing these political stunts in this House, which are wasting our time, this Legislature's time.

In what they have done so far, with that $4.5 billion handout, even their own front-bench ministers are acknowledging, are saying in the media that they are disappointed that it didn't work the way they wanted it to work, because corporations have used those to buy back their shares, to give more dividends, and they have no plan of investing that into the economy. The reason for that is that they have done nothing on market access. Instead, what was already in place – for instance, oil-by-rail contracts that would have moved 120,000 barrels a day to the market, would have created returns for Albertans, for the companies – they cancelled. As a result, we are seeing a huge job loss in the resource sector. Economic activity in that sector is at its lowest.

Instead of focusing on that and taking steps that are needed and necessary to create jobs, to support that sector, they're wasting this Legislature's time. On the issues that should be, that are debated around and across this province, across this country: instead of participating in that, they're using this Legislature's time to debate federal politics and federal issues while Albertans are losing jobs, while our economy is stuck, while we are not progressing on pipelines.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

While we believe that the federal government has and should retain the authority to build national building projects and be free of any kind of veto, this applies to pipelines running across provinces.

But we have worked on a pipeline, and when we were in government, we went coast to coast to coast to build a case for a pipeline. When we started, only 4 in 10 Canadians were in favour of that project, and as a result of the efforts of the former Premier and now Leader of the Opposition, 7 in 10 Canadians are supporting that project.

Here we are seeing that over time this Legislature's time is being used in political gamesmanship and nothing else. Yesterday in this House we had families from all over Alberta who were concerned about the safety of our roads in this province, survivors of the Humboldt crash. They didn't even listen to them; they ignored their concern and failed to assure them that they will take steps that are needed and necessary. They didn't engage in that debate. Instead of looking at what matters to Albertans, instead of looking at the provincial budget this morning, we are asked to weigh in on federal political issues.

Our schools are still looking for funding certainty. They don't know what numbers they need to work with. They still need to hear whether enrolment growth will be fully funded or not, because the answer we get is that they will either maintain or increase, which doesn't help at all. After an outcry from the opposition and Albertans they're, I guess, barely committing to the child nutrition program. We still don't know anything about class improvement funds. These are the priorities in my riding. These are the issues that I hear when I talk to my constituents. They are concerned about kids getting jammed into classrooms, 40 to 45 kids in one classroom. They're concerned about their bus rides, in particular students with complex needs. Their bus ride times have tripled.

10:50

We have postsecondary students fearing for the tuition to even go double because they want to match the funds collected from students in B.C. and Ontario, where they collect almost 30 per cent as compared to Alberta's 18 per cent. We didn't hear anything on that.

At the same time, we have seniors who are concerned about their out-of-pocket prescription drugs.

Instead of debating those issues, here we are with this motion while Albertans are waiting, and they're stressed about their future. They still have to wait for another week before the budget could be introduced lest it has any adverse impacts, negative impacts on how the federal Conservative campaign goes and how that budget plays out in their campaign, just like how the Ford budget is playing out in the federal campaign.

I think Albertans want this government to focus on their priorities. Albertans want this Legislature's time to be focused on the issues that matter to Albertans, and if we are to govern for Albertans, then we should be debating the budget this morning. This Legislature shouldn't be a playground for partisan games, for this kind of gamesmanship. Instead, we should introduce a budget. If we could, I think we should be debating the budget here this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. I believe that the hon. Minister of Energy has my eye.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has said that he is disappointed that we are bringing a motion. He called it ridiculous, and he called it a political stunt. What is disappointing is their position when we have a jobs crisis in Alberta. We have tens of thousands of people out of work. We have a jobs crisis. It's disappointing to the thousands of men and women that work very hard in our oil and gas sector and are proud of the work that they do. They want to continue working in our oil and gas sector. We are in a jobs crisis.

We don't have capacity to move our product to market. We have had every single pipeline project in the last four years, under a federal Liberal government in Ottawa, either cancelled, vetoed, or stalled, either on this side of the border or that side of the border. Energy East: cancelled. Northern Gateway: vetoed by Justin Trudeau. We've had line 3 stalled. We've had Trans Mountain stalled. We have line 5 in Michigan now under threat. Yet the member opposite said that he's disappointed to see us standing up and fighting for pipelines, fighting for our energy sector.

Mr. Speaker, what we've seen out of Ottawa in the last four years is nothing short of insulting to Albertans. We've seen a federal government, we've seen a Prime Minister who mused about phasing out the oil sands, and he's serious when he talks about phasing out the oil sands. His method to do it is Bill C-69. We've seen Bill C-48 pass through the House, a tanker ban. We've seen him bring in a carbon tax, a carbon backstop, methane emission regulations that our industry said can't be met, clean fuel standards that add onto the carbon tax. These policies out of Ottawa are harmful to our province.

This election is one of the most important elections in our lifetime, perhaps in this century. This is an existential question for Albertans and for Albertans working in the oil and gas sector, yet the opposite side of the House says that they're disappointed. We were elected on a platform to stand up for our energy sector, to fight for jobs, and to have them say that they're disappointed that we're doing that, exactly that, what we were elected to, shows why they lost. We are going to continue to pursue the priorities that Albertans elected us to do.

Mr. Speaker, during this election we can see that it's a race of three of the federal parties to see who can damage Alberta most, who says that Alberta can be off oil and gas the quickest. We've had the Liberal leader muse about phasing out the oil sands. We've had the federal leader of the NDP promising to help oil sands workers find new jobs. Find new jobs. Our oil and gas workers are proud to work in the oil and gas industry. These are the types of policies that we are going to stand up and fight for. That's the job that Albertans elected us to do, that's the job that we are going to do, and that's what this motion is about.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has said that we should be focusing on priorities like the budget. Well, we are. We're bringing in a budget earlier in our term than the NDP did when they were first elected. Our budget is challenging because we've had pipeline constraints, because we've had harmful policies out of Ottawa. We are dealing with a challenging time for exactly the reasons why we are now standing up and fighting for our energy sector.

Mr. Speaker, while the members opposite can call this a political stunt and say that they're disappointed, we're doing what Albertans elected us to do, and we're going to continue to do that each and every single day.

The Acting Speaker: With 50 seconds left under 29(2)(a), I'm not seeing anyone.

Are there any members willing to speak to the motion proper? The hon. Premier has caught my eye.

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and debate the following motion before us:

> That the Legislative Assembly denounce all federal political parties that would enable a provincial government to unilaterally prevent the construction of interprovincial infrastructure projects of national importance, including natural resource pipelines.

Mr. Speaker, what caused the government to bring this motion before us is a matter of great urgency that touches on our vital economic interests, jobs, the economy, and the future of Alberta. That is the debate being conducted currently in the federal election, where we have, well, not just three but, in fact, four parties – the Liberal Party of Canada, the New Democratic Party, the Green Party, and the Bloc Québécois – all of them openly attacking the industry that has been the lifeblood of Alberta's modern economy and much of Canada's modern prosperity, our responsible energy industry.

One of the ways in which they have launched these attacks, Mr. Speaker, attacks that will be on the ballot next Monday, is by arguing that we should effectively ignore and suspend the letter of the Canadian Constitution in order to allow provincial governments to block federally approved interprovincial infrastructure, including oil and gas pipelines. Should that coalition of parties who want to

shut down our energy industry succeed in so doing, the impact on this province would be long lasting and devastating.

I just heard one of the members of the NDP opposite, who was one of the members of the only one-term government in Alberta electoral history, whose government was defeated in a massive electoral trampling because of their refusal to stand up for and defend this province, talking about the priority of his constituents. Well, we canvassed Albertans last April, Mr. Speaker, and do you know what they said their priority is? Jobs, the economy, and pipelines. That's exactly why we brought this motion here before us. Albertans understand that issues like funding education, health care, and other social programs is largely dependent on our ability to get this economy rolling, and that is in large part dependent on our ability to get pipelines built.

11:00

So the speeches that we've heard from the NDP today demonstrate that they've learned absolutely nothing from the drubbing that was handed to them by Albertans just six months ago, but we haven't forgotten the lesson, Mr. Speaker. Albertans demand leadership that will, without relent and without apology, defend our vital economic interests, and that's why we brought this motion forward, to give Alberta's elected representatives an opportunity to respond to the ongoing campaign of defamation being led by several federal parties that are using this province and its workers as punching bags, convenient political punching bags, in this federal election.

Within minutes of the beginning of the French leaders' debate, the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Speaker, attacked me as the Premier of Alberta for defending the oil and gas industry. He said that Canada needed a federal government that would, to translate into English, stand up to the government of Alberta and the big oil companies. If the Prime Minister and his friend the NDP leader and his friends the Green and Bloc leaders want to stand up to the big oil companies, as they put it, in this province, then when are they going to stop taking the revenues generated by those companies, that have produced, that produce every year tens of billions of dollars of federal revenue which are shared with Canadians across the country through fiscal federalism, through equalization, and other transfers?

No, Mr. Speaker, we are not going, as the NDP advises us – we will not sit here passively, quietly ignoring these political attacks daily in this federal election by people whose charge, whose mandate and responsibility it is to unite the country.

Three days after I had the honour of being sworn in as our Premier, Mr. Speaker, I was meeting with the Prime Minister in his office in Ottawa. The hon. Minister of Energy was in attendance, and she can confirm that I reminded the Prime Minister that the primary responsibility of a Canadian Prime Minister is to ensure, protect, and strengthen national unity. But picking on one province for short-term political gain, defaming the industry that has been the greatest creator of jobs, wealth, opportunity, and prosperity across the country is not national leadership. It does not strengthen but, rather, undermines national unity.

So, no, to the members opposite, we will not be silenced. We will not be silent when this province and its workers are being attacked by national leaders, including their leader, Mr. Singh. The NDP: there's not a separate provincial and federal NDP. They are legally, constitutionally one and the same party. Their leader, Mr. Speaker – it is just shocking that we have members of the Alberta Legislature who are sitting here passively, silently accepting their leader, their party, their candidates, their platform seeking to shut down the largest industry in this province and put hundreds of thousands of Albertans out of work.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon them to stand up and defend their constituents, defend this province, disassociate themselves publicly from the politics of their leader, Mr. Singh, who has said, and I quote: I would not impose a project on any province, and that means there has to be social acceptability with respect to oil pipelines; I mean, it should be the fact that if we want to move forward with a pipeline project, there has to be buy-in from all people involved. He said that the NDP's platform states that pipelines "cannot bypass Quebec's . . . laws and cannot proceed without the agreement of the Government and people of Quebec." When asked recently about what he'll do to TMX in a minority government position, he said the following: I am opposed to the project, the Trans Mountain expansion, absolutely and fully opposed to it; whatever government the people of Canada choose, I will be doing my best to continue to fight this project; I will work with whatever position I'm in to continue to oppose this project. Mr. Speaker, quote, unquote. That is their leader, and not one of them has had the gumption, the courage, or the integrity to stand up to their leader and say that he is wrong.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, the first Premier to be defeated in an election after one term, the former Premier, was asked recently by the media who she was supporting in this federal election. She implied that she wasn't going to support the NDP, and then when the media reported that, she came out with an urgent clarification. She said: I'm not not voting for the NDP. Imagine this. They're ashamed to admit – they're ashamed to admit – that they are New Democrats, yet they are also afraid to stand up and denounce the anti-Alberta policies that are dividing our country and seeking to balkanize it.

Now, Mr. Trudeau is not much better, Mr. Speaker. He said, when my friend the Premier of New Brunswick sought to get federal support for an effort to revive the failed Energy East pipeline concept, that would have taken Alberta energy to our east coast, displaced OPEC energy imports, stopped some of those dictator oil tankers from coming into the Bay of Fundy and the port of Saint John, would have helped us to achieve the dream of energy independence, would have moved hundreds of thousands of barrels of responsibly produced Alberta energy to be upgraded and refined by Canadians on our east coast – it made so much sense that the NDP's close friend and ally Justin Trudeau killed it. He did so by imposing new regulatory mandates to require that TC Energy take account in its application for the pipeline of up- and downstream emissions notionally associated with that pipeline, even though the regulation of the upstream production of energy is, under section 92A(1) of the Constitution, a matter of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, that Prime Minister and that government killed Energy East, so Premier Higgs, desperate to create jobs for his people in New Brunswick, sought federal support. He said: listen, if you guys are willing to buy a pipeline to the west coast in desperation because you drove a global company, Kinder Morgan, out of Canada, how about helping us to get an east coast pipeline built? You know what the Prime Minister's response was? He said to New Brunswickers: you need to get the government of Quebec onside because we will not support Energy East unless the government of Quebec is onside. He handed – he handed – an unconstitutional political veto over that project, that would unite the country and increase its prosperity, to one government.

And, Mr. Speaker, of course, the Green Party leader, who is now vying to support a prospective Trudeau-led coalition, is even more extreme on these matters. She says, "I say to Quebecers: I will stand with you, we will fight against any pipeline project . . . and we will defend Quebec's right to refuse pipelines." What right? We have a quiescent, silent NDP here, refusing not only to defend our

province's vital economic interests against their own party and its allies but refusing to defend the Constitution of Canada.

What are these party leaders – Mr. Trudeau, Mr. Singh, Ms May, and le leader du Bloc Québécois – seeking to do? They are seeking to kill the dream of Canadian Confederation as an economic union. That is what brought the colonies and territories together into one great northern dominion in 1867 and in the decades that followed. It was the audacious dream, which we now easily take for granted, of uniting the northern half of North America into one great union. Mr. Speaker, that is why, from July 1, 1867, this document, the Constitution of Canada, originally the British North America Act, gave to the national government the exclusive authority to regulate projects that run between provinces, because the whole point of Canada was to knock down barriers, was to create unity, to share prosperity, to be partners in that prosperity.

11:10

That is why, in their wisdom, the Canadian founders wrote the following into section 92(10)(a) of the Constitution Act, which says that it will be the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal Parliament over

> other Works and Undertakings connecting the Province with any other or others of the Provinces, or extending beyond the Limits of the Province . . .

And further, in section 92(10)(c),

> Such Works as, although wholly situate within the Province, are before or after their Execution declared by the Parliament of Canada to be for the general Advantage of Canada or for the Advantage of Two or more of the Provinces.

This says that any project that runs between provinces is the exclusive regulatory jurisdiction of the dominion Parliament and government and that even projects that lie solely within provinces that are deemed to have national economic benefit are the exclusive domain of the federal authority.

Mr. Speaker, in other words, the position – like, this is shocking. This is why we brought this motion forward. I know the NDP doesn't want to talk about it because they cannot bring themselves – they cannot bring themselves – to disagree with their own. That's how socialists always are. They call it solidarity. They are in solidarity with Jagmeet Singh and the NDP in throwing Alberta workers under the bus, just as Justin Trudeau has thrown this province and its workers under his campaign bus and just as Ms May is doing the same thing. If they won't stand up for our workers against these attacks on Alberta's energy sector, then can we please bestir them to stand up for the rule of law and the Canadian Constitution and national unity against these efforts to balkanize this country?

That's what this is, Mr. Speaker. I know that for some of the Laurentian elites, you know, for some of the chattering classes who write columns in the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail,* for their leader, Mr. Singh – they regard us as little Canadians. They regard us as parochial and too focused on our own economic interests. They could not be more wrong. It is Albertans who are the great champions of national unity and of Confederation, of constitutional federalism as originally conceived by the founders of Canada and not just originally conceived: only six months ago the British Columbia Court of Appeal upheld unanimously, in a five to nothing decision, federal paramountcy over interprovincial pipelines per section 92A of the British North America Act. So this is not some sort of dead letter of the law. This is not some antique constitutional principle. This is live constitutional law that is being ignored.

Mr. Speaker, we need to regain the sense occasionally to have a bit of outrage. We have leaders seeking the highest office in the land who are saying that they will wilfully violate the Constitution of the land by handing to individual provinces the ability to block interprovincial projects, including oil and gas pipelines, notwithstanding the Constitution's absolutely clear assertion of federal paramountcy on these projects. That's why we're bringing this forward for a vote. We're trying to put on notice those parties. We're trying to gain the public's attention not just here in Alberta but across Canada. This is not just about the hundreds of billions of dollars of wealth and the resources that the left wants us to keep in the ground. We're not just talking about hundreds of thousands of jobs. We're not just talking about our ability to pay for schools and hospitals in Alberta and, through equalization, across the rest of the country. We are talking about whether we will become 10 balkanized little provinces, undermining the dream of Confederation.

No, Mr. Speaker. We Albertans are big Canadians. We are champions of national unity. We are the defenders of the Constitution. We call on all federal parties to stop the Alberta bashing, to stop bashing the women and men who have come here from every corner of the country and every corner of the world to responsibly develop the patrimony of our natural resources. Mr. Speaker, we call on the federal parties to stop the division, to stop separating one province from another, to stop setting up interests against one another, to think big, to dream big, to build big things, yes, including energy pipelines.

Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the House that this past summer when I chaired the Western Premiers' Conference here in Edmonton, I was immensely proud to see all seven of those Premiers, four western and three northern Premiers – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon – all agree unanimously in our joint communiqué with the principle and the goal of building energy and resource corridors, including, and I quote explicitly, oil and gas pipelines. To take that further, a month later we gathered in Saskatoon at the Council of the Federation with the 10 provincial and three territorial Premiers, and 12 of those heads of government on behalf of their provinces and territories agreed to a language that I proposed in a joint communiqué to support energy and resource corridors, including oil and gas pipelines. One province resiled from the words "oil and gas"; otherwise, unanimous agreement with the concept of energy and resource corridors.

Now, that's really what we're asking for here, Mr. Speaker: respect for the letter of the Constitution so that those corridors can be built, the modern version of the CPR that linked the Dominion together in the 1870s and '80s. What kind of a weird, upside-down, topsy-turvy world do we live in where we have 12 of 13 provincial and territorial governments from all different partisan backgrounds, including the New Democrats in British Columbia, for goodness' sake, and Liberal governments on the east coast, all of these governments aligned, understanding federal paramountcy on interprovincial pipelines, supporting resource and energy corridors, including oil and gas pipelines, 12 of 13 provincial and territorial governments in favour of those job-creating, country-uniting projects, yet we have four of five federal parties against that principle.

Let me just restate that in case it's lost on anyone. We have all but one of the 13 provincial and territorial governments saying that the federal government has unquestioned constitutional responsibility to build these big projects or to see that they are built, but we have four of five federal parties against the federal power, against the Constitution, against our share of prosperity. What is going on in this country, Mr. Speaker, and why is Alberta's NDP silent about this? Well, we all know why. Because – you know what? – they're all just New Democrats. They're in solidarity – they're in solidarity – with the folks trying to land-lock this

province. We will be able to see that depending on how they vote on this motion.

You know, let me go a step further on this. Not only do we have 12 of 13 provincial governments aligned with the spirit of the motion before this House right now – and by the way, I must pause to congratulate the one federal party that is actually seeking to respect and defend the Constitution. I want to thank Mr. Scheer for supporting the principle of energy and resource corridors. Mr. Speaker, the NDP is heckling me. Here we go. Yes, absolutely, here we go. Why don't they stand up and put their partisanship aside and thank – and they're laughing at this – and thank the one party, even if they may not vote Conservative or agree with the Conservatives on other issues. How about they have the integrity and the independence to stand up and at least thank one party for embracing energy and resource corridors, including federal paramountcy on interprovincial pipelines? Why don't they? Because I guess they don't agree with that principle. I just want to thank Mr. Scheer for endorsing a concept embraced by 12 provincial and territorial governments and, I believe, by virtually everyone in Alberta except some folks on the left.

11:20

Mr. Speaker, we are through the looking glass on this. We're living in an Alice-in-Wonderland world right now in our national politics: national leaders arguing against the national Constitution and the national authority, national leaders – okay, with the exception of the Bloc leader – whose responsibility it is to affirm national unity, dividing this country, attacking the province that has been the key engine of prosperity and growth. But at the same time, the same national leaders, four of the five, supporting unilateral federal interference in an area of exclusive provincial constitutional jurisdiction, namely the regulation of upstream production of our resources. What am I talking about? I'm sure the NDP doesn't understand because they never opposed the no more pipelines law, Bill C-69's assertion that they can regulate, that the federal government can Bigfoot into our territory and regulate the production of resources.

I refer the House, Mr. Speaker, to section 92A(1) of the Constitution Act. Allow me to read this into the record:

> In each province the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to
>
> (a) exploration for non-renewable natural resources in the province;
>
> (b) development, conservation and management of non-renewable natural resources and forestry resources in the province, including laws in relation to the rate of primary production therefrom; and
>
> (c) development, conservation and management of sites and facilities in the province for the generation and production of electrical energy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the founders of Confederation didn't have the wisdom to include that in 1867 because these issues were not current at the time. What I just read is the single most important constitutional victory and, arguably, political victory of the government of Alberta in the last century. This section – this section – was fought for and won by the late, great Premier Peter Lougheed during the patriation of the Constitution in 1981 because he was never going to again allow a federal government – let's be pointed about this – a Trudeau government, to destroy the economy of this province through a replay of the national energy program.

The consent for Alberta to the Constitution of Canada was conditioned on that section I just read. Had Peter Lougheed not succeeded in getting that written into the Constitution, we never would have signed the Constitution. We still would be outside formal consent for the Constitution as has the province of Quebec since 1982. What I just read was a conditioned precedent of Alberta's signature to the Constitution Act. This is serious business, Mr. Speaker. This section, which I just read, gives to this Assembly alone, let me re-cite: "In each province the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to . . . exploration for non-renewable natural resources in the province; [and] development, conservation and management of [those resources].

Mr. Speaker, that is the law of the land, yet we have a federal government that just brought into force a bill they passed through Parliament against the advice of the Senate of Canada, with opposition from, I believe, eight provinces and two territories. They brought in the no more pipelines law, which asserts a federal power to regulate the exploration for nonrenewable natural resources in the province and the development, conservation and management of nonrenewable natural resources and the rate of primary production therefrom.

Mr. Speaker, C-69, the no more pipelines law, a complete prima facie, gross violation of the Constitution, not just any provision but the provision of the Constitution which was the condition precedent of Alberta signing on – the federal government is running on that in this campaign, the Trudeau Liberals supported in that bill by the NDP and the Green Party. I must add that on this point at least the Bloc Québécois agrees with us, Mr. Speaker. As Premier François Legault confirmed to me in my meetings with him, Quebec is against this – why? – because they've always been allies of Alberta in defending provincial jurisdiction under the Constitution.

We had, I think, every province supporting us in opposition to Bill C-69, with the exception of British Columbia and I think the exception of Yukon territory. I think the Energy minister will confirm that. Why am I talking about C-69? Mr. Speaker, let me just be clear. You've got four of five federal parties saying that they are giving federal power over pipelines to the provinces and then they are taking provincial power over the upstream regulation of a resource and taking it to the federal government. This is a complete inversion of the Constitution. They are turning the Constitution upside down, on its head.

Now, I guess, I know that to many people constitutional issues are abstractions, but these principles were enshrined here for a reason, Mr. Speaker. The reason: so that we could have a right to develop our resources and have a national government that would get those resources to market. When it comes to the continuing jobs crisis in this province, that's what we need. All we need is that the Constitution be respected, but in order for that to happen, we need federal leadership that will respect the Constitution along with us. That is why we brought forward this motion.

I know the NDP in their hyperpartisanship want to dismiss this. They want to talk about anything else but this. They were quipping earlier that they wanted the budget earlier, even though in 2015 they brought their first budget in later. But you know, Mr. Speaker, consistency has never been an NDP virtue. The real question for them is: why have they been so silent in a federal campaign where this province has become a political punching bag? Why won't they speak up? Why is their own party campaigning actively against this province? Why are they going to go and vote for that party? Why are they going to go and vote for the leader who is now, according to the polls, potentially in contention to be a future Prime Minister, who wants to shut down the energy sector in this province? If we think we have a jobs crisis right now, could you imagine – could you imagine – the crisis in our economy under a federal NDP government? I don't know what's worse, that or a Liberal-NDP-Green coalition.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for them to stand up and defend their constituents and their jobs. It's time for them to stand up and defend national unity and the Constitution of Canada. It's time for them to

stand up and defend the future of this province. Well, this government certainly will, and that is why I commend this motion to the House. I make it clear to the leaders of the federal Liberal, NDP, Green, and Bloc parties that in this province we have a government that will defend our vital economic interest, that will defend our patriotic attachment to Canada, that will advocate for the spirit of Confederation to do and build big things once again. We will defend national prosperity. We will defend the letter of the Constitution of Canada. We will defend national unity against the forces of division and balkanization. That's what Albertans have hired us to do, and that's exactly what we will do.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anybody be wishing to take that opportunity.

Seeing none, I see that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has the call.

11:30

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the motion up for consideration. I want to be very clear that nobody is asking the Premier to be silent. Nobody. What we are asking for him to do is his job, and a big part of his job is making sure that he puts forward a plan that outlines the budget for the province of Alberta. I know he will say: well, we're going to get it in two days earlier. Well, that's actually a very creative, flexible way of revisiting history, because the history is that his cabinet was sworn in in April. His cabinet has had more than six months to get together and work on their plan for our province. That's actually their job.

For those six months there has been a lot of political grandstanding, a lot of weighing in on federal issues, and a lot of spending time engaging in things that actually aren't getting pipelines built, aren't creating more jobs, and aren't giving clarity to the people of our province about what the plan is for health care and education and social services. Members of the government caucus have said things like: we don't know if we'll be able to afford the luxury of affordable child care. It's problematic to me that six months after the election we're hearing language like that, but we're also not here debating the things that are actually core mandate to the province of Alberta, including the Ministry of Children's Services.

I think that this motion is making a mockery of this place and of our provincial responsibility, Mr. Speaker. I think that this government called us back early, and in this caucus, the NDP, we were very excited to come back early because we have been saying for months that it's really important to get a budget out, and even if you don't have the full and final budget, give the targets to schools so that they know what the funding formula will be. When they know how many kids they have, they can do the math, and they can figure out how much money they're going to have. That didn't happen. We said: bring forward a budget so that we can have that certainty.

As a result, we've seen things like kids in Calgary on buses for their ride times. I met with a family last week. Their ride time had nearly tripled. It was about 20 minutes previously, and it was over an hour. This is students who have severe challenges – severe challenges – that in the morning wake up with such anxiety that they are bent over a bucket in anxiety and stress. These are the things that we are asking the Premier to speak up on, for the Premier and his cabinet to be leaders on. Under provincial jurisdiction is the funding of education. The funding of education is so fundamental to making sure that we have a strong society and a strong economy for this and the next generation as well.

But what we've seen for the last two weeks, as was mentioned by my colleague the Member for Calgary-McCall, is filibustering on government bills, bringing in bills that we obviously are going to unanimously support. I imagine that when members of government caucus were called back, they were also hopeful that we'd be here debating substantive, major pieces of public policy. Instead, we are being asked to stall and delay on the actual substantive work of this Legislature and engage in highly partisan attacks against the Official Opposition, Her Majesty's Official Opposition, in Alberta.

I will tell you that the Premier made it clear in his opening remarks that he wants this debate to be an item of national news, and what I have to say is that I am concerned about his focus on national news over the focus on his core mandate. I'd say that the government is lost at this time. They're not creating jobs as they promised. They brought in a $4.5 billion, no-jobs corporate handout that has certainly not helped them live up to the mandate that they were actually given by Albertans, and they continue to engage in items of federal interest, which I am also interested in. I am interested in knowing why the Premier, when he was sitting around the cabinet table and representing Alberta in the House of Commons, only said the word "pipeline" twice in the House of Commons. The Premier only said the word "pipeline" twice in the House of Commons. It seems pretty interesting to me that he's taking this opportunity in the middle of a federal election to try to aggrandize what his – to rewrite history, one might say.

He's also cancelled oil by rail. The Energy minister, when introducing this, talked about capacity, and certainly the Energy minister acted in the exact opposite way from what she was espousing by actually reversing those decisions to increase capacity and get to new markets.

Those are some of the main points I wanted to begin with. At this time I will take a moment to introduce an amendment that I have to the motion, please.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Just so that you understand, I'm just taking a quick moment to ensure that it gets a chance to be passed around the House. Then, once that's done, I'll call on you, and you will have the remainder of the time to speak on this amendment.

Thank you, hon. member. To ensure that we can continue moving forward, would you be so kind as to read it into the record, and then please continue with your remarks.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be my honour. I'm moving this amendment on behalf of my colleague the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, who proposes that we amend Government Motion 34 by adding the words "and that would roll back progress on efforts to reach Canada's current greenhouse gas emissions targets, including the abysmal federal TIER plan" after the words "prevent the construction of interprovincial infrastructure projects of national importance, including natural resource pipelines."

What we're proposing here is not to take anything out of the government motion but to actually add to the government motion. What we are saying is that you can't have one without the other, which I think many have made very clear throughout the debate on this. The economy and pipelines as well as the environment need to go hand in hand. So what we are proposing is the addition of this wording to say that we actually take the environment seriously and that we add to the motion by saying that anything that would roll back progress efforts to reach Canada's current greenhouse gas emission targets, including the abysmal federal TIER plan, would be something that this House would be opposed to.

Those are my remarks with regard to this this morning. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to consider other feedback we have with regard to this amendment and to the main motion.

I want to say again that there is important work of this Assembly. The important work of this Assembly includes bringing forward a provincial budget. That is the direct responsibility of the province. It's actually one of the recommendations that was also made in the MacKinnon report, that there be certainty around budgeting. Certainly, I have to say that the crisis that is being created in our schools and in our hospitals – we're hearing people this morning on the Internet talking about things like radiologists being told that they can't refer patients for more tests at this time because there just isn't enough certainty about the budget and that there's a deep level of concern that the budget isn't sufficient to cover increased testing requirements.

These are the types of things that I really would propose the Premier and his cabinet spend some of their time addressing. I know that he is enjoying the opportunity to engage in federal politics again, which he regularly does, but in this House we also have a responsibility to actually focus on the mandate that was given to the province, and to bring forward a budget, of course, is a big piece of that.

If the Premier was really focused on what I would argue is the most important part of his job, he would take those responsibilities very seriously. So I request that he please stop stalling and playing games and that he introduce the budget already. This is something that many, many Albertans are deeply concerned about the government failing to do, and for good reason.

That is my amendment and my remarks as such. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to speak to this amendment? [interjection] Oh. Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available first. My apologies. Five minutes for questions and comments. I see that the hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika has risen to speak.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to take up a lot of time in my response, but I did have a quick thought to share with the Legislature here. The member opposite had said at the beginning of her remarks that she's disappointed we're standing here talking about this motion and not about the core mandates of the government. Well, frankly, if jobs, the economy, and pipelines aren't the core mandate of this government, I don't know what is. I don't.

11:40

We campaigned on this for months, you know, well over a year before the election was officially called. Albertans across the province knew what the core mandate of this government would be if elected: jobs, the economy, pipelines. This motion speaks directly to that, so I find it irritating that the members opposite would suggest that we're wasting our time debating this motion when defending the province is our main priority, and that's what this motion does.

With that, I just had to respond to that ridiculous remark.

The Acting Speaker: With three minutes and 50 seconds remaining, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora has risen.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member, for giving me an opportunity to reinforce what I was saying. In terms of jobs, one of the first bills that was brought forward by the government in the spring session, many, many months ago, was around a massive corporate giveaway, what has been referred to as a $4.5 billion, no-jobs corporate handout. Even the Minister of Energy has said how disappointed she and many of her colleagues, I imagine, are about the fact that there are no jobs that are coming from this massive, massive giveaway.

I have to say that when the member says that chiming in about trying to argue about certain political parties in this House is core to his mandate, I would say that core to his mandate is actually developing policies that will result in jobs. That is one of the key pieces rather than giving a massive $4.5 billion, no-jobs corporate handout – say that three times fast – to certain friends and insiders.

I also have to say that when it comes to creating a budget, that is one hundred per cent core to the work of government. Every government should be bringing forward a budget, and they shouldn't have to take more than six months to create one. The government was sworn in in April.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Like you.

Ms Hoffman: Oh, thank you for the comment, Government House Leader. The 2015 government was sworn in in May, but I appreciate you chiming in through your heckling. It's always fun when you belittle this side of the House for chiming in during other people's debate, and now the Government House Leader is heckling me, which is, you know, standard practice, I guess.

But let's get back to what's actually core to government's role, and that is actually bringing forward a budget, a budget that gives clarity to hospitals in the Government House Leader's riding about what their future will be. I know that when he was in opposition and I was the minister, I was very pleased to work across party lines to make sure that we fought hard to save hospitals in his own riding. Are those his priorities now that he's sitting around a cabinet table creating a budget?

We've certainly got a lot of health care workers deeply concerned about the future of the health care system in this province, and for good reason. When we hear government members say things like a luxury to have affordable child care that is safe and accessible, what else is next? Is it a luxury to have affordable health care that is universally available? Is this inevitably the next step along this path? Is it a luxury to have a fire department that is available if you're in times of crisis? Is it a luxury to be able to send your kids to postsecondary institutions so that they can achieve the most from our opportunities in this province? Is it a luxury to be able to go to school without having to lean over a bucket in the morning because you're in such agony about your transition time and what your experiencing on that bus when you're a student who has severe special needs? I see the Government House Leader continue to laugh and mock these things that Alberta parents are saying are so important to them to have addressed.

They stall and delay and weigh in on federal matters, Mr. Speaker. Again, I will not apologize for holding the government to account about the government's core work. If they actually wanted to focus on their mandate, one of the things that they would be doing is bringing in a budget.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, on amendment A1 I see the hon. Government House Leader has risen to speak.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to hear the deputy leader of the NDP refer to apologizing. I think that's a good spot to start in regard to the amendment that the NDP has brought forward to a motion brought to this House by the government to stand up for our largest industry and for our province's rights in a nonpartisan way, to defend the people of Alberta, which, I would submit to you, is why everybody got sent

to this House. It does not matter which side of the House they are on.

But if we're talking about apologies, Mr. Speaker, when is the NDP going to apologize for their behaviour in government? Albertans fired them because of their behaviour, because of that hon. member, who was part of a government who oversaw the largest job loss in the history of the province, who sat in this Chamber supporting a Premier who would laugh at Albertans when they would come and talk about rural crime, supported a Premier who called Albertans Chicken Little, told them to take a bus, and belittled them at every point, refused to consult with the agriculture community, creating some of the largest protests in the history of this province on the steps of the Legislature, mocked them even. Even in this Chamber their own Finance minister said to them, to the agriculture community, that they were deliberately trying to hurt their workers.

That side of the House has no business lecturing this side of the House at all. They are the only one-term government in the history of this province, the worst fiscal government in the history of this province, who did more damage to this province in four years than any government combined over the rest of the other 100 years, of the time that Alberta has been here, Mr. Speaker.

They have not apologized for the most important issue, and it's very relevant to their amendment. They have not apologized for their coalition with their close personal friend Justin Trudeau. They sat on this side of the House when they were in government and went out of their way to sell out Albertans over and over and over, to support a Liberal Prime Minister who attacks this province daily, whose stated policies devastate our communities. Not just the stated policies, Mr. Speaker; the policies that he brought forth like Bill C-69: that hon. member, the deputy leader of the NDP, once mocked us in this House because we asked during question period why she wouldn't get on an airplane or why her cabinet had not gotten an airplane down there to go fight about Bill C-69.

It took them hundreds of days even to respond on behalf of the people of Alberta while constituencies like mine were being devastated because of NDP policies that were then being shored up by an NDP government that that hon. member was the Deputy Premier of. Shame on them. On behalf of Albertans, shame on them. You want to talk about apologizing? When are you going to apologize for what you did to this province? They still don't realize what they did to this province. It's one of the problems that they have. They seem to think that they can continue with their bizarre approach to managing our province or to talk about our province in that context and not understand that the reason they got voted out in record numbers, the reason that they are the only one-term government in the history of this province, is because of the things that they did, particularly when it comes to how they interacted with the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

All of the members in the government caucus who had the privilege of serving in the Official Opposition will remember sitting up in the Federal Building preparing for question period on the day that that hon. member, the former Deputy Premier, stood by her leader, who was then the Premier of Alberta, and they had a party and spiked the football on a pipeline, stood outside – it was shocking, Mr. Speaker – and celebrated it as a victory. They never got a pipeline built. They never got a pipeline built. They sold us out to Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberal Party. Over and over they did that.

Now here we are yet again with a simple motion for this House to call upon federal parties to take our constitutional rights as a province seriously, to recognize our right to produce our resources, to recognize the damaging policies of their close personal friend Justin Trudeau and their party.

Mr. Speaker, remember that their provincial party and their federal party are the same. They're the same party. They're connected, the same legally, through the structure. It's been well established in this House. That's how it is, and they have never stood in this House and condemned their leader, their federal leader, who has been very clear that he's anti oil and gas, antipipelines. They want to talk about apologizing. Come to Rocky Mountain House and apologize to the people for the damage that your policies have done. Come to Drayton Valley, that has been devastated under the NDP's watch. Shame on them. Shame on them for bringing this to this House. They still have not stood up. They still have not stood in this place and condemned their leader. Their leader. Their leader. Their party and the federal party are the exact same party legally, structurally, everything. They've never stood up and condemned him.

11:50

What they have done over and over in this House is stood up and defended Justin Trudeau, Mr. Speaker, stood up and defended a Prime Minister who went out of his way to devastate this province. Over and over and over and over they've defended him. Here we are yet again, in the eleventh hour before one of the most important federal elections in the history of this province, and they still cannot stand up for this province. They still choose Justin Trudeau each and every day over top of Albertans. It's shameful. It's shocking. It's why Albertans are so frustrated with the NDP.

It's why the NDP are in Official Opposition and – we'll see what Albertans decide – I suspect, at the next election will go to the third, fourth, and may not even be a party in this place, because you do not get to represent Albertans and then sell them out to the Prime Minister, a federal Prime Minister that does not care about this province. You do not get to say that you get to come here and represent your constituents and then go out of your way to stand side by side with the Prime Minister who would bring in Bill C-69. You do not get to represent Albertans and claim that you stand with Albertans when you will not point out the hypocrisy that Justin Trudeau has brought forth. You will not do it. They will not stand here and condemn him. They went out of their way.

Mr. Speaker, in some ways you see how politically they fought, that was expedient for them when they were in government. It's unfortunate that they chose what they thought would be to their political advantage over top of Albertans, but you can see how they did that.

How they think, now that they're back in the Official Opposition benches, that it makes sense for them to go out of their way to shore up and to tie themselves to a Prime Minister and a federal Liberal Party that are absolutely despised in this province, how they think that the right political strategy and the right decision as the Official Opposition is to stand side by side – side by side – with the Prime Minister that is causing devastation to this province, that is hurting the very people that I represent and that they represent: it is so shocking over the years to watch how the NDP abandoned their own constituents when it comes to this issue, how they've chosen a federal Liberal Prime Minister who is anti our largest industry, who is anti our province, who has done nothing to help the people of this province, how they chose to stand with him instead of the very people that they represent.

As the Premier said earlier, this should not be a partisan issue. This is about Alberta. This Chamber here is Alberta's Chamber. It's our job to represent Albertans, to stand up for Albertans. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of Albertans are absolutely infuriated with what is happening in the federal election. They do not agree with the federal Liberals, they do not agree, certainly, with their leader in the federal NDP, and they certainly don't agree with

the Greens. Will they stand up? No. They stand up and continue their partisan games.

Now they want to add some language to the motion instead of standing up for the industry, and I will encourage all of my colleagues to vote against the amendment, Mr. Speaker, because, again, this is a motion to stand up for our province, to stand up for our constitutional rights. You want to talk about how parties manage climate change policy and policy around greenhouse gas emissions, an important issue, and it's something that we've taken seriously in our platform, and we'll legislate on it shortly.

But when you compare it to the record of the Official Opposition when they were in government, when their own leader, who brought in the largest tax increase in the history of this province at the very time that Albertans, everyday Albertans, were hurting, that ended up, by her own admission on a TV interview at Christmastime – by her own admission, the leader of NDP said that it had no impact on emissions. She could not point to one concrete example of an impact on emissions. That's a fact. At the same time that they made things worse – Mr. Speaker, it is ridiculous. Their leader was on TV – they know it – and could not point to any emission reductions on her signature policy issue.

Do you know what it was, Mr. Speaker? It was those members putting the largest tax increase in the history of this province on the people of Alberta at the very time that they were down, at the very time that they needed the most help. It was all economic pain, no environmental gain, and it lost them the government. It was not even a smart political move. They're in the wilderness of opposition now with no hope of coming back to government any time soon, because you don't treat Albertans like that.

At the same time that they were treating Albertans like that, they would stand in this House, and the hon. deputy leader of the NDP was the main culprit, would stand up as Deputy Premier each and every day and say, "We got two pipelines built" – they didn't, Mr. Speaker – say, "We're with Justin Trudeau to the end: Justin Trudeau, Justin Trudeau, Justin Trudeau." Albertans are not with Justin Trudeau.

This Chamber should make it very, very clear, with a clear statement with this motion, that we stand up for our provincial rights, our constitutional rights, as the Premier did a good job articulating today, that we stand for Albertans, that we stand with our small towns that are struggling to keep people employed, that we stand with the people that have lost their jobs in the oil and gas industry and are struggling to pay their bills.

What message does the opposition send when they continue to do this game? They continue to come here and shore up their friend Justin Trudeau. It's shocking that anybody who says that they represent their constituents in this province could do that with a straight face and then come here and say that they still support Justin Trudeau, that they still support their federal leader. Their federal leader: they can't run away from that. They're the same party, literally the same structural party. It's not just that they're NDP or the same ideological views; they're the same party, the same legal entity. Their leader has travelled across this country attacking pipelines, attacking this province, saying things that are not true about our largest industry. By them standing over and over with their leader when he does that, they're supporting what he says about the hard-working men and women that work in the oil and gas industry in this province. Even more disturbing, they're supporting an attack on the economic engine not only of this province but of this country, over and over and over, and they can do that with a straight face, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the opposition has any credibility left on this issue at all.

Certainly, Albertans spoke loud and clear. They don't trust them to represent them. They made that very, very clear in the last election in record numbers. Certainly, their actions over and over and over show that they will sell out this province for their close allies in the national landscape. Certainly, they have shown over and over that their priority is not Alberta, that their priority is not Albertans. We've asked them repeatedly to stand up and condemn their leader's actions and words, to condemn their close personal friend and ally Justin Trudeau. I mean, they chose that alliance, not me. They still have not stood in this Chamber and condemned what he's done with our province, condemned the policies he's bringing forward, Mr. Speaker, and, shockingly enough, they're not even condemning now the even more outrageous statements of policy that are coming from a potential coalition between the NDP and the federal Liberals. Not once have they stood up there.

Again, Mr. Speaker, they smile because they know that they side with their ideological NDP friends before they do with their constituents. They side with their ideological friends. I see the hon. deputy House leader. She, by supporting Justin Trudeau, is siding with the federal government, with the federal Liberals and Justin Trudeau over the good people of Edmonton-Manning. It's shocking.

Now they want to talk about the budget. I barely have any time left, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you this. It is ridiculous for the NDP, who has already been called out for the NDP's dishonesty, according to the mayors, has already been called out once for that – I suspect more will come soon – to talk about budgets. Well, let's talk about the NDP. They came into power a few days later than us, in early May 2015, and they tabled their first budget on October 27. This government is getting ready to table their budget on October 24.

The reality is that we inherited a heck of a fiscal mess because they spent their time trying to support Justin Trudeau, Mr. Speaker, and now they're still here trying to do it and trying to make up things, misrepresent facts about the budget. I look forward to seeing the budget next week, the same time as almost any other government in history during the same type of time frame. I can tell you this. The difference between us and them is that we won't side with Justin Trudeau, we won't sell out this province, and we will commit to our promise to be able to get our fiscal house in order.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I strongly suggest that we vote down this amendment.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

Seeing the time, under Standing Order 4(2.1) this House stands adjourned until 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:59 a.m.]

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