



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, November 7, 2019

Day 41

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

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

First Session

Cooper, Hon. Nathan M., Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (UCP), Speaker
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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
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Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (NDP)
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)
Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

Party standings:

United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 7, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, the prayer. 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 prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. members, I am honoured to have met with this morning and welcome to Alberta and to the Legislative Chamber this afternoon Mr. Chung, the consul general of the Republic of Korea. Mr. Chung is accompanied by the deputy consul general, Yongwook Na, consul general of Korea in Vancouver, and Ms Hester Kim, executive assistant to the consul general. Welcome to Alberta. Thank you so much for joining us.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have three school groups joining us this afternoon. Please rise as I call your schools: from Calgary-Klein, grade 6 students from Colonel Irvine school; from West Yellowhead, grade 6 students from Niton Central school; from Edmonton-City Centre, welcome to the specialized professional services. Thank you, all students, for joining us.

Hon. members, it's my absolute pleasure today to introduce to the Legislative Assembly perhaps the very best thing coming out of Livingstone-Macleod, the hon. member's wife, Darleen Reid. If you'd please rise and receive – we all know it was true; I was just saying it.

Also, in observance today is a very distinguished group, and it's my absolute honour and pleasure to introduce them to the Chamber. There are a number of indigenous veterans and indigenous leaders who are here in observance of indigenous veterans' day, which actually takes place tomorrow, November 8, but they were here today for a ceremony. If you could all please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly. [Standing ovation]

Hon. members, guests this afternoon of the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo are Cheryl Robb with Syncrude and Melanie and Lloyd Antoine, Fort McMurray residents and business owners.

Also, guests of the Member for Lesser Slave Lake are Herb Lehr, president of the Métis Settlements General Council, and Silas Yellowknee, Chief of Bigstone Cree Nation.

Lastly, guests of the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung, welcome members of the wildland firefighter rappel program, also known as rap. Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly. [Standing ovation]

Ministerial Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

National Aboriginal Veterans Day

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, November 8, is National Aboriginal Veterans Day, recognizing indigenous veterans from the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and the Canadian Armed Forces efforts. While exact numbers are difficult to determine, approximately 12,000 First Nations and Métis soldiers served Canada with at least 500 losing their lives during major conflicts in the 20th century.

Today I'd like to honour indigenous veterans for overcoming challenges, for contributing their skills, and for sacrificing their lives for our country. Many travelled far from home to enlist and left their families to afford us peace, freedom, and all the rights and privileges of a democracy. These veterans contributed valuable skills, often working as successful sniper and reconnaissance scouts, who secretly gathered information on the enemy. Others created and interpreted radio code messages in indigenous languages to evade the enemy. Many of these veterans are from Alberta and deserve our recognition.

In World War I Henry Louis Norwest from Fort Saskatchewan had a divisional sniping record of 115 fatal shots, earning him the military medal and bar. Also during World War I Alex Decoteau, who was Canada's and Edmonton's first indigenous police officer, used his skills as an Olympian to serve as a communications trench runner.

Sadly, after their courageous efforts, all that many veterans were left with were memories of fighting amidst a land of rubble, smoke, burnt trees, and bloody casualties. Many of these veterans died. Others suffered from trauma and injuries only to continue to face discrimination here at home. They fought with courage, skill, and a deep commitment to our country, and they deserve our gratitude for selflessly sacrificing their lives and well-being for our freedom. On behalf of our government, thank you for all you've done for Canada.

Lest we forget.

The Speaker: Lest we forget, indeed.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs will respond on behalf of the Official Opposition.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we honour National Aboriginal Veterans Day on November 8 and Remembrance Day on November 11. As Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to the Canadian Armed Forces I am honoured to stand here today and honour those who have dedicated their lives to the service of Canada. Indigenous people have always played an important role in the Canadian military. Often their determination started well before deployment, travelling from remote communities, learning new languages, and overcoming discrimination and other challenges in order to enlist.

In the First World War over 4,000 indigenous people served in uniform. In the Second World War over 3,000 indigenous people served in uniform. Indigenous soldiers served bravely, and many serve as proud examples to the generations that have come since. Over 50 decorations were awarded to indigenous soldiers for bravery during World War I, soldiers like Henry Louis Norwest, a Métis marksman born in Fort Saskatchewan. He held a divisional sniping record of 115 fatal shots and was awarded the military medal and bar for his courage under fire. Sadly, Henry was killed three months before the end of the war. His sacrifice is like so many soldiers who were prepared to give their life for our freedom.

During World War II many indigenous soldiers shared their own language to support the war effort as code talkers. Charles Checker Thompkins from Alberta translated sensitive radio messages into

Cree so they could not be understood if they were intercepted by the enemy. Indigenous families also contributed to the war effort on the home front. They donated large amounts of money, clothing, and food to worthy causes and also granted the use of portions of their reserve lands to allow for the construction of new airports, rifle ranges, and defence installations.

In my previous role I was able to host a ceremony to honour Passchendaele, and I was able to meet the family of Private Alex Decoteau, Canada and Edmonton's first indigenous police officer. His great, great niece wrote a book about his life, and that is available from our very own Legislature Library. To hear personal stories of this incredible athlete is so important and a great example of how we need to continue to honour our veterans and pass their stories on to the next generation.

I've spent time working with the Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta and The Memory Project. Both of these organizations do important work to connect today's youth with the history and impact of our indigenous veterans. I want everyone here to know that they can reach out to these organizations. Please let schools in your constituencies know that these organizations can help co-ordinate visits from veterans to come and share their stories with our little ones. On behalf of my colleagues and Albertans, thank you to our veterans and their families for your sacrifice.

Lest we forget.

1:40

Members' Statements

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

Premier's Travel Expenses

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has a perfectly usable vehicle parked outside this building along with a driver, all provided to him at taxpayers' expense. He's also been seen driving a suspiciously clean blue Dodge pickup although we don't know who paid for that, but neither of these vehicles is fancy enough for this Premier.

After flipping some pancakes at Stampede, the Premier and his buddies and his buddies' wives whistled up a private plane to take them all to Saskatoon. I'm sure this really made the Premier feel like the big man on campus, and then he stuck Alberta taxpayers with the big bill. That's right, Mr. Speaker. Every Albertan is paying more income tax, more in property tax, more in school fees, more for their insurance, more to register their mortgage or their car while this Premier is blowing up Alberta's budget with his \$4.7 billion corporate handout, then he went in front of business leaders and said: we're broke; we have to make hard choices.

Mr. Speaker, it's this Premier's judgement that's broke. He's forcing hard choices on Alberta seniors, Albertans with disabilities, and Albertans with kids, but when he's partying with his pals and their wives, he chooses a private party plane over the car these Albertans are already paying for. We've seen this movie before, when an arrogant and ambitious Conservative Premier doesn't want to spend any time on the highway with taxpayers. Albertans have zero patience for this kind of free-spending entitlement.

Premier Redford's love of private plane rides brought down her government. The Premier may read a lot of history, but he sure hasn't learned anything from it. He even said that he would do it again. It's time for this Premier to get his head out of the clouds. He must apologize to Albertans and pay for his own private plane ride.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville has a statement.

Remembrance Day

Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise in the House to acknowledge Remembrance Day, a day to honour the memory of millions of Canadians who have served as part of our military and for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Our Canadian troops have bravely served in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, Afghanistan, and many other international military and peacekeeping operations and are well regarded for their bravery and defence of our freedom.

Our nation may not be the most populous in the world, but our forces have had a major impact on the international stage. Normandy, Vimy Ridge, Dieppe, and Juno Beach are amongst many of the momentous battles that our Canadian soldiers played a vital role in.

The Canada we live in today is because of their efforts, and for that we thank them. For many, war is something only observed second-hand, far removed from our everyday lives. We must take time and remember those that paid the ultimate price for our freedom and also acknowledge all of those that have served and continue to serve our country.

I would like to acknowledge the service of my grandfather, Walter St. George Armstrong, my father Jack Armstrong, and my family good friend, Kris, and many others who through their sacrifice helped make Canada and the way we live today possible. Our dedicated military families also sacrifice alongside our soldiers throughout the deployment, the moves, and the family separation.

May we honour their memory and teach the next generation and the generations to follow the high price that was paid so that we can live free. May we continue to wear our poppies as a symbol of remembrance. May we also stand alongside our veterans not only on the battlefields but as they return home. Much has changed in our world over the past 100 years, but the values of freedom, democracy and justice live on. May I sincerely offer my solemn thanks and eternal gratitude.

Lest we forget.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

National Senior Safety Week

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As MLA for Calgary-Fish Creek I'm proud of our active agers, the people that truly built this province, and it is therefore my privilege to address the issue of senior safety.

Every November from the 6th to the 12th we recognize National Senior Safety Week. Throughout this week awareness campaigns urge us to pay special attention to helping mature Canadians stay healthy, active, independent, and safe. In my own family I have been through and continue to be involved in building ramps, installing hand rails, modifying bathing facilities, and doing all possible to minimize the risk of injury. I've also had the privilege of cohosting numerous seniors resource fairs at the local Legion, connecting public and private service providers with our growing population of aging baby boomers, and, Mr. Speaker, I intend to continue to do so.

This year the Canada Safety Council is highlighting the most common cause of injury-related hospitalization among seniors. Falls and related injuries represent a disproportionate number of potentially life-changing and critical-injury incidents in our seniors population. Among seniors, falls made up a worrisome 81 per cent of all serious-injury hospitalization in 2017-2018. This year let's attack this worrisome statistic by encouraging seniors and those caring for them to not only address fall prevention tips to help them

to live safer lives but to do risk assessments along every step of their daily lives. Some preventative measures include encouraging regular physical and mobility-focused activities, providing stability and strength and thereby reducing the chances of a fall, and investment in nonslip footwear and walking aids.

Mr. Speaker, our honoured seniors represent a growing proportion of Canadians, accounting for some 35 per cent of the current population. By 2035 over 1 million seniors will call Alberta home. I would therefore encourage all of my colleagues to make time during this week to visit seniors in their community, to learn about the safety challenges facing them, and to take time to learn and share some practical tips that clearly demonstrate the much-deserved care and respect . . .

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

Budget 2019

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the UCP government released their plan for Budget 2019, my office has seen a significant increase in e-mails and phone calls from folks who are worried about how this bait-and-switch budget will impact them. We have heard from single parents worried about rising school fees, folks with disabilities on AISH, and high school students who are worried that postsecondary might just get too expensive. The UCP campaigned on getting Alberta back to work, yet our province has lost over 27,000 jobs since they took office. They insisted on giving \$4.7 billion away to big corporations and that it would increase investment in Alberta, but last week EnCana took their \$55 million gift, packed up, and left. They told us that we just need to tighten our belts and to put a few things on pause. Now they are slashing the many important programs that help our most vulnerable populations live with dignity.

There are a lot of people out there who are worried about a whole range of different issues in this budget, but, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you the one thing that they all have in common: they are confused about how this budget is supposed to help make their life more affordable. They're hearing things like "making life better" and "smarter public services," but now they're going to have to pay more in taxes for fewer services.

Given that this government has seen fit to spend \$10 million to create an associate ministry of red tape while cutting public services, scrapping social programs, and making it more difficult for our kids to get an education, I think it's high time the UCP government starts cutting through their own red tape. They need to clearly explain the true costs that Albertans will pay for their reckless and irresponsible budget.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Syncrude Partnerships with Indigenous Businesses

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The oil sands are a major driver for our local, provincial, and national economies. What people don't realize, though, is that the oil sands have also benefited our indigenous Canadians. Today in the gallery we have Cheryl Robb from Syncrude and Melanie and Lloyd Antoine, owners of Antoine's Pump and Equipment Maintenance. Very early on, Syncrude worked with indigenous-owned companies as over the last 25 years Syncrude has spent over \$3.5 billion contracting with indigenous-owned companies. In 2018 alone Syncrude spent \$518 million in indigenous content contracts, which represented 14 per cent of Syncrude's total annual procurement.

Because of that partnership, there is prosperity, prosperity for these local indigenous companies and their communities. Lloyd and

Melanie Antoine support our community. Specifically, Lloyd and Melanie support Girls Incorporated of Northern Alberta, they support the Centre of Hope, and they support Keyano College, which enriches our community. They take their hard-earned dollars from oil and gas development and support their families and our communities, too.

Thank you, Melanie and Lloyd, for all that you have done. Thank you for partnering in the prosperity of our natural resources. And congratulations to Syncrude, who have just hit the 3 billion barrel milestone. They have always ensured that our entire community and indigenous peoples have been partners every step of the way.

1:50

The employment opportunities strengthen everybody. When our people are working, they can send their children to university, they can donate to our social nonprofits like the SPCA and the food bank, and local sports teams are sponsored. The wherewithal to address abused women with housing and safety, children with lunch money, our addiction-afflicted with counselling: they are all supported when our community is working.

I know that under our current government and with great industrial partners like Syncrude and with fantastic people like Melanie and Lloyd Antoine, our community and each of us as individuals will become stronger than we ever thought possible.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Premier's Travel Expenses

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, the last two weeks the Premier has said that people with disabilities, former kids in care, kids in the school system all have to get by with less to pay for his \$4.7 billion corporate handout. What he didn't say is that if he wants a pancake party with his Conservative friends, he'll fly them around on private planes and make Albertans foot the bill, no problem. To the Premier. This isn't hospitality; it's hypocrisy. Will he pay Albertans back for his irresponsible \$16,000 plane ride on Air Tory?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, another day, another effort by the NDP leader to mislead Albertans. There is no such thing as a \$4.7 . . .

Mr. Bilous: Point of order.

Mr. Kenney: . . . billion handout. There is the job-creation tax cut, that will create 55,000 net new private-sector jobs according to several prominent economists and this year will represent a revenue shortfall of \$100 million, not \$5.7 billion. We ran on a commitment to stop Alberta's isolation under the NDP, to build alliances with like-minded provinces. That's why we hosted several Premiers, representing 60 per cent of the population, in Calgary. We provided them with logistical support to get to the Council of the Federation, part of our effort to stand up for Albertans.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 1:52.

Ms Notley: Those Tory Premiers supported Alberta long before this Premier's pancake plane party, Mr. Speaker.

A private plane chartered by this Premier for his Conservative friends cost Albertans 16 grand. In estimates today the Premier cited good old-fashioned Alberta generosity as the reason, yet when he defends his broken promises to kids in school, to people with disabilities, to former kids in care, the Premier shows nothing close to Alberta generosity. Why does the Premier think that children

should pay for his \$4.7 billion corporate handout and his friends take private planes?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, almost every line in that was inaccurate. We're getting used to that from the NDP leader. One of the reasons she is the first Premier in Alberta history to be fired by voters after only one election is because she isolated Alberta whereas this government has built alliances. We've managed to get nine of 10 provinces agreeing to fight Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines law. We got nine of 10 provinces to sign on to energy and resource corridors, including oil and gas pipelines. We even got the government of Quebec to join us in suing the federal government to stop the imposition of the carbon tax. That will save us billions of dollars.

Ms Notley: A completely different topic.

Albertans already had one Premier with a taste for partisan planes. They truly don't want another. Now, Mr. Speaker, what is very true is that this Premier is telling Albertans to tighten their belts while he buckles up his for a private plane ride with his friends. He said that we can't afford to fly firefighters into the heart of danger, but we can fly a bunch of Tories into the heart of Saskatchewan. To the Premier. Give your head a shake. Why won't you apologize to Albertans, do the right thing, and pay Albertans back?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, we invited several Canadian Premiers from different parties to come to Alberta to demonstrate solidarity for the 180,000 Albertans who lost their jobs under NDP mismanagement, to show their support for oil and gas, to stand up for the construction . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Hon. members, you would think that you would want to hear the answer to this important question. [interjections] Order.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, they're still angry with Albertans for firing them this April, but happily we have several . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members of the Official Opposition, the Speaker will hear the answer.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, while they're angry with Albertans, happily we had Premiers representing 60 per cent of the Canadian population showing solidarity with this province. In order for them to do that and to get to the Council of the Federation to fight for pipelines, we offered logistical help with one prop plane.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has a question.

Wildland Firefighter Rappel Program

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, today I was joined by 14 brave firefighters from the provincial rap program, and my colleague the Member for Calgary-Mountain View was joined by another 15 members at a press conference in Calgary. They are all part of the rap program, that has been cut by this Premier to pay for his \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway. The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry stooped to even further lows yesterday when he insulted them and implied they were lazy. To the Premier. These brave souls are in our Legislature today. Simple question: will you or your minister apologize to those firefighters?

Mr. Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, the laziness, I think, comes from that member opposite and the attacks that he said yesterday . . .

Mr. Bilous: Point of order.

Mr. Dreeshen: . . . because overall, Mr. Speaker, the thousand wildfire personnel that we have here in the province of Alberta do an amazing job. They keep our forests safe. They keep our communities in the forested areas safe. They do an amazing job, and it's something I'm proud of. We've spent \$30 million for 1,000 seasonal wage positions, and that will continue. It is all demand driven, and we will continue to give the funds to these brave men and women, that do a great job keeping Albertans safe.

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, I'll let the firefighters determine who's working hard on this file, me or the minister.

The rap program only brings on elite firefighters who are willing to literally jump into the middle of a blaze to put it out. Firefighter Logan Mahoney said this of the program's cancellation, quote: we would like to stress that this has a major effect on safety and that you can't measure damage that didn't happen. Unquote. To the Premier: are you willing to put the safety of Albertans and their homes at risk just to save money to pay for your corporate giveaway while you're insulting firefighters?

Mr. Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, again, the premise of that question is ridiculous. We do actually have the human external cargo program, that is an alternative to the previous rap program, and it's something that Alberta Parks has been using for decades. It's a proven technology and its proven methods that actually go out – and in the backcountry it's been used to rescue people. It's something where there's been a two-year pilot program that's already been in place, and it's something that's going to continue next year. That's extra certification to our brave men and women in the Alberta wildfire program, and that will continue.

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are watching as this government refuses to bend, and the rap program, they say, is gone. They left our communities at risk as a result. They won't even apologize for offending the firefighters gathered today. To the Premier. These firefighters deserve respect and to be listened to. You haven't even agreed to listen to them. We have at least listened to them and met with them. Will you or your minister today commit to meeting with them and me immediately after question period?

Mr. Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, \$750 million is going to be committed to emergency wildfires, an emergency fund, for next year. I'd be happy to meet with Alberta wildfire members. I've done it all this year. They are brave men and women that keep Albertans safe. To try to politicize the public sector, I think, is just disrespectful, and it's something that we won't do on this side of the House. Again, happy to meet with the brave men and women, the thousand of them, that have been working extremely hard for Alberta Wildfire. I as minister am extremely proud of all the hard work that they've been doing. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo has the call.

Emergency Management Funding

Member Ceci: The Wood Buffalo wildfire was the largest wildfire evacuation in Alberta's history. More than 88,000 Albertans fled their homes. It required unprecedented co-ordination between all partners. In the aftermath of the fire, Mr. Speaker, the KPMG report recommended that the province invest in a new Provincial Operations Centre to better respond to future incidents and protect Albertans. We funded it; they cut it. Why does the Premier believe

that protecting Albertans in an emergency is wasteful spending and that the \$16,000 spent on a plane ride isn't?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Madu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Myself and the Premier and a lot of MLAs spent this summer at the Provincial Operations Centre in Edmonton to tackle the northwest wildfire. I can confirm to this House that we've got a state-of-the-art facility. All the equipment that they need is embedded in that wonderful complex. What we don't need is to spend money that we don't have. While the NDP would continue with their reckless spending, we will rein in our expenses and bring balance to our finances.

Member Ceci: This morning the Minister of Municipal Affairs insisted that the cut to the Provincial Operations Centre was perfectly reasonable because it's, quote, a functional building, but the KPMG report states that the operation centre is "past its useful life." The abandonment of building a new facility is made all the more concerning with the word that this government is also cutting the rap firefighters program. To the Premier: we need highly trained firefighters and the necessary facilities and resources to keep Albertans safe. Are you really telling Albertans that their safety and even their lives are worth less than your \$4.7 billion handout to big corporations?

Mr. Dreeshen: Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring some reality to the context of what's happening here. Next year we are going to commit \$750 million to the contingency fund for emergency responses. Emergency responses are demand driven. When there is a need, the province of Alberta steps up. Recommendations come through the department to ministers. They go to Treasury Board, and the funding is always there. It has been, and it will continue. That's just the process. Again, the fearmongering that happens on the other side is sad to see.

Thank you.

Member Ceci: The firefighters that my constituents in Calgary rely on are at their breaking point, and yesterday all the Minister of Municipal Affairs would do is point fingers when asked about the \$9 million shortfall that the Calgary fire department is going to experience. To the Premier, one last time: will you take responsibility and restore the rap program, properly fund firefighters in Calgary, and build a new Provincial Operations Centre? Or does every dollar have to go to your \$4.7 billion corporate handout and a \$16,000 plane ride, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs has the call.

Mr. Madu: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. As I earlier remarked, we have a state-of-the-art Provincial Operations Centre that's got all of the equipment and machines that we need. What we would not do is embark on reckless spending. Obviously, we are working so hard to rebuild our province. If we find that there is a need for a new building for the Provincial Operations Centre, we will do that. But at this point in time we have a functional Provincial Operations Centre that works and meets our goals. What we will not do is embark again on reckless spending.

Rural Education Funding 2019-2020

Ms Hoffman: The chair of Sturgeon public schools wrote to the Minister of Education on November 1: "Several significant changes arising from the 2019 Provincial Budget far exceed that which our

rural Division can bear." The letter itemizes \$3.3 million of lost provincial funding this year and says that next year "will mean further draconian cuts and fee increases for our families." The Minister of Education says that her cuts don't exist, so to the Premier, then: is the Sturgeon public board chair lying?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the record, every student that walks through our doors in any school is going to be funded at the exact same level as last year. We are spending \$8.223 billion in the 2018-2019 year. We're spending \$8.223 billion in the 2019-2020 year. By reallocating restrictive grant funding and eliminating reporting requirements, we have reduced red tape and provided boards with additional flexibility to meet their local priorities.

Ms Hoffman: I quote:

To balance the 2019/2020 Budget the Division will deplete our limited reserves, increase fees, and reduce staff across all Schools and Departments. The cuts will be deep and have a lasting effect.

These deep cuts send a clear message that rural education does not matter.

That's from the board chair, Terry Jewell. To the Premier: why are you prioritizing a \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout and making kids in rural schools pay for it?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The truth of the matter is that all summer long, late summer, early fall, I met with school boards, and one thing that they told me over and over and over again was that they want sustainable, predictable funding. We have a new funding assurance model that we'll be rolling out in the new year, and part of that will be the sustainable, predictable funding. Again, every single student that walks through our doors will be funded, is going to be funded, was yesterday, will be tomorrow.

Thank you.

Ms Hoffman: I quote:

The communities served by Sturgeon Public Schools elected your Government with the belief that you and your Government would honour your commitments to our children, staff, communities and to Albertans . . .

The spirit of hope that accompanied your promises to the students within our collective care has been replaced by grave concern for the future of rural education and the communities that are the heart of a vibrant Alberta.

These are the Premier's supporters, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier calling the Sturgeon public school board chair a liar? It sounds like his minister is.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I totally – totally, totally – do not agree with that statement. What I heard over and over again from our rural boards is the absolute support that this government is showing to our rural communities. It's unprecedented. Actually, I was in communities where they haven't seen the Minister of Education in decades, if at all ever. Therefore, I would just like to reinforce again that school boards are in the best position to deal with their budgets, and we are funding every single student. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Interprovincial Relations

Mr. Orr: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are frustrated with our current position in Confederation. Albertans know that we need to get a fair deal in Confederation. Albertans also know that to do this we need allies, and unfortunately under the previous NDP government some of our closest allies like Saskatchewan were alienated and pushed away. To the Premier: what has our government been doing to repair and build alliances to support Alberta's interests? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

You are a lively bunch this afternoon, but the hon. Premier has the call.

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, for the folks at home, the government is not heckling. It doesn't heckle. It's the opposition that's angry with Albertans for firing them last April. One of the reasons that happened is because the NDP isolated Alberta. They picked fights with our best friends right next door in Saskatchewan. They mocked the Premier of Ontario, who supports us on pipelines, on the carbon tax, on C-69, and on all of our vital economic interests. Instead of picking fights with other provinces, we've been working to build a coalition to help us get pipelines built, to scrap the carbon tax, to stand up for our vital economic interests.

Mr. Orr: Mr. Speaker, given that I think Albertans feel that one of the primary barriers to our success and fairness in the federation is Prime Minister Trudeau, the federal Liberals, and the NDP and Greens who are propping them up and given that alliances with like-minded provinces are critical to standing up to a hostile federal government, to the Premier: could you please tell us how the alliances we are building with other provincial governments will help push back against federal policies like C-69, C-48, and the carbon tax, that are prejudicial against Alberta?

Mr. Kenney: Thank you to the member for the question, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to report to the House that in part through Alberta's leadership under this government we managed to secure the support of nine of the 10 provinces and two of the three territories to call on the federal government to not proceed with the no-more-pipelines law, Bill C-69, which the NDP could not bring itself to oppose for almost its entire tenure in government. I'm also pleased to report that we had several provinces speak out against Bill C-48, and I anticipate several provinces will support our constitutional challenge against the no-more-pipelines law.

Mr. Orr: Given that the previous government thought that our best course of action was to forge an alliance with Justin Trudeau and given that the NDP-Trudeau alliance was a disaster for Albertans, to the Premier: can you explain how our government's approach to standing up to the federal government and advocating for the interests of Albertans will be more successful than the NDP alliance with Justin Trudeau's Ottawa Liberals? [interjections]

2:10

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I hear the NDP leader quite inappropriately heckling because she doesn't like to hear the truth about how her deal with Justin Trudeau sold Alberta down the river. She was in his office mugging for the cameras the day that he announced that he'd killed Northern Gateway and that he was going to bring forward the tanker ban. Instead, I'm pleased to tell the House that we even have the government of Quebec joining us at the Supreme Court of Canada to argue against the federal imposition of the carbon tax, that will cost Albertans billions. One of the ways we built this coalition was through the Stampede Premiers' meeting

that brought together Premiers representing 60 per cent of the population in the defence of our interests.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Rural Police and Sheriffs

Ms Renaud: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The Justice minister talks a big game about how he's going to add 500 police officers to take real action to combat rural crime in ridings like St. Albert. Bluntly, he promised more boots on the ground. Yesterday we learned that there are, in fact, no new boots on the ground. Maybe some different shirts, maybe new badges, but no new officers. Why did the Minister of Justice abandon such a public promise to rural Albertans to pay for his \$4.7 billion corporate handout?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education is rising.

Mr. Nicolaidis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government of Alberta at the moment, just for some clarity for the members opposite, provides two very important grants to our cities and to our municipalities. The first, of course, is the municipal policing assistance grant, the MPAG, and the other is the police officer grant, the POG. The province stated quite clearly that neither of these grants will be reduced to our cities.

Ms Renaud: Okay. Given that boots on the ground means fish and wildlife, commercial vehicle enforcement, and Alberta sheriffs and given that all three of these branches saw their funding reduced by this minister's budget – that's on page 150 of his estimates, by the way – why does this minister think rebranding a smaller number of officers is going to do anything at all to address rural crime?

Mr. Nicolaidis: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. Our government wants rural Albertans to know that we have listened to them, unlike the former government, unlike the members opposite, who did nothing to address rural crime in the province. We have listened to them, we have heard them, and we are standing with them. We are doing everything that we can to strengthen crime protection and fight crime in rural Alberta.

Ms Renaud: Okay. Try to follow along. Given that the minister says that none of these officers will be trained and ready until the fall of next year and given that this minister's policing budget will drop below 2018 levels – that is on page 108 of his fiscal plan – Minister, when will you come clean with the people of St. Albert, Rocky Mountain House – you name it – about your paper-thin plan that is actually taking police right out of communities?

Mr. Nicolaidis: Mr. Speaker, the only paper-thin plan was the one that the members opposite were operating from as they were trying to tackle rural crime. We have a robust five-point plan to help us address and fight rural crime within the province, including an announcement that we made the other day regarding the creation of the RAPID force. This force will put more first responders into more rural areas. The government will be creating the Alberta provincial integrated police force, also the RAPID force, as I mentioned, and grant additional roles and authorities to Alberta sheriffs to take some real action on rural crime.

Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Member Irwin: A United Conservative government will not address this issue, will not engage in this debate, will not initiate legislation. Mr. Speaker, these were the comments made by this Premier earlier

this year. What was he talking about? Abortion. Fast-forward a few short months, and what do we have? An MLA from the Uterus Control Party introducing a bill that's all about abortion. To the Premier: will you stand by your words and declare in this House today that you will not support this bill? Simple question.

The Speaker: The hon. minister of status of women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to talk about a private member's bill, let alone one that hasn't even been introduced yet. There is, of course, time and a place to debate private member's business, as the member opposite well knows. I would suggest that the member opposite wait and read the bill in question.

Member Irwin: Given that trans and gender-diverse Albertans continue to face a number of potentially fatal barriers when accessing the health care system, including long wait times for gender-reaffirming surgery, and given that when conscience rights are invoked, we know this can mean that vital services for LGBTQ2S-plus folks can be denied – absolutely unacceptable in 2019 – to the Health minister: will you commit in this House right now to ensuring that queer and trans people will face no additional barriers to accessing health services under your watch?

Mr. Shandro: Yes. Mr. Speaker, the 29 health professions that are in this province who have colleges all have standards of practice that prohibit discrimination.

Member Irwin: Given that a few weeks ago my colleague from St. Albert introduced a motion calling for increased access to reproductive health services where there's a desperate need, particularly in rural Alberta, and given that the members opposite refused to support this motion, claiming it was divisive – but it wasn't just about abortion; it was about access to critical services like birth control, midwifery and fertility treatments – and given that this Premier has also claimed that he will allow his members to vote by their conscience, to the Premier: will you force the entire government caucus to support a bill that hurts access to reproductive health care?

The Speaker: Hon. members, I would caution that it wouldn't be appropriate for members to comment on a decision that's already been made by the Assembly.

If the minister of status of women would like to, of course, she would be welcome to.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's sad that the opposition lacks the sensitivity that is essential for a respectful conversation surrounding issues. Interestingly enough, during that motion half of that caucus didn't even show up to vote, so . . .

Mr. Bilous: Point of order.

Mrs. Aheer: . . . let's talk about that for a minute. Secondly, it's clear, absolutely clear that instead of trying to bring people together . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's clear. It is clear that the goal of this opposition purely is to drive a wedge between Albertans. As the minister of multiculturalism . . . [interjections] You know what? There is an opportunity for respectful discourse in this place. I am honoured to have the debate.

The Speaker: Of course, the hon. minister of the status of women would know that referring to the absence or the presence of a member would be wildly unacceptable, and I'm sure she'll be happy to apologize after question period.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Child Protective Services Caseload

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I managed youth shelters, we worked with kids on temporary and permanent guardianship orders. For context, these were kids whose guardian was the provincial government that were placed in a homeless shelter and often assigned to a caseworker with caseloads of 25-plus high-risk kids. That was four years ago. We knew back then the caseload pressures and the challenges that were created for front-line employees. For four years we also saw the previous government fail to adequately fund caseload growth. To the minister: how are we going to do better for kids?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Despite what we've seen in terms of a cynical campaign of calculated misinformation by the NDP designed to scare and shame vulnerable Albertans, I'm going to present the facts. Unlike the previous government, we have a thoughtful and well-funded plan to ensure that government resources are targeted to at-risk children, youth, and families. Our government increased Children's Services' budget by 8.5 per cent this year, 15 per cent over the next four, and our child intervention budget alone saw an increase of \$68.5 million. That is after we fund the \$5.7 million . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for the thoughtful response to this important issue.

Given that the lack of funding by the previous government for caseload growth has led to increased pressures for front-line caseworkers and given that increased pressures on front-line caseworkers has led to increased burnout and poor staff retention and given that it takes time to fill positions and train front-line employees to ensure that they are prepared for the challenging work ahead, what are we doing to help recruit, qualify, and train new employees to help manage the shortfall created by the previous government's failure to act?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Children's Services.

2:20

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We do have some challenges in Children's Services as it pertains to retaining and recruiting new front-line staff. We have maintained all front-line staff positions within this year's budget. We will continue to fill those positions. I'm also relying on the expertise of our front-line staff and management, who are working together, especially in some of the rural and remote areas of our province, on how we can best identify some of the challenges and begin to recruit and retain more staff in those very important roles.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank you to the minister for the answer. Given that our front-line caseworkers often have very challenging work environments and given that their success or failure affects so many young lives and given that failure to communicate problems and issues within the department leads to

children falling through the cracks, to the minister: what are we doing to help support our caseworkers at all levels of the ministry to reduce potential burnout and the resulting attrition in our front-line services?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Schulz: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to do this review, and we're undertaking this review with the AUPE and our front-line staff to determine some of the biggest impacts to front-line caseworkers. I want to say that we also work very closely with our community partners, and despite what the members opposite have been saying, we are continuing to fund multimillion-dollar partnerships with our community partners to continue to target supports for at-risk children, youth, and families who need it the most.

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

Public Service Wages

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "Neither [our leader] nor the UCP are proposing cutting pay for public sector workers." That was a message this Premier's official Facebook account sent to an Albertan concerned that the UCP would cut the wages of teachers, just before the election. The UCP said that concerns about wage cuts were just fear and smear, but we now know that they want a 2 to 5 per cent rollback for the many hard-working public servants. Will the Premier just admit that massive wage rollbacks were part of his plan from the beginning?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, we took several months this summer to take a look at Alberta's finances. We commissioned the MacKinnon panel for a report to do a deep dive into our finances and to provide a path to balance. What the MacKinnon panel found is that public-sector wages in this province are significantly higher, in many cases, than those in other provinces. We have a responsibility to deliver sound fiscal management on behalf of Albertans, and we will deliver that.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Premier also claimed publicly that, quote, the UCP knows the value of our front-line public servants, end quote, right before directing his Finance minister to seek a cut in wages and given that hundreds of thousands could see their pay cut so that this Premier can pay for a \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout, to the Premier: how can you say that you value the people who care for our loved ones and clean our schools when you're planning to lay off so many and cut the wages of the rest who remain?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, this side of the House has a great deal of respect for those public-sector employees, that deliver top-quality services every day on behalf of Albertans. We believe that our position is very defensible considering the losses that so many other Albertans have taken in the last four years with decreases in pay and in some cases, in many cases losing jobs altogether. We believe that we're providing a very defensible, responsible position going into public-sector negotiations.

Ms Gray: Given that this Premier promised Albertans that he wasn't planning to cut the pay of our public-sector workers before the election and given that day after day in this House the Official Opposition points out the many places where the Premier misled or wasn't up front with Albertans about his true plans, to the Premier:

will you now finally admit that you said what was necessary to get elected and now we are seeing your true colours?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, again, this government took time to become well informed to make responsible, sustainable decisions on behalf of all Albertans, including the public sector. One thing we will not do is reperform the recklessness of the previous government, the members across the House, who drove this province into an unsustainable spending trajectory, spending 4 per cent per year every year, over and above the previous, while revenues remained flat, driving us to over \$100 billion of provincial debt. We will not reperform that irresponsibility.

Edmonton LRT Valley Line Funding

Mr. Carson: Mr. Speaker, residents in my community are deeply concerned that this UCP budget will scuttle the long-awaited west leg of the valley line LRT. The Minister of Transportation has offered them no hope that this project will actually proceed. Instead, his government has snuck a clause into Bill 20 that allows them to pull funding to the project without cause. To the minister: why are you playing games with an LRT line that my constituents have been waiting for for so long?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member ought to know that what he just suggested is not, in fact, accurate. We promised to fulfill our promise of \$3 billion for LRT, including \$1.47 billion to Edmonton. A section in the legislation before this House right now actually confirms that very commitment of this government. The hon. member ought to know better. We are actually looking forward to the LRTs being built in Calgary and Edmonton, and we intend to work co-operatively with both cities.

Mr. Carson: Well, given that the bill before the House gives the government 90 days to cancel that project without cause and given that it's not me saying that the project is in jeopardy but, rather, Mayor Don Iveson and given that this government has hoped to sneak the clause to kill the valley line LRT past Albertans by cramming it into an omnibus bill that also raises taxes, cuts tax credits, and leaves Albertans paying more and getting much less, to the minister: are you willing to admit that you intend to kill the valley line LRT to help pay for your \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout?

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's been well established that the \$4.7 billion is not accurate. Experts have said so. I've also made it clear in the legislation that the money will be available for Edmonton. I appreciate that the hon. member is trying to make a point, but he actually ought to stick to the facts because the facts are that our government has committed to the funding for the LRT line and that our government will deliver the funding for the LRT line. We look forward to working co-operatively with the city of Edmonton in the construction and planning of that same line.

Mr. Carson: Well, given that the \$4.7 billion figure is on page 144 of this government's budget and given that we get nothing but rhetoric and finger pointing from this minister and given that the residents in Lewis Farms, Secord, Rosenthal, and all of west Edmonton are waiting on the valley line LRT and want certainty that it will be built as quickly as possible, to the minister: will you commit here and now to removing this heavy-handed clause from your terrible piece of legislation?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say to the hon. member that the city of Edmonton, to my knowledge, hasn't had any complaints about the cancellation clause in the federal funding on the very same project. I don't know why they would have a complaint about a similar clause in the provincial funding. On that basis, I look forward to working with the city of Edmonton. I hope the hon. member will actually change his mind and get on the bus and actually support the city of Edmonton in working with us in getting the LRT built. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. The Official Opposition will come to order.

The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Teachers' Retirement Fund Management

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that every member in this Chamber can agree on the pivotal role that teachers play in setting our young people up for success. I know that our government values their contributions to this province. I have been made aware of a considerable amount of misinformation surrounding our government's announcement on the Alberta Investment Management Corporation becoming the exclusive manager of the Alberta teachers' retirement fund. Can the Minister of Finance please clarify why our government is proposing this change?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having the ATRF use AIMCo as their investment manager reflects our commitment to make government more efficient, remove redundancies, and provide more value for taxpayers' dollars. Because AIMCo invests substantially more assets than ATRF, it can benefit from economies of scale and deliver with lower costs. The combination of similar or better returns for substantially lower costs creates a compelling rationale for AIMCo to manage these investments. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat has the call.

2:30

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that many teachers have reached out to my office voicing concerns over a perceived loss of control over their pensions and given that this perceived loss of control has many teachers worried about AIMCo's management, to the Minister of Finance: can you assure this House and teachers in Brooks-Medicine Hat that the ATRF will have strategic control of the fund?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to assure you that teachers' pension compensation benefits will be unchanged. There are no changes to the plan itself. The only thing that is changing is the investment manager of the funds. The ATRF will continue to be the trustee for the plan, and it will continue to manage the administration of the pension. The ATRF board will remain in control of determining how the pension funds are invested at a strategic level as well as retaining ownership of the plan's assets. That is, AIMCo will invest according to the policies set by the ATRF board.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the language that has been communicated to my office has verged on inflammatory

and given that there is considerable fearmongering around hijacking of teachers' pensions and, further, given that in all likelihood the health of the fund will improve under lower administration costs, to the Minister of Finance: is there any concern about government influence over the fund, and can you elaborate on the potential health of the fund after making this proposed change? [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford will come to order when the Speaker is on his feet. This is not the first time this week that we've had this conversation.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the ATRF board will remain in control of determining how the pension fund will be invested at a strategic level, and the ATRF will retain ownership of the plan's assets. AIMCo's mandate is to provide the best returns for the owners of the assets that they manage. We have great respect for AIMCo's independence, and we are confident that they will deliver excellent returns at a low cost for teachers.

Drinking Water Quality in Daycares and Schools

Mr. Schmidt: An article in *StarMetro* this week revealed that more than 10 per cent of daycares in Alberta have drinking water that exceeds the maximum allowable concentration of lead. Lead is a neurotoxin that impedes children's brain development. It can cause behavioural problems and result in loss of IQ. It's unacceptable that our government will allow our children to be exposed to lead. To the minister: what action will you take today to stop kids from being poisoned by the lead in the drinking water at their daycares?

Mr. Shandro: It's a good question, Mr. Speaker. I've been advised by AHS, and both I and the Minister of Education have let those school boards know that AHS is there to be able to provide the support to be able to do the testing and to be able to provide any strategies that might be required to mitigate any safety concerns for our children.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, given that the same article identified that a quarter of all schools tested in the Calgary Catholic school board and the Elk Island public school board also had drinking water that exceeded the maximum allowable concentration of lead and given that testing of drinking water in schools isn't mandatory so we don't know how many schoolkids are being exposed to lead on a daily basis, what will the minister do today to prevent our children from being poisoned by the lead in their drinking water in schools?

Member LaGrange: Thank you for the question. Of course, we're very, very concerned about this issue and concerned about the water that our children are drinking. School boards and municipalities are the ones that are testing and monitoring and maintaining water supplies, and as my hon. colleague has already said, AHS and my department are willing and wanting to assist anyone who needs it so that we can deal with this particular issue.

Thank you.

Mr. Schmidt: Given that the lead issues are easily solved – you simply replace the lead plumbing – but given that this government has handicapped municipalities and school boards by drastically cutting their infrastructure grants, to the minister: are you really going to stand in this House and support a \$4.7 billion corporate handout but deny any funding to fix the dangerous problem of lead poisoning in our schools and daycares?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said previously, AHS is there to be able to provide the supports for our schools in this province, to be able to do any testing that's required, and to be able to help them with any mitigation, any strategies that might be required to be able to help make sure that our kids are safe.

Ms Notley: By treating the lead poisoning: is that what you're saying?

The Speaker: Order.

School Construction Needs in North Edmonton

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has done nothing to address the growth pressures of north Edmonton schools. For years now the parents and students in my constituency have been in dire need of a new public and a new Catholic high school. In her announcement there was not a single project to address the needs and concerns of the residents of north Edmonton. Can the Minister of Education please clarify why she's fighting for a \$4.7 billion corporate handout but won't do a thing for the people in the area that I represent?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Education.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the election we made a promise to Albertans that our government would continue to build schools. We have actually carried through with that promise in Budget 2019. We are supporting 25 new capital projects for the education system, an increase from the total amount, increased from the previous government, of 2018. This includes 15 new schools which will be built across the province, including brand new schools in Calgary, Edmonton, Leduc, Blackfalds, and Langdon. Six schools were slated for replacement, and four will receive modernizations or additions.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, given that that list doesn't include north Edmonton and given that Queen Elizabeth high school in my area is in dire need of upgrades to the point that the school board would rather replace it and given that the minister and this government are putting no-jobs corporate giveaways ahead of the needs of my constituents, can the minister please tell me and my constituents and the people of north Edmonton specifically when they will get the new high schools they need?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year at budget time we receive from school divisions approximately 300 asks for schools and replacements or modernizations. We only have limited funds, and what we are doing is building 25 new capital projects in this budget year. Through these significant investments our children will continue to learn in up-to-date spaces and safe spaces, resulting in better successes in our classrooms. We will be addressing future capital issues in the next budget.

Mr. Nielsen: Given that there was \$4.7 billion for corporations and given that enrolment continues to rise in Edmonton schools and they're already packed to the brim in some areas of the city and given that to address the capacity issues, work on building new high schools would need to begin immediately, can the Minister of Education please tell my constituents that she will reverse this oversight and immediately build the high schools needed in north Edmonton? If not, why not?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member knows, there is a matrix in place. Every school division puts in a three-year capital plan, and on that capital plan they prioritize their asks for the upcoming year. Then it goes to our department, and we go through a very long process in terms of determining which schools need to be built and addressed. As I've said, 15 new schools across this province are being built, including schools in Edmonton. Four new schools were announced in Edmonton, whether they were schools or modernizations. We also will continue to build modulars to address . . .

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

Mental Health and Addiction Services

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past weeks I have attended several events on the topic of mental health. Albertans from all walks of life face mental health challenges, and diagnosis rates are higher than ever. Education and awareness likely play into these growing diagnosis rates; however, services are often too costly to access, especially for our vulnerable youth. To the associate minister: what steps are our government taking to ensure that Albertans have access to affordable mental health services?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister of mental health.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for asking this very important question. On this last Monday we announced a new direction this government is taking. We appointed a mental health and addictions advisory committee. They are going to focus on developing a full recovery-oriented continuum of care to help Albertans to create multiple pathways to get the help they need.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that our United Conservative government has committed to investing \$100 million to implement a mental health and addictions strategy and given that during these tough economic times this investment should be made where it can have the biggest impact per dollar, where is this new money being spent, and how will it help people to move forward into a life of recovery and wellness?

2:40

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

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very proud that our government, under a very difficult fiscal environment, committed \$100 million to help people to increase their access to recovery-oriented continuum of care. In that continuum of care we're going to focus on prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery. You have already heard us. We committed to 4,000 treatment and recovery spaces. Within that parameter treatment beds, detox beds, outpatient services, and community support will all be provided. In the coming months we're going to be informed by this advisory committee; more services will be guided through the advisory committee. We're going to engage Albertans at large to contribute what they can to work on this.

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

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Albertans face challenges in regard to addiction, depression, anxiety, and other issues and given that many of us have seen first-hand the potentially

devastating impact that untreated mental health and addiction can have on communities, to the associate minister: how is our government going to help Albertans and communities who have been affected by someone else's mental health and addiction?

The Speaker: The hon. associate minister.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for this great question. You are absolutely right. Mental health touches the lives of our family, our community, and our business. Unlike the previous government, that didn't seem to care about the community, the business, and they don't care about needle debris, our government will provide the support that Albertans need. We'll also keep the interests of our families and communities and safety at heart. We'll balance both.

Statement by the Speaker

Ceremony in Honour of Indigenous Veterans

The Speaker: Hon. members, prior to rising and departing for the weekend or sticking around for the very important Members' Statements and daily Routine that will follow, I'd just like to bring something to the attention of members of the Assembly if you'll indulge me for just a couple of seconds.

Earlier today, as many of you know, there was a ceremony that was held to honour indigenous veterans. This ceremony had a number of moving parts, but the Speaker invited them into the rotunda as late as early last week. There were some errors that occurred. Unfortunately, the Official Opposition didn't receive the appropriate invite to speak at that ceremony or to be acknowledged. That is an oversight on my part. I apologize for that, although the good news is that this was the first time that that ceremony took place in the rotunda. I look forward to that new tradition in an ongoing way in the Assembly with all members of the Assembly being able to participate.

Having said that, in 30 seconds or less we will proceed to Members' Statements. If you are out on the roads this afternoon, please drive safely, and I invite you all to participate in a Remembrance Day ceremony on Monday.

Members' Statements

(continued)

Budget 2019

Member Ceci: Mr. Speaker, the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good is a nonpartisan, religiously diverse association of congregations, unions, schools, and community groups representing more than 30,000 people in Calgary. On October 17 I attended their founding assembly, where they pledged to focus on four areas: mental health and addictions, building community, truth and reconciliation, and the environment. It is tremendously heartening to witness the formation of groups like the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good, but they can't address these issues alone. The sad truth is that they're being hung out to dry by the UCP government in all four areas.

In the latest budget AISH and income support were deindexed, restricting the opportunity for people with disabilities and on low incomes to engage with their community. The government says that it will not impact recipients of AISH and income supports, but the recipients know better. For years inflation has impacted their livelihood.

This government abandoned the NDP government's climate leadership plan, which reduced emissions by 50 megatonnes at the

same time as creating more than 7,300 jobs. The latest budget also cuts 36 per cent from the services to indigenous peoples and completely eliminated the indigenous climate leadership program, a program that was accessed by all 48 First Nations and eight Métis settlements.

These moves have seriously jeopardized the previous government's progress on truth and reconciliation. We see it in this budget over and over. The government is making Albertans pay for their \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout.

Mr. Speaker, organizations such as the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good show the remarkable community spirit that exists in Calgary, but they shouldn't have to do this government's job for them. They need help. When is this government going to stop passing the buck, stop taking money out of the pockets of Albertans . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and speak today about the establishment of the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation.

At a young age I told my father that I would like to be a pilot, and he proceeded to help me out right away. The next morning I found myself down at his sawmill piloting the lumber. I was very fortunate to be raised in rural Alberta and was honoured to work shoulder to shoulder in the sawmilling and forest industry for decades with many great indigenous families like the Duncans, Gerioux, Sinclairs, Desjarlais, Joachims, Whitehorses, Delormes, Morberlys, McDonalds, Wanayandies, and many others.

To see this bill pass through this Assembly, giving my lifelong friends, who are leaders in their indigenous communities, the opportunity to be true partners in the prosperity of our resource-rich province warmed my heart. It's a game changer. That is what my friends have told me, that it will help indigenous communities in my constituency of Lesser Slave Lake and the rest of the province realize a higher quality of life. That is what this historic, unprecedented program is about, the quality of life of the indigenous peoples of our province.

Herb Lehr, the president of the Alberta Metis Settlements General Council, wanted to thank the indigenous minister for spearheading this, saying: he's inspirational, and he cares and wants to find a solution that is to the benefit of all Albertans as well as all indigenous people. Silas Yellowknee, the chief of the Bigstone Cree Nation, said that this is a great step forward to help First Nations work towards becoming fiscally independent.

The indigenous people in my constituency can see the hope and opportunity, opportunity to improve their quality of life and hope that their children and their children's children will be able to live a better life than they have. The message I have heard from my constituents is clear and simple. This is progress, progress that the establishment of the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation will help them in creating a better life for them, their families, and their communities.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka has a statement to make.

Red Tape

Mr. Orr: Thank you, sir. Mr. Speaker, red tape is one of the big issues facing investors and business owners in my constituency and Alberta. A recent World Bank annual report, titled ease of doing business, measured business regulation in 190 countries. It looks at

regulatory standards and red tape burdens on business. Scores serve as a basis for ranking economies and business environment. The report measures processes for incorporation, getting a building permit, obtaining an electricity connection, transferring property, access to credit, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, engaging in international trade, enforcing contracts, and resolving financial distress.

Canada ranks 23rd. This is the worst score Canada has received in the 15 years of record keeping. We have declined the last three years in a row and fallen steadily from fourth place in 2004. This is abysmal. It's concerning that we are not even in the top 20. Our biggest competitor, the U.S., ranks much better than we do at number 6.

Key takeaways from the report: with regulatory overreach, corruption increases, businesses go abroad, unemployment increases, investment leaves the country, and there was a causal relationship between economic freedom and GDP growth. Worse, this report didn't paint the real story for Alberta. The 2019 Red Tape Report Card from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business scored Alberta an F, the worst rating available.

2:50

Red tape has placed Alberta in the category of some of the worst business economies in the world. Businesses have left, unemployment increased, and investment has gone. These are the long-term results of regulatory overreach. We campaigned on getting Albertans back to work and restoring investor confidence. One of the steps we took to achieve this was the establishment of the associate ministry of red tape reduction. Under the federal Liberals and the provincial NDP, Canada and Alberta have fallen badly. This government has made the reduction of red tape a top priority. There is much more work to be done, and we will do it.

Corporate Taxes and Government Spending

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, in the past few weeks we have heard the opposition delivering a message about a \$4.5 billion and now a \$4.7 billion corporate handout. The reality is that collecting fewer taxes is not actually a handout. It simply means that government isn't digging into someone else's pocket quite as much as it was already. While this is obviously a strange concept to some of my colleagues in opposition, it is something the current government takes pride in.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I have also been listening very intently as opposition members have discussed the electricity market. Having run a power plant for the last number of years, this conversation has proven particularly interesting. You see, as the opposition members have rightly pointed out, the coal phase-out was going to happen. However, when the NDP government decided to accelerate the coal phase-out, it cost the taxpayers \$1.4 billion via a corporate handout.

When the NDP government put a cap on electricity charges of 6.8 cents per kilowatt hour and the actual price rose above that cap, it again cost the taxpayers \$800 million by way of a corporate handout into the Balancing Pool. Then, when the NDP government decided to purchase rail car contracts, which, according to private industry stakeholders I have talked to, industry was prepared to do on their own, again it cost taxpayers to the tune of \$3.7 billion, not to mention the \$2.1 billion handout for petrochemical diversification and partial oil upgraders.

Mr. Speaker, the previous NDP government enacted bad policies, made industry suffer, and then bailed them out using \$8 billion of taxpayer money. Our policies give industry much-needed relief, which allows them to continue investing in our province. That said,

when the members opposite are talking about corporate handouts and boondoggles, we should all take heed because it appears to be their area of expertise.

Speaker's Ruling Interrupting Members' Statements

The Speaker: Hon. members, we have a very long-standing tradition of not providing any comments during Members' Statements. There are lots of times to debate the facts in this House. You might disagree with the statement that the member makes, but there is no reason to provide comment during the statement while he is making it.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to provide oral notice that I think we might go past 3 o'clock today for the Routine.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Energy.

Bill 23 Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2019

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of the hon. Minister of Justice to introduce Bill 23, the Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2019.

This bill will amend three statutes: the Court of Appeal Act, the Court of Queen's Bench Act, and the Provincial Court Act. The amendments will honour our constitutional monarchy and the history of the legal system by re-enacting a provision that will automatically change the name of the Court of Queen's Bench to the Court of King's Bench when Canada's monarch is a king, reduce the age of eligibility from age 60 to age 55 for masters in chambers of the Court of Queen's Bench to be appointed as half-time masters and for provincial judges to be appointed as part-time judges, and allow justices of the Court of Queen's Bench and the Court of Appeal to access federal funds to attend meetings related to the administration of justice without being limited to an annual \$500 per-judge amount.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 23 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Bill 206 Workers' Compensation (Enforcement of Decisions) Amendment Act, 2019

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to introduce Bill 206, the Workers' Compensation (Enforcement of Decisions) Amendment Act, 2019. This bill proposes that workers who receive a favourable judgment when they file a dispute with the Workers' Compensation Board will be awarded their compensation in a timely manner as well as have the potential to be compensated for any legal fees that may be incurred.

With that, I request leave to introduce Bill 206, the Workers' Compensation (Enforcement of Decisions) Amendment Act, 2019.

[Motion carried; Bill 206 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Peace River.

**Bill 207
Conscience Rights (Health Care Providers)
Protection Act**

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave today to introduce Bill 207, Conscience Rights (Health Care Providers) Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill seeks to commit to provincial law the fundamental freedom named in Charter section 2(a), “the freedom of conscience,” for health care providers so that these professionals never have to choose between their most deeply held convictions on one side and their jobs on the other. This bill is aligned with existing protections that many colleges and regulatory bodies governing these professions already have established and gives certainty to our valued Alberta health care providers while maintaining access to services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to robust debate in this House on the bill.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:57 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Armstrong-Homeniuk	Long	Savage
Copping	Lovely	Schow
Getson	Luan	Shandro
Glasgo	Madu	Smith
Glubish	Nally	Stephan
Gotfried	Nicolaides	Toews
Guthrie	Nixon, Jeremy	Turton
Hanson	Orr	van Dijken
Issik	Pitt	Walker
Jones	Pon	Williams
LaGrange	Reid	Wilson
Loewen	Rowswell	Yaseen

Against the motion:

Bilous	Hoffman	Phillips
Ceci	Irwin	Renaud
Dang	Loyola	Sabir
Eggen	Nielsen	Schmidt
Gray	Notley	Shepherd

Totals:	For – 36	Against – 15
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[Motion carried; Bill 207 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Are there any tablings for today? The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have received so far 254 e-mails about the ATRF, the Alberta teachers’ retirement fund. I’d like to table copies of just six of them.

I also have a tabling of an article I referred to last evening, Alberta Town Becomes Solar-powered ‘Net Zero’ Community. “The math makes total sense.” That’s from the Canadian Press.

Finally, one more article from November 1, 2019. It’s entitled ‘We Knew’: Ex Oil Boss Says Climate Change ‘With Us Forevermore.’

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-McCall, followed by Lethbridge-West.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of an article entitled The UCP Budget is Leaving Albertans Dizzy, and That’s Deliberate, written by Keith Gerein.

The Speaker: The Member for Lethbridge-West.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two sets of tablings today. One is the requisite number of copies of the flight manifest for a private jet company from Calgary to Saskatoon. The flight flew back empty from Saskatoon to Calgary, costing some \$16,764.

I also have 59 e-mails and the requisite number of copies on the topic of taking control of the assets of the Alberta teachers’ retirement fund from teachers in Edmonton.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, followed by Edmonton-City Centre.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of a number of e-mails to my constituency of Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood from teachers who are quite concerned about this government’s proposal to take control of the assets of the Alberta teachers’ retirement fund. I’ve got 16 e-mails.

I’d also like to rise on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud and table 22 copies of the same sort of e-mails from a whole number of teachers who are quite upset about this government’s plan to take control of the ATRF.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to rise and table five copies of multiple e-mails and letters that I have received from students in the faculty of medicine at the University of Alberta regarding their concerns over this government’s intent to legislate changes to how they allocate practitioner IDs in the opportunities in rural Alberta.

I thank several of those students for joining me today in the gallery.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have tablings on three different topics. The first is nine letters that I have received from folks who are deeply concerned about the government’s reaching into the ATRF, which has been in existence since 1939 as joint governance, and making a decision to move this over to AIMCo. They urge the government not to do so.

The second is letters from teachers about their concerns regarding their class sizes and the complexity of their classrooms and the even deeper concerns they have that things will get even more challenging with this new budget.

The third tabling I have is from the Sturgeon public schools, a letter that was sent to the minister as well as local MLAs, the Premier, and others that outlines the deep cuts that are coming to Sturgeon public, \$3.3 million this year alone. They itemize those and they say that they’re in direct conflict with what the government campaigned on and that they feel betrayed by this budget.

Thank you.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table 17 copies of e-mails from teachers upset around the ATRF pension changes.

I have two other tablings, Mr. Speaker. The first is a report produced by the Alberta Federation of Labour in consultation with

respected economist Hugh Mackenzie where they analyzed the report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances and determined that should the government follow through, it would be a path to economic recession.

Secondly, I have the requisite number of copies of a second report produced by the Alberta Federation of Labour in consultation with respected economist Hugh Mackenzie where they analyze the newly released UCP budget and confirm the predictions of the Kenney recession from their previous report and suggest that these cuts could result in a cumulative negative impact on GDP of 4.8 per cent and the loss of over a hundred thousand jobs.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there others wishing to table documents? The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table an article from the *Calgary Herald* calling the budget "a credible budget plan." It goes on to say, "It pledges to prune back operating spending over four years, yet aims to protect priority areas such as health care, children's services and education."

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table a copy of a letter I received from Alexander Grove. He's a Centre High science teacher. He says that his classroom this year is up to 34 students when it should be 25.

3:20

The Speaker: Are there others?

Seeing none, I have a tabling today. Hon. members, in accordance with section 21(1) of the Child and Youth Advocate Act I have the six requisite copies of the 2018-2019 report of the Child and Youth Advocate for the period April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2019.

Hon. members, we are at points of order. The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise under 23(h), (i), (j). At approximately 1:52 today during question period the Premier specifically was referring to the Leader of the Official Opposition and referred to her as attempting to mislead Albertans. Now, I believe that this is a fairly clear point. You've made several rulings consistently that when a member accuses another or alleges another member in this House has misled Albertans or the public, it is out of order. I know that the Premier knows better. I mean, I assume he knows better. On this first point of order I'm asking for him to apologize and withdraw his comments.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will withdraw that comment. I wish to clarify that what the Premier meant to say was: another day, another effort by the NDP to mislead Albertans. We withdraw. It's clear we're not to refer to a person in the House. Thank you.

The Speaker: I thank you for your withdrawal and consider the matter dealt with.

The hon. Official Opposition House Leader for the second point of order.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise under 23(h), (i), (j). I'm going to implore the members opposite, because this is a similar example, that there is an apology along with a withdrawal as opposed to a backhanded second attempt to again infer what members are not allowed to do directly or indirectly, which you have said many times on many occasions.

At approximately 1:57 the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, in responding to a question from the Member for Edmonton-McClung, spoke directly to him as opposed to through you and said "the laziness . . . comes from that member" right there. I don't know if there's a more clear example of something, in my opinion, that's unparliamentary. That is a comment made to cause disorder. It was abusive, insulting language, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, and again "imputes false or unavowed motives" against the Member for Edmonton-McClung. I implore you to call on the government to apologize for this comment as it was an insult and offensive and to withdraw the comment.

The Speaker: I appreciate your encouragement. I hope that you'll do the same to your own caucus, who had a big problem with this just yesterday in repeating the unparliamentary language in their apology, in fact.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will withdraw and apologize for the hon. member's statement. I think what he intended to say is that the NDP are lazy, which is something that I'm sure all of us here would agree with. Thank you.

The Speaker: We got so close there – so, so close – to apologizing and withdrawing. It's always the easiest path forward. I encourage you to do so in the future.

Hon. Opposition House Leader, it's very difficult for the Speaker when you give him the high eyebrow about how he responds when only yesterday he didn't create any form of disorder for members of his caucus who basically flat out refused to apologize or, in fact, repeated the unparliamentary language in the very loose apology. The high eyebrow is not really appreciated by the Speaker.

We'll take point of order 3.

Point of Order Referring to the Absence of Members

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under Standing Order 23(h), (i), (j), but there are a number of precedents. At approximately 2:17 the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women in response to a question said, referring to this side of the House, that "half of that caucus didn't even [bother to] show up to vote." Now, I'm going to draw your attention to a number of rulings. There are precedents on this, first, in *House of Commons Procedures and Practice*, page 217. You know, it says that "the Speaker has traditionally discouraged Members from signalling the absence of another Member from the House." Again, there are many places that members have to be in order to carry out all of the obligations that go with their office.

There are numerous examples, Mr. Speaker, of previous rulings. In fact, you ruled against me at one point. That was on June 24 of this year. I withdrew the remarks, but you said that "we can't do indirectly what we can't do directly, which [is] to refer to the absence or the presence of a member."

There were previous rulings under Speaker Zwozdesky back on November 27, 2012. It was actually my former colleague from

Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood who referred to the absence. Again, Speaker Zwodzesky reinforced the decision and actually interrupted question period to force Mr. Mason to reframe his question during question period.

I'll also point you, Mr. Speaker, to *Beauchesne's* parliamentary practice, page 141, citation 481.

481. Besides the prohibitions contained in Standing Order 18, it has been sanctioned by usage that a Member . . . must not:

(c) refer to the presence or absence of specific Members.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a warranted point of order, where the minister did in fact break tradition.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. In light of the time this afternoon I might just provide some comments, and then, hopefully, we'll be able to proceed in an orderly fashion. I would say that there may be some ambiguity here this afternoon as to the hon. minister of status of women. An argument could be made that she was referring to the voting record of individuals inside the Assembly, and of course a voting record could be commented on. In this case, because of the language that she used and because of my intervention during question period suggesting that she could apologize at the end of question period, I'll ask the hon. Deputy Government House Leader to apologize and withdraw. I think we've had a good example of how that can be done today. Let's see if we can all get there.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We apologize and withdraw. I just would like to point out that I think what she had said was that 11 MLAs out of the caucus of 24 voted. I don't think she intended to note that anybody was either absent or present. It was the voting record, a matter of public record. We do withdraw and apologize for that.

The Speaker: I appreciate the apology and withdrawal. I think it would have been helpful to just apologize and withdraw so we could all move on in the most expedient way possible, but thank you for the apology.

Hon. members, we are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 21

Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act, 2019

[Adjourned debate November 5: Mr. Schweitzer]

The Speaker: Anybody wishing to join in the debate today? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie has the call.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Always a pleasure to get up in the House. As we continue to debate Bill 21, Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act, 2019, I would very much like to introduce an amendment.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I can hand this over now and wait, Madam Speaker, until you have received the notice of amendment before I continue.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, hon. member.

All right. This will be known as amendment RA1. Hon. member, please proceed.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Just for the record, I'd like to read this. I move that the motion for second

reading of Bill 21, Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act, 2019, be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following: "Bill 21, Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act, 2019, be not now read a second time because the Assembly is of the view that the bill will negatively affect the most vulnerable Albertans, and should not proceed without further input from the public."

3:30

As has been highlighted a number of times by my colleagues on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, there are a number of effects that this omnibus bill will actually have on the Alberta public. It will significantly affect advanced education, the student financial aid assistance act, as well as affecting seniors' and health legislation. It will impact those who are receiving AISH, employment and income supports, the seniors' benefit, the seniors' lodge program. It will eliminate the regulated rate cap that was put in place by the previous government, our government.

In terms of Health, it will give the minister the ability to set conditions on issuing practitioner certificate ID numbers, and there have been at least two constitutional challenges, that were both lost, in British Columbia and Quebec, in relation to the proposed legislation that's being brought forward by this government. As well, for Municipal Affairs, it will enable the provincial government to retain a greater portion of fines collected on behalf of municipalities, and the enabling legislation gives the minister the ability to change the police costing model to charge currently exempted municipalities.

That's not all, Madam Speaker. In terms of Labour, it gives the minister greater authority to define "employee." It sets restrictions on unionized employees for what services they access from the government. It repeals the essential services replacement worker ban, of course, as has been highlighted a number of times by a number of my colleagues but specifically the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods and critic for Labour here, who has brought this up a number of times. It reinstates the specific bargaining unit exemptions for budget officers, systems analysts, and auditors; prescribes limits on termination and severance pay for non bargaining unit employees; and the list goes on. It formalizes bargaining oversight by laying out that the minister can issue confidential directives to employers before, during, and after collective bargaining respecting the mandate, including terms of agreement, fiscal limits, and requests for information from employers, and it does not change exemptions at all.

Madam Speaker, these are but some of the issues that are being brought forward by the Alberta NDP caucus in opposition to the government in terms of bringing forward Bill 21, that we're highly concerned about. We're already hearing from a number of stakeholders in the communities on their opposition to a number of aspects of this piece of legislation. I think that the Member for St. Albert has gotten up and spoken eloquently about the effects that this will have on AISH recipients. As well, a number of other colleagues have gotten up in the House to talk about all of this.

With that being said, Madam Speaker, I will highly encourage all of the members of this House to support this amendment. With that, I will give you thanks for the opportunity to speak.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available on this amendment, RA1. Any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I just want to respond to this motion. I certainly cannot support this motion. Bill 21 is very important legislation that will be required to implement our budget. The reality is that this government has inherited a very challenging fiscal

scenario within the province of Alberta, and Albertans elected us to manage our finances responsibly. We've presented a budget that we believe will do just that. In fact, we've had a number of banks that have confirmed that we have presented a very credible budget and a very credible path to balance on behalf of the province. Bill 21 is a key part of implementing that budget, so I will speak against this motion.

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

Seeing none, any other speakers to RA1?

Mrs. Savage: Madam Speaker, with the agreement of the House, we would like to go to one-minute bells for the remainder of the afternoon.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the referral motion? The hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 21, the Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act, 2019. There are a number of ways in which one sustains fiscal sustainability. Indeed, looking at how much you spend versus how much you take in is an important consideration, and looking at areas where one can save money to ensure that you stay closer to within your budget is a good and reasonable thing. But you also have to carefully think about each decision you make in choosing to save money because not all choices are equal, and with the implications of them, particularly when you are dealing with systems as complex as those of a government and responsibilities as broad as those of a provincial government, that impact so many people's lives, I think it's important that we give very careful consideration to the steps we take.

That's why I find it concerning that, you know, with Bill 21 here, as with Bill 20, we see this government moving on so many fronts at the same time, with, it seems, not a lot of thought, perhaps, on some of these things. In particular, today I would like to speak about the piece in Bill 21 which allows the Minister of Health to set conditions on issuing practitioner certificate ID numbers. According to the government they are intending this as a tool to try to encourage more doctors to practise in rural and remote areas. This is a concern, I know, that has been present in the province of Alberta for some time. Now, I'm not quite sure precisely how they tie that to fiscal sustainability. It is an issue, and certainly the provision of rural health care is an important part of the government's work – fair enough – and they have included it here.

One of my concerns is that this is a fairly significant move on the part of government and one that has been tried in other jurisdictions and indeed been unsuccessful. We know, Madam Speaker, that indeed there have been two constitutional challenges against precisely this type of legislation and this type of move by government, and both times government lost. That was in B.C. and Quebec. Now, of course, we know that this government has no problem with throwing money at losing legal battles as they continue to move forward with their court case against the federal government on the carbon tax and as they intend to move forward in other areas, setting up their energy war room and other things. We know that this government likes to be litigious. Fair enough. That said, I don't think that it's the most practical way to move forward in trying to address what we recognize is a real issue, that being ensuring that we have enough doctors providing support and being willing and indeed encouraged to practise in rural Alberta.

3:40

Indeed, as I said, this has been tried in other jurisdictions. The province of New Brunswick is currently reversing their policy on this. The province of New Brunswick introduced this policy mandating where physician practitioner IDs were given out, depending on where they wanted doctors to practise, and what they discovered was that it was not successful in achieving their ends. Indeed, it created new problems for them that they had not anticipated. Indeed, the Minister of Health in New Brunswick, Mr. Hugh J.A. Flemming, said: "The physician billing number system no longer works for the province. It is flawed because it restricts the number of physicians practising, restricts the mobility of physicians and impedes recruitment." That's the Health minister.

The president of the New Brunswick Medical Society, Dr. Serge Melanson: after 30 years we've come to understand that this is a failed experiment; by removing it, we're essentially streamlining the process so that we can recruit physicians to the province faster and actually give more flexibility and options to physicians who are looking to set up practice in the province.

Madam Speaker, that sounds like they are working to cut red tape. That is one of the flagship policies of this government, but they seem to feel that in this particular instance introducing more red tape is going to improve the system. It's clear from the example of New Brunswick that they have come to see that that is, in fact, not the case.

Indeed, Dr. Melanson goes on to say, "The billing number system has not proven effective in recruiting physicians in any region of the province, rural or urban, and its restrictive nature has actually proven to deter some physicians from practising in the province."

This has been echoed, Madam Speaker, by Dr. Christine Molnar, the president of the Alberta Medical Association. Her observation is: "It's ironic that on one hand, we are witnessing reduction of proven, effective support for rural care through on-call." As we learned the other day, this government is pushing through a nearly 50 per cent reduction in payments for physicians who are currently willing to practise on-call, reducing incentives for doctors to practise in rural communities. As Dr. Molnar says, she finds it ironic that this government is moving on that front in that way while, on the other hand, they're "introducing restrictive policies that will undoubtedly inhibit rural access."

She notes that their rural members "are already stressed by a heavy burden of service." She refers to Bill 21 as "[restricting] access to billing numbers in the name of improving rural physician supply," but she notes again, as I have, that this is "a strategy that has failed in [multiple] other provinces."

Now, it's problematic, Madam Speaker, that this government is moving on what has proven to be a failed policy, that does not actually achieve the ends that they claim it would achieve, and at the same time is making an enemy of yet another health care profession in the province of Alberta. This government's track record on that in its brief six months in government so far is not a good one, looking back to Bill 9, one of the first examples we had of how this government intended to collaborate with the public sector and indeed many health care workers in this province by breaking their duly negotiated contracts.

When I raised this issue with the Minister of Health during estimates on Tuesday, his comment to me was that he believed, you know, that doctors would be willing to take the government at their word that they intend to negotiate in good faith. Madam Speaker, this government has not demonstrated good faith at any stage of their work with health care professions in this province so far. Bill 9: breaking contracts, making promises that they were not in fact

going to seek wage rollbacks, and now, of course, they are. Promise made, promise broken.

Indeed, to go back to a popular trope of this particular government and that many members who are sitting in this House today love to repeat about the carbon tax, this government did not include this intention in their platform. They did not tell doctors that they intended to take away their freedom to practise, that they intended to enforce that.

Now, I bring this up today in particular, Madam Speaker, because I have today here in the gallery several students from the University of Alberta medical program. These are some of the first doctors that will have the opportunity to practise in the province of Alberta under the new rules which this government is pushing forward through their sustainability omnibus bill. To the best of their knowledge, these students are not aware that the Minister of Health has taken any opportunity to reach out to and speak with medical students, who will be the first affected, for their thoughts on this bill. It seems clear from the comments from the Alberta Medical Association that they are not feeling that they've been heard either. What we are seeing and what I'm hearing from these students is that this will not be an effective way to convince them to go and practise in rural areas.

Now, I had a chance to speak with these students, and they've done some research, Madam Speaker. They've looked at other alternatives. Indeed, they pointed to a program, I believe, within the province of British Columbia, where they have outreach specifically to recruit students from rural areas and have particular streams within schools of medicine. If you recruit a student from a rural area, they are more likely to want to go back and practise in that area, and we see that often with teachers and with other professions. That is perhaps a better option for us to explore.

For a government that is talking about how it wants to invest more in the skilled trades and provide more opportunities for students to gain that experience across the province, perhaps they should consider one of the other suggestions that these students brought forward, that being that we work to open up more opportunities for students to train and do their practice in rural areas. Indeed, some of those students spoke to me about how they themselves have done that or some of their colleagues have. Once they have the opportunity to live in and experience those communities and learn more about the particular nuances and challenges of rural health care – because it is different from the city. We recognize that.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, members of the government often speak about the unique challenges that are faced in rural Alberta. So for doctors to practise there, they have to find other ways to approach. They may be required to be on call for a larger area. They may have less equipment to be able to work with. They might not be able to refer to a specialist as quickly. They have to have an adapted mode of practice. So giving students the opportunity to go out and get that experience, rather than simply by force of law telling them where they are and are not allowed to practise, I think could be a far more effective model, one that would not be subject to constitutional challenge at the expense of the Alberta taxpayer. It would not continue the habit of this government, so far, of picking fights and wielding a fairly heavy hand in how it approaches the health care sector.

These students care about health care in rural Alberta, Madam Speaker. They made that very clear to me. Some of them are from rural Alberta. Some of them are from other rural areas. Some of them are from urban centres. But they recognize the need to provide quality health care to all Albertans. They want to be part of that process. They want to support that, and I believe, you know, that all of our colleagues with the Alberta Medical Association do as well.

The path forward, Madam Speaker, is through collaboration, through innovation, another favourite word which this government likes to toss around, but when it comes to things like this, they seem to prefer to fall back on old things that have been tried and have failed. They have the opportunity here to look for new ways, new paths forward, but instead they are going with policies that have been subject to successful constitutional challenge and that are indeed being abandoned by other provinces in Canada. You know, I appreciate what Dr. Molnar brings up when she says – and then at the same time this government is creating disruption in so many other areas, by cutting the on-call pay for doctors, again, by nearly 50 per cent, which some doctors have said is almost guaranteed to put a life at risk.

These students also spoke to me about their concerns about how this government is deindexing AISH, how they are removing supports for vulnerable young people, pulling funding for housing for individuals who are homeless. These students recognize that when they are doing their practice and when they are in our health care facilities, their workload is increasing because we do not provide enough of those preventative supports.

3:50

Again that brings me back to where I started with this bill. Fiscal sustainability is not just about making cuts to balance now, it is making prudent decisions informed by recognizing that long-term investments or even just investments made now have long-term impacts. This government may be successful in lowering the deficit, though on this budget they certainly aren't. Their deficit is up from where we would have been as a government. Indeed, they are on a path to \$93 billion of debt, just barely behind where we planned to go while actually investing in these front-line services, working collaboratively with our health care professions to realize savings and realize improvements.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available. Any members wishing to speak? The hon. member for – the hon. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Always a safe way out.

I was quite interested to hear what the Member for Edmonton-City Centre – to give him an opportunity to conclude his thoughts. I know that, specifically, there are guests of his in the gallery who are very concerned about this piece of legislation. I know that the Member for Edmonton-City Centre supports the amendment because this refers it back to committee for further discussion, for an opportunity for the Minister of Health to meet with students like these and doctors, to come at negotiations in good faith, not through legislation. I'm curious to hear what else the member has to say.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Indeed, that is precisely why I support this amendment and believe that this bill should not be now read a second time.

To continue, these students have expressed to me their concerns that this government is creating this level of disruption throughout the health care system, making decisions like this alongside cutting wages, cutting back on RN hours, making cuts to EMS and ambulance services, which could in fact drive more health care workers, as we did see under the austerity years under Premier Klein, out of our province. Indeed, I remember that my own family doctor at that time, who had served my family for over a decade, picked up and left for the United States. It was no longer worth his while under that government to continue to practise here. This government speaks often about their concern about investment

fleeing Alberta. They seem perfectly content to drive out health care workers.

Like these students, we had physician residents that were here earlier this week who met with my colleagues and I imagine met with some government members. They were here specifically speaking again about investment in preventative supports, in particular harm reduction and other programs, which this government has continued to target and besmirch since coming into power, and expressing their concerns that some of the pivots this government may be choosing to take in how they fund addictions and mental health supports could indeed begin to drive up costs in health care and make their jobs more difficult. I can tell you that those resident students are the ones working on the front lines in the Royal Alex hospital, where they told me that they need more capacity for supervised consumption services because the spillover is landing in the halls of their hospital.

All that to say, Madam Speaker, that amongst many other reasons – again, this is an omnibus bill, which does many other things, including pausing the indexing for AISH, which again these students also have raised concerns about and so many other things – today my reason, in particular, for supporting this amendment that this should not be now read a second time is because of the further disruption this creates.

I would encourage the Minister of Health, when these students return here later this month for their regular advocacy day, to meet with them, listen to them, and hear their concerns. It's my hope that he's listening and that he will make room in his schedule to do that because the way we will move forward in improving health care in this province is not by dictative legislation and a heavy hand and the sorts of threats we are seeing coming from this government but through open negotiation and collaboration in true good faith.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other members in the last minute of 29(2)(a)?

Any other members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I do want to thank the Member for Edmonton-City Centre for his very thoughtful comments on some of the challenges that he has with the bill.

The challenge with a piece of legislation this size, Madam Speaker, is that these types of omnibus bills, again, popular in Ottawa – it's interesting how they're becoming more popular in Alberta now. Normally omnibus legislation is for housekeeping items. This piece of legislation could be broken, quite frankly, into a number of bills because of how many people it impacts. Now, I believe that the title of Bill 21, Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act, 2019, is a bit of a misnomer. I think part of this bill could be renamed the Act to Raise Costs on Everyone, or the Picking Winners and Losers Act.

There are a couple of challenges that I have with this, Madam Speaker. Let's start with Advanced Education. The tuition cap is coming off, something that – you know, I think I can now safely say that I've heard it all sitting in this House in a short seven years. At one point in discussion or in a back and forth a couple of weeks ago the Minister of Advanced Education made it sound like students were asking for the tuition cap to be removed. They were asking government: "Please raise our tuition. This affordable postsecondary is just ridiculous. We should be paying more." That's the first time that I've ever heard of a student or students asking to pay more for postsecondary. I too was a postsecondary

student once, and I can tell you that I never thought: "Wow. I'm not paying enough. I should pay more." So that's interesting.

Now, I appreciate that the minister is talking about a new agreement that they're working on. The challenges when you talk to postsecondaries – and we've heard from a number of them that their costs are going up. In fact, in all of the different places in the budget, it sounds like postsecondary education is where there are the biggest increases, up to, I believe, 23 per cent. So that is going to make postsecondary unattainable for some students in this province. For every student? No. For some students? Yes. I appreciate that the minister has talked about increasing bursaries and grants, but unless those bursaries apply to every single student, you've made postsecondary more expensive and unattainable for some students.

Madam Speaker, I am a very, very big fan of our natural resources. I know that Alberta is blessed with an abundance of oil and gas, a very valuable resource. But in my opinion, our greatest resource in this province is the people, and investing in the people of this province will ensure that we continue to have a robust economy and that Alberta continues to lead the province, the country, and quite frankly the world in a lot of different areas.

In fact, I think it was just last night that I was talking about artificial intelligence and, you know, Alberta ranking third in the world. We're about to start dropping from that position, which is alarming. I think we're missing opportunities in that space.

But postsecondary is a great vehicle, Madam Speaker, to be able to ensure that Alberta is a solutions provider. We know that Albertans are entrepreneurial and innovative, but the tools and supports that help them to be successful for some students, not all, is through our PSE rates. Increasing the interest rates on student loans will make that more costly and more expensive. I'm sure it will make some students think twice.

Another area, Madam Speaker, that's of grave concern to me. I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition along with the Member for St. Albert had a number of guests who are adults that are on the AISH program. The fact that through this bill that indexing is being cut out means that – of course, every year through inflation costs go up, our purchasing power goes down, and it means less and less money.

4:00

Now, the payments that AISH recipients get are, you know – I know the government likes to talk about how they're the highest in the country. Well, when you look at some of our costs and you look at the cost of housing alone, to my understanding, most AISH recipients have just enough to scrape by, so removing indexing is going to hurt these people and hurt their ability to continue to make ends meet, Madam Speaker.

We also see that we're pausing indexing for seniors. You know, the very people who helped build this province, and you have a government through legislation saying: yeah, we're going to attack your benefits by deindexing them. Again, anyone who stands up in this House and says that that's not a cut, they're being very loose with the facts. Deindexing means less money moving forward, which is essentially a cut.

Very similarly, Madam Speaker, anyone who says that maintaining funding, whether it's education or health care, is not a cut – it is a cut. You know, a simple example in our education system this fall: 15,000 new students entering our school system. Over the next four years there will be 60,000 new students. Not adding a single additional teacher or teacher's aide or support staff means larger class sizes and is essentially a cut. There's no two ways to argue this.

In this legislation, in Bill 21, again, cutting indexing or eliminating indexing for the seniors' lodge program, for seniors' benefits is outrageous, quite frankly, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the fact that there is a desire for Alberta to get back to balance in the budget. I appreciate that. I had many conversations with Albertans who said that we want to do that responsibly and methodically. What I don't understand is that there are decisions that are being made. The answer isn't that there isn't enough money. It's that you haven't made the priority list. You're not important enough, because there are enough funds to be able to move to a path to balance responsibly, without picking fights with the public service, with teachers and nurses and doctors, saying, "You get paid too much. We're rolling your wages back," or deindexing AISH, and picking on seniors.

Madam Speaker, within 30 days of forming government, I think, from the election – I'll stand to be corrected – the government announced a \$4.7 billion corporate tax cut. There's money right out of the gate for that, but there's no money for anyone else. Everyone else: you can't; we have no money. Oh, but they did find \$16,000 for a flight. That doesn't count though. It's only \$16,000. But \$4.7 billion for a corporate tax cut: we are still waiting and, in fact, Albertans, quite frankly, are waiting for this to help incentivize jobs, but to date I'm not aware of a single job that that's helped to create.

We've heard of some amazing companies in Alberta that are, unfortunately, taking what they've gotten from a corporate tax cut and are investing it in Saskatchewan, investing it in Newfoundland, investing it in other provinces, or investing it in the U.S., but they're not investing it here. That flies in the face of the Premier and this government saying: "No, no, no. This corporate tax cut is going to help Alberta be more competitive. It's going to help businesses stay here." Okay. Well, you've yet to produce one example of that. "It's going to trickle down, and it's going to help create jobs." Well, again, haven't found a company yet. I'm looking, Madam Speaker, all the time to find companies that are going to use that to help create jobs.

Meanwhile other tools that were helping Alberta companies create jobs have been cut, have been axed. Once again, these are choices that are being made. You know, for me, it's frustrating that we're seeing the real priorities of this government.

Regarding energy, the electricity cap is coming off, so already we are hearing from groups of people around the province that are expecting their electricity prices to shoot up. Soon, Madam Speaker, you can look forward to your insurance rates going up substantially. It's ironic for a government to talk about: we're saving people money. No, you're not. You're playing a shell game, and you're actually costing people more. There's a list of fees in the budget. That means that everything is going to be more expensive, from user fees to insurance to – I'll look to my colleagues for other examples of the costs that are in the budget that are going to be going up. [interjection] Oh, of course. Thank you very much, Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Of course, you know, it's also rich, Madam Speaker, I just have to say. The other side criticizes our former government about the carbon tax, that we didn't campaign on it. Show me in your literature where you campaigned on raising personal income taxes on every single Albertan, because I'd love to see that piece of literature. You can't have it both ways. You can't attack us for saying – we actually did talk about a climate leadership plan throughout the whole campaign, and a price on carbon was part of the climate leadership plan. I understand. I'm not arguing to resurrect it. I appreciate that Albertans voted against it. But they didn't vote for you to bring in and raise provincial income taxes on

them. Not a single Albertan knew that that was something that you were going to do, nor was it something that you campaigned on.

That's in the first couple of sections. Sorry; I'm jumping ahead really quickly. Of course, my esteemed colleague from Edmonton-City Centre spoke about the government's ability to unilaterally terminate the doctor compensation agreement with the AMA. If you rip up a contract and break your word, then your word means nothing. How can any Albertan trust you when you say: "No, no, no. Here's an agreement, but we're actually not going to honour that because it's not convenient." Once again, Madam Speaker, it's not that we don't have the money. No. We spent \$4.7 billion, but just not on you. We spent it on others, that have still failed to produce the results that were promised.

Now, I get that the Premier is very excited about the MacKinnon report and because a couple of economists say that there will be jobs created. I've yet to hear a timeline, Madam Speaker. You know what? The other day I was talking to an unemployed Albertan, who said: "You know what? I need a job now, not in two years from now, when the corporate tax cut may or may not help." When I asked the Premier, I mean, his timeline was: maybe two years. So let's say to these Albertans: "You know what? I know that you have a mortgage payment coming up in two weeks. Can you wait two more years? Then maybe you'll have a job to make that payment." No.

But tools that were helping the economy grow – and, yes, our tax credits may have helped only a few hundred companies, but you know what? They were working. The numbers don't lie, Madam Speaker. We see the return on investment. We see how companies were growing. They were hiring people and helping our economy. Those tools have had the legs knocked out from under them. I'm growing tired of arguing with the minister of economic development and trade, who either doesn't get it or doesn't care, that the numbers for the tax credits were helping to create jobs. It's a tool that was working.

In this bill, Bill 21, again, attacking the very people who take care of us when we're sick, the very folks who are in high demand – I mean, you know, let's talk about rural Alberta and access to doctors and to health care. We have members of the government stand up daily and talk about either a care facility in their constituency or the need of a hospital or refurbishing or upgrading a hospital. I guess the plan is: let's fix some buildings, and then let's not worry about having anybody work in them. That was actually the MO a couple of governments ago, where they would build shiny buildings, and then they wouldn't staff them. The Member for Edmonton-North West remembers some of the schools that were built, yet there was no money for teachers or staff. That's great; so now there are empty buildings.

Other areas of this piece of legislation attacking workers: again, it opens up when it comes to labour, in addition to going after doctors . . . [Mr. Bilous's speaking time expired] Time flies when you're having fun, Madam Speaker. I have many more things to say.

4:10

The Deputy Speaker: There is an opportunity for Standing Order 29(2)(a) to be used. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview sharing his thoughts on this bill. I know that there were a couple of other things that he wanted to touch on, so I don't want to take up much time. I was hoping he might share those because I think those are important things that we need to know when we're making critical decisions about an

omnibus bill that, quite honestly, I think should be renamed the Act to Make Life More Difficult. If he could share his thoughts.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I'll thank the Member for Edmonton-Decore. I'll wrap up my comments here. It is my pleasure to speak to second reading and to speak in favour of this amendment that gives the government an opportunity to pause on this bill. I mean, I've tried to highlight some of the areas that I think are very, very challenging and very problematic for a number of Albertans. In fact, the personal income tax increase affects absolutely every single Albertan, but this one for seniors, for people on AISH, for supports for the most vulnerable, for our doctors, for labour, for our public-sector workers – really, I encourage the government to look at this amendment that merely sends it to committee so that, you know, some of the consequences, intended and unintended, can be reviewed. It allows for the government to have good-faith conversations with the very groups that it's trying to legislate.

You know, Madam Speaker, the labour unrest that Bill 21 will cause is significant. I don't know if you recall, but years ago a former PC government tried to bring in a number of different pieces of legislation attacking public-sector workers. They caused wildcat strikes all over the province. It caused massive disruptions, and it cost money.

Under our government, in four years, do you know how many labour disputes there were and unrest that caused an economic impact on the government or a real impact on service delivery for Albertans? You guessed it. None, because we met with these folks at the bargaining table in good faith. You know what we said? For many of these public-sector workers we asked them to accept zeros for a couple of years because Alberta was in a tough spot. We recognized the private sector was hurting. A lot of people had lost their jobs, but we said to the public sector: "Your salaries don't spike when prices go up. When the economy is hot, you're paid the same, but you have stability because when the economy hits a recession, you still have a good-paying job." We asked them through good-faith negotiations, and they accepted. They said: we understand that we need to do our part.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that legislating to roll back people's wages or open up agreements is an attack on working people. I think it will permanently question the faith and trust that the doctors and others have in this government to honour their word. If you don't have your word, then I don't know what you have.

With that, I will urge all members to support this amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak to amendment RA1?

Seeing none, I shall call the question on amendment RA1 as moved by the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment RA1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:15 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Bilous	Eggen	Nielsen
Dach	Gray	Renaud
Dang	Loyola	Shepherd

Against the motion:

Armstrong-Homeniuk	Milliken	Schulz
Getson	Nally	Shandro
Glubish	Nicolaides	Stephan
Gotfried	Nixon, Jeremy	Toews
Issik	Orr	Toor
Jones	Panda	Turton
LaGrange	Pon	van Dijken
Loewen	Reid	Walker
Long	Savage	Wilson
Luan	Schow	Yaseen

Totals:	For – 9	Against – 30
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[Motion on amendment RA1 lost]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers to the main bill?

Seeing none, I shall call the question.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 4:19 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Armstrong-Homeniuk	Milliken	Schulz
Getson	Nally	Shandro
Glubish	Nicolaides	Stephan
Gotfried	Nixon, Jeremy	Toews
Issik	Orr	Toor
Jones	Panda	Turton
LaGrange	Pon	van Dijken
Loewen	Reid	Walker
Long	Savage	Wilson
Luan	Schow	Yaseen

Against the motion:

Bilous	Eggen	Nielsen
Dach	Gray	Renaud
Dang	Loyola	Shepherd

Totals:	For – 30	Against – 9
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[Motion carried; Bill 21 read a second time]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that the Assembly adjourn until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, November 18.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:24 p.m. to Monday, November 18, at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 1st Session (2019)

Activity to Thursday, November 7, 2019

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 1 to 200 are Government Bills. Bills numbered 201 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills numbered with a "Pr" prefix are Private Bills.

* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the Committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If a Bill comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel, Alberta Justice, for details at 780.427.2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned chapter number until the conclusion of the Fall Sittings.

Bill 1 — An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax (\$) (Kenney)

First Reading — 8 (*May 22, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 44 (*May 23, 2019 aft.*), 79-92 (*May 27, 2019 eve.*), 95-107 (*May 28, 2019 morn.*), 121-43 (*May 28, 2019 aft.*), 166-70 (*May 28, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 215-24 (*May 29, 2019 aft.*), 239-41 (*May 29, 2019 eve.*), (*May 30, 2019 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 246-51 (*May 30, 2019 morn.*), 327-339 (*Jun. 3, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 4, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2019 c1]

Bill 2 — An Act to Make Alberta Open for Business (Copping)

First Reading — 58 (*May 27, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 145-52 (*May 28, 2019 eve.*), 189-90 (*May 29, 2019 morn.*), 236-39 (*May 29, 2019 eve.*), 375-79 (*Jun. 4, 2019 aft.*), 416-17 (*Jun. 4, 2019 eve.*), 448 (*Jun. 5, 2019 aft.*), (*Jun. 5, 2019 eve.*), (*Jun. 5, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 986-1002 (*Jun. 19, 2019 aft.*), 1090-99 (*Jun. 20, 2019 aft.*), 1218-22 (*Jun. 25, 2019 eve.*), 1235-44 (*Jun. 26, 2019 aft.*), 1293-1300 (*Jun. 27, 2019 aft.*), 1313-26 (*Jul. 2, 2019 aft.*), 1329-31 (*Jul. 2, 2019 aft.*), 1347-57 (*Jul. 2, 2019 eve.*), 1357-62 (*Jul. 2, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Third Reading — (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve.*), (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 18, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2019 c8]

Bill 3 — Job Creation Tax Cut (Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment) Act (Toews)

First Reading — 111 (*May 28, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 236 (*May 29, 2019 eve.*), 341-53 (*Jun. 4, 2019 morn.*), 408-16 (*Jun. 4, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — (*Jun. 5, 2019 eve.*), (*Jun. 11, 2019 morn.*), 685-700 (*Jun. 11, 2019 aft.*), 738-45 (*Jun. 12, 2019 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — (*Jun. 12, 2019 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 28, 2019; SA 2019 c5]

Bill 4 — Red Tape Reduction Act (Hunter)

First Reading — 202 (*May 29, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 277-78 (*May 30, 2019 aft.*), 365-75 (*Jun. 4, 2019 aft.*), 432-48 (*Jun. 5, 2019 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 633-44 (*Jun. 10, 2019 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 644-46 (*Jun. 10, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 28, 2019; SA 2019 cR-8.2]

Bill 5 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2019 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 779 (*Jun. 12, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 986 (*Jun. 19, 2019 aft.*), (*Jun. 25, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1135-36 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve.*), 1153 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1195 (*Jun. 25, 2019 eve., adjourned*), 1213 (*Jun. 25, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 28, 2019; SA 2019 c4]

Bill 6 — Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2019 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 931 (*Jun. 18, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 984-86 (*Jun. 19, 2019 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1136-38 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve.*), 1153 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1195-98 (*Jun. 25, 2019 eve.*), 1213 (*Jun. 25, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 28, 2019; SA 2019 c3]

Bill 7 — Municipal Government (Property Tax Incentives) Amendment Act, 2019 (Madu)

First Reading — 356-57 (*Jun. 4, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 625-31 (*Jun. 10, 2019 aft.*), 653-60 (*Jun. 11, 2019 morn.*), 701-07 (*Jun. 11, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 811-13 (*Jun. 13, 2019 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1138-45 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 28, 2019; SA 2019 c6]

Bill 8 — Education Amendment Act, 2019 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 421 (*Jun. 5, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 648-49 (*Jun. 10, 2019 eve.*), 707-25 (*Jun. 11, 2019 eve.*), 781-95 (*Jun. 12, 2019 eve.*), 848-74 (*Jun. 17, 2019 eve.*), 1145-53 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve.*), 1153-62 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve.*), 1180-86 (*Jun. 25, 2019 aft.*), 1255-57 (*Jun. 26, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1258-59 (*Jun. 26, 2019 eve.*), 1266-78 (*Jun. 26, 2019 eve.*), 1375-83 (*Jul. 3, 2019 aft.*), (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve.*), (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve.*), (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Third Reading — (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 18, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force July 18, 2019; SA 2019 c7]

Bill 9 — Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act (Toews)

First Reading — (*Jun. 13, 2019 , passed on division*)

Second Reading — 874-84 (*Jun. 17, 2019 eve.*), (*Jun. 17, 2019 eve.*), 933-71 (*Jun. 18, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 971 (*Jun. 18, 2019 eve.*), 1004-76 (*Jun. 19, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Third Reading — (*Jun. 19, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 28, 2019; SA 2019 cP-41.7]

Bill 10 — Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2019 (Toews)

First Reading — (*Jun. 13, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 847-48 (*Jun. 17, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 971 (*Jun. 18, 2019 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1138 (*Jun. 24, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2019 c2]

Bill 11 — Fair Registration Practices Act (Copping)

First Reading — 975 (*Jun. 19, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1186-94 (*Jun. 25, 2019 aft.*), 1244-51 (*Jun. 26, 2019 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1259-63 (*Jun. 26, 2019 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1263-65 (*Jun. 26, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2019 cF-1.5]

Bill 12 — Royalty Guarantee Act (Savage)

First Reading — 1088 (*Jun. 20, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1186 (*Jun. 25, 2019 aft.*), 1251-53 (*Jun. 26, 2019 aft.*), 1255 (*Jun. 26, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1257-58 (*Jun. 26, 2019 eve.*), 1292-1293 (*Jun. 27, 2019 aft.*), 1393-94 (*Jul. 3, 2019 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 18, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force July 18, 2019; SA 2019 c9]

Bill 13* — Alberta Senate Election Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1225 (*Jun. 26, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1292 (*Jun. 27, 2019 aft.*), 1345-47 (*Jul. 2, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1383-93 (*Jul. 3, 2019 aft.*), (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve.*), (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve.*), (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — (*Jul. 3, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jul. 18, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force July 18, 2019; SA 2019 cA-33.5]

Bill 14 — Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation Act (Wilson)

First Reading — 1654 (*Oct. 8, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1655-77 (*Oct. 8, 2019 aft.*), 1679-95 (*Oct. 9, 2019 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1708-25 (*Oct. 9, 2019 aft.*), 1761 (*Oct. 10, 2019 aft.*), 1763-67 (*Oct. 15, 2019 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1768-70 (*Oct. 15, 2019 morn.*), 1785 (*Oct. 15, 2019 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 30, 2019 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2019 cA-26.3]

Bill 15 — Real Estate Amendment Act, 2019 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1707 (*Oct. 9, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1758-61 (*Oct. 10, 2019 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1767-68 (*Oct. 15, 2019 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1783-85 (*Oct. 15, 2019 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 30, 2019 aft.*) [Comes into force October 30, 2019; SA 2019 c13]

Bill 16 — Public Lands Modernization (Grazing Leases and Obsolete Provisions) Amendment Act, 2019 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1782 (*Oct. 15, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1810-17 (*Oct. 16, 2019 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1817-18 (*Oct. 16, 2019 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1911-15 (*Oct. 22, 2019 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 30, 2019 aft.*) [Comes into force January 1, 2020; SA 2019 c12]

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

First Reading — 1798 (*Oct. 16, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1819-28 (*Oct. 17, 2019 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1915-26 (*Oct. 22, 2019 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1949-59 (*Oct. 23, 2019 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 30, 2019 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2019 cD-13.5]

Bill 18 — Electricity Statutes (Capacity Market Termination) Amendment Act, 2019 (Savage)

First Reading — 1850 (*Oct. 17, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1926-29 (*Oct. 22, 2019 aft.*), 1931-45 (*Oct. 22, 2019 eve.*), 1947-49 (*Oct. 23, 2019 morn.*), 1959-66 (*Oct. 23, 2019 morn.*), 1978-90 (*Oct. 23, 2019 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1990-94 (*Oct. 23, 2019 aft.*), 2037-41 (*Oct. 28, 2019 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 2055-56 (*Oct. 29, 2019 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 30, 2019 aft.*) [Comes into force October 30, 2019; SA 2019 c11]

Bill 19 — Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Implementation Act, 2019 (\$) (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 2053 (*Oct. 29, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2123-26 (*Oct. 31, 2019 aft.*), 2146-57 (*Nov. 4, 2019 aft.*), 2177-79 (*Nov. 4, 2019 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2237-49 (*Nov. 6, 2019 eve., passed*)

Bill 20 — Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2019 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 2026 (*Oct. 28, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2056-66 (*Oct. 29, 2019 eve.*), 2089-2100 (*Oct. 30, 2019 eve.*), 2167-77 (*Nov. 4, 2019 eve., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 2227-37 (*Nov. 6, 2019 eve., adjourned*)

Bill 21 — Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act, 2019 (\$) (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 2026 (*Oct. 28, 2019 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 2066-74 (*Oct. 29, 2019 eve.*), 2100-10 (*Oct. 30, 2019 eve.*), 2159-67 (*Nov. 4, 2019 eve.*), 2193-2212 (*Nov. 5, 2019 eve.*), 2265-70 (*Nov. 7, 2019 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 23 — Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2019 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — (*Nov. 7, 2019 aft., passed*)

Bill 201* — Protection of Students with Life-threatening Allergies Act (Armstrong-Homeniuk)

First Reading — 277 (*May 30, 2019 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), (*Jun. 13, 2019 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 825-38 (*Jun. 17, 2019 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1122-24 (*Jun. 24, 2019 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1124-26 (*Jun. 24, 2019 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 28, 2019 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force January 1, 2020; SA 2019 cP-30.6]

Bill 202 — Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Protecting Alberta's Children) Amendment Act, 2019 (Ellis)

First Reading — 277 (*May 30, 2019 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), (*Jun. 13, 2019 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 838-40 (*Jun. 17, 2019 aft.*), 1115-22 (*Jun. 24, 2019 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 1126 (*Jun. 24, 2019 aft.*), 1882 (*Oct. 21, 2019 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1883-87 (*Oct. 21, 2019 aft.*), 2027-29 (*Oct. 28, 2019 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Oct. 30, 2019 aft.*) [Comes into force October 30, 2019; SA 2019 c10]

Bill 203 — An Act to Protect Public Health Care (Feehan)

First Reading — (*Jun. 13, 2019 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), (*Jun. 27, 2019 aft., reported to Assembly*), 1875-82 (*Oct. 21, 2019 aft., not proceeded with on division*)

Bill 204 — Election Recall Act (Smith)

First Reading — (*Oct. 23, 2019 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), (*Nov. 6, 2019 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Bill 205 — Human Tissue and Organ Donation (Presumed Consent) Amendment Act, 2019 (Jones)

First Reading — 2223 (*Nov. 6, 2019 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)

Bill 206 — Workers' Compensation (Enforcement of Decisions) Amendment Act, 2019 (Reid)

First Reading — (*Nov. 7, 2019 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)

Bill 207 — Conscience Rights (Health Care Providers) Protection Act (Williams)

First Reading — (*Nov. 7, 2019 aft., passed on div.; referred to Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)

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