



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, December 2, 2019

Day 50

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

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

First Session

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United Conservative: 63

New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, December 2, 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 to 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.

Hon. members, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all ages, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by the Brother Anthony choir. I would invite you to participate in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Thank you. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, this afternoon we have a number of guests joining us, a couple of school groups as well. From the constituency of Edmonton-South West, joining us from the School at the Legislature, welcome to St. John XXIII Catholic elementary.

Also in the galleries today are a group of dedicated public servants and employees of the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Actually, let's get those students to rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

I'm also pleased to welcome our anthem singers this afternoon. With that stirring rendition you should be careful; you might get put on full-time. The Brother Anthony choir is a volunteer group, formed 23 years ago, from the Knights of Columbus Council 10014 in St. Albert. They lead the congregation monthly at Holy Family parish and provide holiday carolling at senior residences all around the region. Thank you so much for joining us today. You did a wonderful job.

Also visiting, guests of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford: please welcome 27 survivors of the '60s scoop. Thank you for joining us. Please rise and receive the welcome of the Assembly.

Visiting are guests of the Minister of Advanced Education. Welcome to the Medical Students' Association from the U of A and the University of Calgary.

Also in the galleries this afternoon are guests of the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud. Welcome Nadine Cardon and Cathy Pearson.

Guests of the Member for Edmonton-McClung: please welcome members of Edmonton's Jewish community.

Also in the gallery today are a number of guests of the Member for Edmonton-City Centre, health care workers from a variety of organizations.

Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Members' Statements

Protester Conduct outside UCP Convention

Mr. Schow: Mr. Speaker, this weekend Albertans saw first-hand what happens when irresponsible rhetoric and intentional distortion of facts from the opposition meets thuggish union activists. They attack people who disagree with them. Let's be clear. This isn't some hyperbolic hot take from folks on Twitter. This was real, it was targeted, and it was against a female journalist.

You see, Mr. Speaker, this weekend while nearly 1,700 UCP party members gathered to celebrate our historic win that sent our UCP government to Edmonton with a historic mandate with over a million votes, the NDP and their public union friends took to the streets with signs and uninspired chants, which is just fine. It's their democratic right to do that. But as the Member for Edmonton-Glenora and the NDP's acting leader marched outside, a man decided to attack a female reporter, bashing her with a sign. Now, there has been an effort to find this beta, this thug who hits women, but the union cronies who supported him refuse to identify this violent attacker.

It's shocking that the NDP have yet to condemn this attack on this female journalist, and the union leaders share that blame. What if it was someone from the *Edmonton Journal* or the *Calgary Sun*? Imagine the rightly justified outrage for such an attack on the free press. The silence from the opposition leaves Albertans to wonder. Why haven't the NDP disavowed this violence that occurred at an event some of their MLAs were a part of? It's not hard to say that violence has no place in our political discourse. Why is that so hard for them to say? Their lack of condemnation – it's just sad, Mr. Speaker.

A few short months ago Albertans fired the NDP for their complete and total failure. We know they're still mad at Albertans for firing them, but we surely can all come together and condemn violence. The fact that they have yet to condemn an act of violence against a female journalist is simply shameful.

Health Care Workforce

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I'll be putting forward a motion for emergency debate on this government's intention to terminate over 5,000 public front-line health care positions, including nurses, lab technologists, and many more. To explain why, I'd like to share some of what I've heard from these workers themselves in just the past two days.

From an RN:

I work in the busiest emergency department in western Canada, which is also one of two trauma centres in Edmonton. Today alone, I received 21 messages asking me to come in for overtime.

From a resident physician:

I am currently doing a rural rotation in Peace River Alberta – when I do overnight shifts in the [ER,] there are only 2 nurses . . . to assist with patients brought in from the periphery . . . If nursing jobs are cut province wide then rural hospitals who are most in need of extra nursing help will be impacted.

From another family physician:

[With] cutting nursing jobs, the UCP are also directly threatening not only primary care but also, I believe, medicare . . . I have no doubt [that they] will be effective

in bringing forward a two-tiered system in our province.

I can't possibly work more hours or days without affecting my mental health, work-life balance, or patient care. I know many family physicians feel the same.

From another RN:

I work 12 hours, seven days a week, holidays, weekends, and nights. I work short-staffed. I work with sick babies, a very difficult and stressful job. Please invite the Premier to spend one 12-hour shift with a nurse before he decides to do anything with our wages.

From resident students I met with today and who sit here in this gallery, they told me that cuts to nurses and other allied professionals will only hamper the ability of rural physicians to provide effective patient care.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to stop. It needs to back up. It needs to listen to the front-line workers, who provide the care that Albertans depend on, about the impacts that their reckless cuts to pay their \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway to big corporations are going to have on patient care in Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East has the call.

1:40

Capitalism

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few short weeks ago the NDP joined an Extinction Rebellion protest outside of the Legislature. They stood alongside people shouting and screaming for the total shutdown of our economy. They lined up beside antipipeline, anti-oil, and anti-Alberta signs and nodded along as the crowd screamed that we must keep oil in the ground. The NDP then joined the virtue-signalling cheers as Greta Thunberg took the stage. Now, we know that Greta would fit right in with the anti-oil and gas rhetoric of the NDP and their Extinction Rebellion friends, but what we didn't know is that she would fit into the anticapitalist rhetoric of Alberta's left as well. The free-market system, that Extinction Rebellion, the NDP, and Ms Thunberg call colonial, racist, and patriarchal systems of oppression, is what built our modern world.

Alberta's indigenous communities are standing up for themselves, demanding to have their voices heard as they fight to lift their people from poverty to prosperity and build new opportunities for themselves. We are proud to help provide the support they need to tell their story to the eco colonialists who want to speak over the voices of our indigenous peoples.

In case the radical activists of the left have forgotten: global poverty is dropping and has been for decades. Why? Because of capitalism. Since the 1980s the expansion of free-market capitalism and free trade access across the world meant that two billion people who previously lived in extreme poverty no longer do so. Modern miracles are saving lives through the transformative innovation in health care. Why? Because of capitalism. Global hunger is declining, and new high-tech crops are being developed to combat hunger at its source. Why? Because of capitalism.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans know that the Leap Manifesto, Extinction Rebellion, leave it in the ground, antipipeline NDP and their friends have never supported the systems that built our modern world. But on this side of the House we are thankful for the prosperity, the progress, the modern miracles made possible through and because of innovation, ingenuity, and the creativity of capitalism.

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

Health Care Professionals

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend we learned of the 5,100 front-line health care workers, and counting, that this

government is set to axe. Who are these folks? Well, we've all had personal experience with them, so I'll share some of mine.

They are the nurses and health care aides that came running when my friend who had just undergone cancer surgery pressed her call button 10 days ago at the Royal Alex. They are the people in medical device reprocessing who ensured that the scalpel and other medical tools used during that surgery were sterile and safe. They were the paramedics who picked my grandma literally up off the floor of her long-term care facility and safely assessed and transported her to the emergency department, where she later underwent emergency hip replacement surgery, following the traumatic fall that she had. They are the folks who worked in the kitchen of her long-term care facility, who cooked and modified the meals to ensure that she was nourished in her final years. They are the X-ray techs who diligently took X-rays of my broken wrist before and after surgery to ensure it was healing properly. They are the OTs and PTs who helped me regain strength and mobility while helping me learn to manage the pain. They are the allied health professionals who helped my mom fight cancer, like the social workers, psychologists, and radiation techs at the Cross Cancer Institute. They are the home-care teams, RNs, LPNs, HCAs who came to my parents' home to care for my dad and for us as we helped him die at home.

Let's be clear that the 5,100 positions don't count attacks on family physicians, these families' physicians who tell patients that their child has kidney disease or autism or mental illness. While we fight for these folks and work to do the right thing for families in this province, it's hard to stomach these cuts, Mr. Speaker, cuts that don't need to be like this, cuts that are precipitated by the \$4.7 billion corporate giveaway to corporations. While this Premier, cabinet, and entire UCP caucus keep putting their friends and insiders first, giving away billions and asking ordinary families to pay the price for it, I don't want you to just think about the 5,100 people who received notice last week; I want you to also think about all the people they serve.

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

Budget 2019 and Government Spending Reductions

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was managing the Mustard Seed shelter, I was left with the daunting task of reducing our budget by 20 per cent. The downturn in the economy left us short, with 30 days to figure out how we could move forward with less. My team and I walked through our systems. We evaluated everything that we did. Our determination to not leave the people that we served out in the cold led us to what I would call transformational change. We refined our systems. We increased efficiencies. We got back to our core strategy of community mobilization, and we called on Calgarians to help.

Mr. Speaker, what happened next I would call nothing short of a miracle. Volunteers from the community took over our shelter floor. Many of our staff changed their focus from providing basic services to supporting those volunteers. Others were redirected towards advocacy, housing, aftercare. We saw hundreds of people moving out of our shelter. This was not an easy time, but we got through it, and it only helped us to become better at what we do.

Alberta is once again facing tough times, and like my team was asked back in 2008, we are asking government, school boards, municipalities, Albertans to help us get back on a path to balance with as little disruption to front-line services as possible. It will not be easy, but I know that with ingenuity and the passion of Albertans we can find those opportunities. If done right, we will revolutionize how we do government.

The good news is that despite all the fear rhetoric that we are hearing, we are not looking for deep, draconian cuts but looking for a mere 2.8 cents on the dollar. Cuts are never easy. Decisions around this budget were not made lightly, but I strongly believe that this exercise will also lead to increased government efficiency and the transformational change that will aid us in providing high-quality government services long into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Election Commissioner

Ms Sweet: Mr. Speaker, Friday certainly was a busy day for members of this Assembly and the government. While the UCP was gearing up for their AGM, members and the media were scrambling to keep up with the flurry of activities. It would have been easy for very important revelations to have been missed as health care and government workers learned about the devastating job losses on the way in this province. That revelation took place during the Legislative Offices meeting on Friday, during the much-anticipated presentation to the committee by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Just a week after the passing of Bill 22, that we were told would save taxpayer money and that terminated the Election Commissioner and rolled the responsibility for that office into the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, we, the members of the Assembly, the media, and the public learned what this would mean for democracy and the ongoing investigation of the Election Commissioner's office.

So what did we learn? We learned that, contrary to the government's assertion, this move would not save Albertans money. The Chief Electoral Officer confirmed that his budget for investigations was, in fact, \$100,000 more and that that is without the salary of the Election Commissioner himself. Yes, you heard right. In comparing the budget that had been prepared by the Election Commissioner with the budget prepared by the Chief Electoral Officer, there's actually more money needed. We also learned that 76 complaints have not been investigated at all, complaints stemming from the spring 2019 election.

Mr. Speaker, this has given rise to a looming question for many Albertans. If the elimination of the Election Commissioner, Lorne Gibson, who has levied more than \$200,000 in fines to people close to the Premier and his party, was not about saving money, what other possible rationale could there be? Sometimes you just have to call a spade a spade and ask yourself: what is the UCP hoping may be missed under the guise of cost savings? Our democratic institutions demand that we continue to dig until we find the answers.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie.

Northern Alberta Development Council

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northern Alberta Development Council, known as NADC, was established in 1963. The NADC is a provincial government agency that investigates northern Alberta's social and economic development priorities, programs, and services to ensure supports meet the needs of northern residents. The council is tasked with producing quality regional development information, supporting education and skills enhancements, and building strategic partnerships. The NADC's vision is to create "a stronger Alberta through a stronger north."

In support of continued development of the north, the NADC has identified several priorities, including timely communication with government and northerners, the development of a skilled and educated local workforce, the continuation of a robust, diversified economy, and providing ongoing support for strong and vibrant

northern communities. I am proud of my recent appointment as chair of the NADC and look forward to meeting with the council next week to get started in this new role.

Encompassing over 60 per cent of Alberta's total land mass, the NADC region accounts for approximately 9 per cent of Alberta's population and includes 18 municipal districts. The NADC is working hard on a number of initiatives that will bring economic prosperity and opportunities for communities across northern Alberta. Some recent initiatives of the NADC include research on broadband access in the north, particularly in rural and remote areas; geothermal energy development; and the potential for processing flax fibre. In addition, for over 40 years the NADC has offered bursary programs to help attract and retain skilled professionals in demand throughout the north. In 2018-19 the NADC distributed over \$1.5 million in bursaries to recipients.

I am excited about the role that the NADC and the north can play in Alberta's economic recovery as we work hard to get Albertans back to work. This is another promise made, promise kept, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

Nursing Workforce

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This UCP government ran on an explicit commitment to balance the budget "without cutting front-line services." It's right there on page 12 of their platform. Now we all know that that was intentionally designed to mislead Albertans. Alberta is going to lose more than a thousand RNs and LPNs in order to pay for this government's \$4.7 billion corporate handout, and that's just the start. This Premier made a serious promise to Albertans in writing, and now he's breaking it. Why should Albertans ever – ever – trust a thing he says again?

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's ridiculous, and that's what you see from the Official Opposition and that hon. member in particular. That's the kind of leadership that you see, her party misleading Albertans, causing fear all across this province. It's absolutely ridiculous. What we want and I'm so proud to have is a Premier that is showing true leadership today in Toronto, who got a deal, unanimous consent of every province and territory, to fight against Bill C-69, the no more pipelines bill. When that hon. member was the Premier, it took her 200 days to even send an official down to Ottawa to defend our province.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are probably 30 or 40 nurses up there, and I can't believe how disrespectful that answer was to the question I just asked. Nurses are the very definition of front-line health care workers. When Albertans are sick or injured, they're the ones who are there to take care of them. In their letter, that was sent on Friday, in black and white AHS says, "We need to be more efficient and focused." To the Premier: what on earth does a health care system focus on if it's not the workers who are right at the patient's bedside? Why didn't he tell Albertans he was going to fire them by the thousands?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government remains committed to defending front-line workers, to defending front-line services inside Alberta Health Services. What this NDP Official

Opposition continues to do is fear and smear, misrepresent facts, mislead Albertans, and cause fear all across this province. That's not leadership. That's not leadership with that hon. member now, but she did not lead the way when she was the Premier of Alberta either. She's created the situation that we find ourselves in. This party, this Premier will lead the way. We'll keep our promises to Albertans, and we'll get this province back on track. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, the stuff I am talking about is in black and white in letters from AHS. Even that House leader can't deny that. We warned that this government's \$4.7 billion corporate handout would mean mass layoffs of critical front-line health care providers, and not surprisingly they said that it was fear and smear. Now we know what it actually was, the truth. Here's another warning: you can't dismiss thousands of health care workers without harming patient care and Albertans. Albertans did not vote for an attack on their health. Why won't this government reverse these dishonest and cruel cuts?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier said Saturday, we respect our front-line health care workers. We want to work in partnership with them to get our province back on track. We will continue to call upon them as our partners to find ways to be able to help get our province back on track because that's true leadership from the Premier. Unlike that member when she was the Premier of Alberta, who took 200 days to even go to Ottawa to defend us on Bill C-69, you see true leadership now from the Premier in Toronto today, who has gotten a deal, unanimous consent of every leader of every province or territory inside this country, to defend our province. That's leadership.

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

Health Care Services

Ms Notley: Friday's letter from AHS, which is actually what we're talking about, also says that they're considering repurposing and relocation of services. The government likes to talk about its rural representation, so I sure hope rural members are listening to this, because Friday's letter means moving services out of rural hospitals into the cities. It means moving jobs out of rural communities. No surprise when this government takes its marching orders from a woman who closed 53 rural hospitals. Why is this government so quick to betray rural Alberta?

Mr. Jason Nixon: All rural MLAs on this side of the House will never be lectured by that member when it comes to defending rural Alberta. We have stood in this Chamber and defended our homes over and over from that member when she was Premier, who attacked our communities over and over. That's not leadership. We have a Premier and a party that are in charge now and that are focused on leading, getting our province back on track. The Premier showed it yet again in Toronto, a focus on leadership. They're focused on fear and smear, misleading Albertans, and causing fear all across the province. Mr. Speaker, through you, shame on them. [interjections]

The Speaker: If I could provide a bit of advice for the members of the opposition: if you're going to be heckling, it should probably be parliamentary.

The Leader of the Official Opposition has the call.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, AHS says that acute-care beds will close "as continuing care beds open" as well, so rural MLAs with a new continuing care facility in their riding should look forward to their hospitals being threatened with closure. Indeed, the House leader might remember that AHS tried to do this in Sundre, and the previous Minister of Health put a stop to it. So what will the House leader tell the people of Sundre when his government tries once again to close his hospital? And, please, can the member give me a heads-up when that press conference starts? I really want to be there for that one.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would like to come to Sundre or Rocky Mountain House or Rimbey, she can come any time. In fact, I tried to get her to do it several times when she was the Premier of Alberta, but she continued to ignore rural Alberta.

Here's what's happening. The opposition continues to mislead Albertans. That's what I tell the people of Sundre. It's disappointing to see their ridiculous behaviour. Shame on them. Mr. Speaker, through you to them, shame on them. I can assure Albertans that this government will keep its promises, will continue to defend front-line health care services, and will continue to lead the way, unlike what the NDP did, which was repeatedly sell out this province over and over and over.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I did was that I protected the Sundre hospital, and the member opposite is going to sit quiet while it's once again threatened.

Now, the AHS letter also specifically warns of "reducing or ceasing the provision of services." Now, this is just another in a long list of broken promises and misinformation provided by the UCP to Albertans during their campaign. Can the Premier please advise this House exactly which services will no longer be provided by this government, or, to put it plainly, which services will Albertans only access if they are super rich and have lots of cash in their pocket?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the people of Sundre know who will stand up for them. It's this side of the House and certainly not that hon. member, who went out of the way to make their lives so much worse when she was the Premier of Alberta.

Here are the facts. You see the way they approach this, which is to mislead Albertans, cause fear, cause smear, scare people by misleading them and misrepresenting facts. I can assure Albertans, through you, Mr. Speaker, that under the leadership of our Premier they will continue to see leadership, just like today in Ontario, where we will build bridges. They're going to destroy bridges. We will build bridges and defend this province each and every day.

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

Ms Notley: Actually, Mr. Speaker, it's reading letters in black and white from this government that causes fears for Albertans. On Friday, in doing that, they also learned that this government is considering a plan to close acute-care beds for every continuing care bed that is opened. The Health minister had previously said that this number is roughly 1,700. Now, many Albertans who should be in continuing care are currently in acute-care beds – we know that – and that's why we kept our election promise, something you guys should try sometime, and opened more than 2,000 new beds. However, we need acute-care beds to stay open in order to reduce surgical wait times. So has this Premier abandoned . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, that's all they can do. All they can do is misrepresent facts, fear and smear, make things up. It's so disappointing. I'm so glad that we have true leadership inside this province. Today the Premier also got a unanimous consent deal with all the Premiers, of every province and territory, when it comes to fighting for equalization rebates inside this province, bringing equalization back here to Alberta. That's leadership. That's leadership. We're proud of him for that. When you contrast that to this ridiculous behaviour, this fear and smear and making things up, I'm so grateful that we finally have real leadership in this province.

Ms Notley: So disrespectful.

You know, this government is also considering an American-style plan to privatize emergency medical services. Imagine an ambulance system that is designed to maximize shareholder value at the expense of Albertans' safety. Alberta's paramedics work incredibly hard, and they work through some of the most emotionally demanding circumstances. Why is this government punishing them and the people whose emergencies they respond to with threats to sell off the province's ambulance system?

2:00

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, you can't believe anything that's coming from the opposition. They misrepresent facts. They cause fear. They make things up, the NDP, just like when they told the minister of culture that she had bought \$35,000 worth of liquor. You can't believe them. That's not leadership. I'm proud that we have a government in charge right now that is willing to lead the way, that's going to keep its promises to Albertans and is going to get us back on track, all the while defending front-line public services, including health care, because that's important.

Ms Notley: This member is denying the black-and-white words and the letters that have been sent by this government to Albertans. I can't believe that he will not take responsibility for it, Mr. Speaker. It is so shameful.

Now, on Friday we learned that this government plans to fire more than 5,000 front-line health care workers, close health care facilities, close beds, and cease some services altogether. This is a complete abandonment of their promise to Albertans. Will they at the very least agree to an emergency debate so that Albertans can learn why this government decided to break so many promises to Albertans?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, this government promised Albertans that they would defend front-line services, and we still continue to do that. We also promised Albertans that we would fix the fiscal mess that that one-term Premier created in this province. She failed this province. She created the worst fiscal situation in the history of this province. This side of the House promised that we would fix it while protecting front-line services. We will keep that promise to Albertans. That member should really stand in this House and apologize for what she did when she was Premier.

Election Commissioner

Ms Sweet: "It's going to save taxpayers' money": that was this Premier attempting to justify his government's corrupt Bill 22 just one week ago in this House. He hid in Texas while his government raced to fire the very man investigating his fraud-filled leadership campaign, but we learned Friday it will in fact spend \$100,000 more to run the commissioner's office under Elections Alberta. To the

Premier: will you admit this corrupt piece of legislation was never about saving taxpayers' money; it was only about saving yourself?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, yet another example of what I'm talking about. You can't trust the NDP. They mislead Albertans, and they make things up. The Chief Electoral Officer actually said that there would be a savings of approximately \$390,000. Honestly, it's time for the Official Opposition to stop making things up . . .

Ms Notley: Why don't you stop lying?

Mr. Jason Nixon: . . . and start doing their job and representing Albertans. What they are doing is a complete disservice to this province.

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, through you to them: shame on you; do your job.

The Speaker: Hon. members, a point of order is noted at 2:03.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Well, actually, Mr. Speaker, the CEO of Elections Alberta actually said that he was asking \$100,000 more than the Election Commissioner. The Premier deemed the Election Commissioner's office to be completely unnecessary and redundant, but it also surfaced during a Friday committee meeting that 76 investigations haven't been started. That's 76 cases where justice hasn't been served or maybe never will be served with this Premier calling the shots. To the Premier: will you admit that you want to slow down investigations into election fraud or cancel them altogether, and is it because you deceived Albertans in your bid to become a leader?

Mr. Hunter: Point of order.

The Speaker: I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning should be very, very cautious with the use of her words when she makes suggestions that an hon. member of the House would deceive.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, you can't even bother, in my opinion. I'm not even going to try to answer that question because they continue to make things up. As I said: the Chief Electoral Officer said that the costs will be reduced by \$390,000. Yes, his overall budget is higher. Do you know why? Because of increased costs because of municipal elections, to be able to bring in and handle the regulations brought in by the former NDP government. That hon. member knows that but is continuing to create fear and smear across this province. It's all the NDP have. It's why Albertans fired them.

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

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to see that the House leader has finally admitted that it is higher.

We've kept our commitments to Albertans: that was this Premier once again attempting to downplay this government's corrupt Bill 22. It's not saving money. It's not cutting redundancies. In fact, Elections Alberta is going to rehire the commissioner's position, just likely not the guy that was investigating the Premier. It isn't certainly something this Premier ever mentioned on the campaign trail. To the Premier: if I'm wrong, tell me on which page your huge platform talks about firing the man investigating your fraudulent leadership?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, you see exactly why Albertans don't believe the NDP, and they shouldn't. That member yet again knows that the Chief Electoral Officer has said that there's a \$390,000 saving from the redundancies of bringing the office together. Yes, there's an increase to be able to cover the costs associated with the municipal election changes, and that hon. members knows that. That's what you get from the NDP: misleading Albertans, fear and smear, going out of their way. That's why Albertans don't trust them, that's why they were fired in April, and that's why they're the only one-term government in the history of this province. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. We are a lively bunch today. [interjections] Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

Holocaust Memorial on Legislature Grounds

Ms Issik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard from members of the Jewish community about the current state of the Holocaust memorial here on the Legislature Grounds. When it comes to the Holocaust, we have a duty, a duty to remember. This memorial, erected by the Edmonton Jewish community in partnership with the government of Alberta, is part of the way we remember. It is part of the way we respect those who suffered and died in the Shoah. To the Minister of Infrastructure: are you aware of the concerns surrounding the memorial's state of disrepair, and will your department be taking action to resolve this issue?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for bringing this issue to the attention of the House. I have been made aware that the Jewish community has concerns about the state of the memorial, and I can tell the Assembly that I'm committed to working with the Edmonton Jewish community to ensure the condition of the memorial is restored. I know that all the members of this House agree with me that we have a duty of remembering, and learning the lessons of the Holocaust is an incredibly important one.

Ms Issik: Mr. Speaker, given that the minister is aware of the problem and committed to taking action to remedy it and given that, among other issues, it seems that discoloration of the memorial is a significant problem, can you expand on exactly what will be done to ensure that these problems are resolved?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, I can report to the House that I have already met with the members of the Jewish community to discuss their concerns. One issue is the natural discoloration of the bronze material that the memorial is made of, and another issue, I'm told, is the natural settling and cracking of the concrete. I'll work with the Jewish community as per our 2003 agreement that is in place regarding the maintenance of the memorial.

Ms Issik: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to hear the answers from the minister.

Given that this is an important matter to members of the Jewish community and the public at large, will the minister commit to keeping the Edmonton Jewish community updated and apprised of the restoration of the memorial going forward?

Mr. Panda: Of course, Mr. Speaker. As the member pointed out initially, this memorial was erected in a partnership between the government of Alberta and the Jewish community, and in that spirit of partnership we'll continue to work closely with the community and keep them fully apprised of the work that we'll be taking on in its restoration. We'll ensure that the memorial continues to stand as

a symbol of memory and the commitment of our government and the people of Alberta to never forget the Holocaust and those who perished in that evil act.

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

Energy Industry Layoffs

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we learned that Husky has cut its capital spending plan by \$500 million over the next two years. This will cost further jobs, and it comes after Husky received a \$233 million handout from this government. Husky already fired 370 Albertans. Albertans were promised jobs and investment. To the minister: will you admit that you have failed to do your job, or do you simply not care about hard-working Calgarians and Albertans?

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Energy.

Mrs. Savage: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that as a province Alberta has to be competitive with other jurisdictions. That was not the case over the last four years. That's why we have been relentless in bringing back jobs and bringing back investment. That's why we're creating the correct regulatory environment to attract investment. We're creating the right tax and fiscal environment. They failed over four years, and we're cleaning it up.

Mr. Sabir: Given that this government refused to honour oil-by-rail contracts that would have moved 120,000 barrels per day and given that ripping up oil-by-rail contracts has led to the extension of curtailment and given that the extension of curtailment has led to one of the worst drilling seasons on record and given that next year's drilling season is predicted to be just as bad, to the minister: you can only blame us for so long. Are you really trying to be the worst Finance, Energy minister that this province has ever seen?

Mrs. Savage: I won't take any lessons from them. Mr. Speaker, I sit in a caucus with members that I'm proud to sit in caucus with who work for the oil and gas industry, people like the Member for Calgary-North, the Infrastructure minister, the Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland, who literally worked building pipelines. While they were protesting pipelines, our members were building them. They failed, and we're cleaning it up. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sabir: I meant to say Energy but Finance, too.

Given that over 11,000 jobs have been lost in the natural resource sector since the government implemented its \$4.7 billion handout and given that companies are choosing to invest in other jurisdictions instead of Alberta, to the entire government cabinet: how many more Albertans have to lose their jobs before you abandon your ridiculous and misguided \$4.7 billion no-job corporate handout?

The Speaker: I'll provide a caution to the member on the use of preambles.

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, the NDP really do not get it. They fail to recognize that over the past four years, they in Alberta and their partner Justin Trudeau in Ottawa tortured the regulatory and the fiscal and the investment environments. Their members were signing the Leap Manifesto. [interjections] Justin Trudeau in Ottawa was talking about phasing out the oil sands. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. I've heard the question. I'll hear the answer.

Mrs. Savage: Mr. Speaker, they really do not get it. They failed for four years. We're cleaning up their mess. They didn't build pipelines. They didn't get a single additional barrel of oil to market.

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

Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society Funding

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 28, 2018, Rachel Notley apologized to the survivors of the '60s scoop. She said, "For the loss of families, of stability, of love, we are sorry." Unfortunately, while the UCP were present for these words, they do not appear to have any impact on this government. Eighteen months after hearing these words, members of the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society have learned that their government funding has come to an end. To the Minister of Indigenous Relations: when did you decide to abandon the '60s scoop survivors in favour of a \$4.7 billion giveaway to your corporate friends?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to acknowledge all the members of the '60s scoop who are here with us today and thank you for bringing this important issue to the House. The '60s scoop, of course, had terrible lasting effects on generations of indigenous children here in Alberta, and I was honoured to attend the '60s scoop exhibit at the Royal Alberta Museum and in the Devon library this year to hear about their pain and suffering and to read about the loss of their culture, that deeply affected them. This government is committed to a path of reconciliation with indigenous people in Alberta, and the '60s scoop chapter must be a part of those efforts.

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

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You'll cry about it, but you won't give them any money.

Given that the apology went further, "For the loss of identity, of language and culture, we are sorry. For the loneliness, the anger, the confusion, and the frustration, we are sorry," and given that while the NDP government was truly committed to reconciliation and helped to establish the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society, this government has decided to abandon those survivors just as they are building their new identities, to the minister: will you commit to returning the funding to SSISA for the next two years?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I just spent the last weekend with a good friend of mine who is a '60s scoop survivor, and we talked about this issue in depth. To the member I can say that this government will look at ongoing participation and support of the '60s scoop. However, we're still awaiting the final report from the society before we can move onto future programming initiatives. This government firmly believes that the '60s scoop survivors' stories and narratives must be heard and be a part of our reconciliation efforts moving forward.

Mr. Feehan: Minister, we're waiting for you to put your money where your mouth is for once.

Given that the '60s scoop . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, can we have another try here without a preamble?

Mr. Feehan: Given that the '60s scoop survivors have been travelling the province to teach both survivors and others about this devastating legacy and have now travelled here to the Legislature to condemn this antireconciliation, will the minister agree to meet with the survivors who are here in the gallery and myself immediately after question period?

The Speaker: Perfect.

The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate that question and the offer. The '60s scoop saw thousands of Alberta children losing touch with their families, communities, culture, and traditional language, and this caused lasting – lasting – negative issues with mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical health and well-being. Survivors and their families are still feeling the effects of the '60s scoop today, and Alberta will ensure that the telling of this dark period in our history will always be a part of our commitment to reconciliation. I'm always, of course, open to meeting with the people that are here. [interjections]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, order, because the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake has the call.

Drinking Water Quality in Indigenous Communities

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many indigenous communities across the province do not have access to clean drinking water. They are left with boil advisories and do not get the same luxuries and privileges that many of us in urban and rural communities do. Water safety is a serious issue and causes many serious health concerns. We see that many indigenous communities are left without clean drinking water and forced to face these serious health issues. To the Minister of Indigenous Relations: how will this government get clean drinking water to the indigenous communities in Alberta that live without it today?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Wilson: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question. Over the summer I did have the opportunity to travel to many parts of Alberta and meet with the First Nations and Métis communities. For example, right in my own area I met with the Ermineskin First Nation and the Samson First Nation on the Maskwacis waterline; as well, up in Frog Lake First Nation, on its proposed project. Our government will continue to work with First Nations across the province and ensure that they have access to safe and reliable drinking water. Of course, we'll be speaking with all of our partners to determine the future of this program.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the federal government has failed indigenous communities in Alberta, leaving some without access to clean drinking water, and given that we live in a country with 20 per cent of the world's fresh water and given that we have the technological means to be able to get clean drinking water to these communities and given the importance to a community of a stable long-term source of fresh, clean water, to the same minister: when will these indigenous communities get access to clean drinking water?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We work closely, of course, with the Minister of Infrastructure, who has set aside money for these important projects. I'll be meeting very soon with our federal counterparts in the near future, and we'll be bringing up this important issue. Our government is committed to strengthening our relationship with the First Nations in Alberta. Of course, clean, safe water is a fundamental need in every community and should be there for them. We will continue to work with all of our government partners to improve access to water, and we work closely, of course, with our Minister of Transportation on these funding issues.

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

Mr. Rehn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

Given that the main drinking water advisories are highly concentrated in indigenous communities and given that contaminants in drinking water such as E coli make those who drink it violently ill and given that the federal government's idea of a solution is to focus on changing long-term boil-water advisories to so-called short-term advisories that last for many years at a time, to the same minister: what is this government doing to solve the clean water issue that many indigenous communities continue to deal with?

The Speaker: The minister.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, of course, for the question. Just this past weekend I met with several members of the Métis settlements, and we discussed these very important issues. The government believes in removing economic barriers to Alberta's indigenous communities and sharing prosperity. Again, we'll be speaking with all of our partners with respect to the future of these programs, including the federal government. Rest assured that safe water supply for Alberta's indigenous peoples is top of mind of this government.

2:20 Affordable Housing and Seniors' Programs

Ms Sigurdson: Along with firing thousands of public health care workers on Friday, this government also said that 2,500 government employees will be cut across multiple areas, including the Seniors and Housing ministry. This government has already ignored an affordable housing crisis in our province. They cut \$44 million from rental assistance and another \$17 million from housing management bodies. To the minister: are you going to cut even more from the housing budget?

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

Ms Pon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question, Member. Affordable housing is quite critical for some Albertans, in particular those with low income and seniors on fixed income. Our government will ensure that more affordable housing is available for those who need it the most. We are committed to working closely with our private-sector partners to ensure that every dollar contributed by Alberta taxpayers to capital investment is fully leveraging.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that in a letter sent to AUPE on Friday, the government claims that it is embarking on a seniors' program review and is planning to cut housing programs and given that this minister has already told seniors to live within their means, even as she backs the Premier's \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout, to the minister: are you planning to hide from seniors and affordable

housing providers for your entire term? Why won't you listen to seniors and Albertans involved in the affordable housing system?

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

Ms Pon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please stop misrepresenting my message. What I meant is that the seniors will teach of living beyond our means. It's not like the other party. They never, never understand that, and we are cleaning the mess right now.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that this government has already kicked 47,000 people off the seniors' drug plan and given that cutting thousands upon thousands of front-line public health care workers is going to lead to more suffering among seniors and given that plans to privatize ambulance services also leaves many seniors wondering if their 911 calls will be answered, to the minister. You haven't said one word to object to the gutting of health care by the Premier and the Health minister, and now you're plotting cuts of your own. When will you step up and serve vulnerable Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health has risen.

Mr. Shandro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think what we've heard today from the caucus opposite is a very artful construction of an alternate reality. We campaigned on maintaining or increasing health care spending, and that's exactly what we did. We are spending \$200 million more on health care spending than that government ever did. The AHS disclosure – let's talk a little bit about the AHS disclosure, Mr. Speaker – to our unions was so that they can have the best information available to them so they can meet with us and then they can negotiate in good faith.

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

Family Medicine

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the Minister of Health is here clean-shaven today, but he is not coming clean to Albertans. In order to pay for its \$4.7 billion corporate handout, we just found out this past Friday that this government is planning deep cuts to family medicine. Family doctors keep Albertans healthy. They are the front line in care. They help detect problems early and keep people out of the emergency room, the most expensive place for them to be. Now this minister wants to limit the number of patients a doctor can see in a day and make each of those visits shorter. Why is the minister taking such a totally wrong-headed approach, putting patient care at risk?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, none of that is true. Look, we are in the middle of negotiations with the AMA. We have tabled a proposal with the AMA. We're happy to continue to have conversations with the AMA, the Alberta Medical Association. This is the organization that represents our physicians throughout the province and their compensation. We're happy to continue to be able to meet with the members and the negotiating team from the Alberta Medical Association so that we can come to a resolution in the best interest of patients as well as their members.

Mr. Shepherd: Given that Dr. Christine Molnar of the Alberta Medical Association wrote to her members that this minister's plans will have "a negative impact on care for thousands of patients" and given that she goes on to say, "The proposals would be devastating to rural family practice... a group that government in other venues purports to support," will this minister listen to the warning from Dr. Molnar and abandon this dangerous attack on family medicine?

Mr. Shandro: Once again, Mr. Speaker, this is a process; it's a negotiating process. There are ups, and there are downs. I look forward to the AMA, the Alberta Medical Association, continuing to meet with us in good faith, to have these conversations, to represent the concerns of their members so that at the end of the process we can have an agreement with the AMA that's in the best interests of their members and patients in Alberta.

Mr. Shepherd: Given, Mr. Speaker, that this government's dictatorial and condescending approach shows that they have no interest in collaboration and given that Dr. Kathryn Andrusky, president of the AMA section of family medicine, told her members:

The devastation these unilateral... impositions will wreak cannot be overstated. There is a significant danger that family doctors will become completely disengaged from the health system as a whole, team members will need to be laid off and some family [physicians]... will simply have to close their doors.

Given that this is an extraordinary warning from Alberta's family doctors, why will this minister not listen?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, we are listening. We're in the middle of negotiations with the Alberta Medical Association. We're listening to them. We're meeting with them. We started meeting with them on November 13. On November 14 we provided our proposal to them. We're looking forward to continuing to meet with them, continuing to get their counterproposal to us so that at the end of it we can have an agreement with the Alberta Medical Association that's in the best interests of patients in Alberta and their members.

Property Crime Prevention

Mr. Loewen: Constituents in my riding are concerned about crime in our smaller communities. In particular, I receive a great deal of correspondence about property crime: trespassing, breaking and entering, theft, and destruction of property. It is not uncommon for criminals to target tools and vehicles, the very things that people need to go to work and support their families. People deserve to feel safe in their own homes and not stressed about the security of their hard-earned property. Could the Minister of Justice let rural Albertans know what the government is currently doing to protect the rights of lawful Albertans and stop criminals in our communities?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to that member for the question. This party has brought forward Bill 27, which will create the strongest property rights possible, the strongest property rights in the entire country, to make sure that law-abiding Albertans know that we stand with them. We're going to make sure that the signal to criminals is that farmers are no longer to be targets on the property of Alberta. The strongest property rights possible: that's what this party believes in; that's what we've delivered for Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Minister.

Given that rural communities and families living in more remote places endure longer response times for police services as a result of larger areas to cover and greater distances and given that these communities are facing added pressures dealing with crime,

oftentimes committed by those from outside the community looking to sell stolen goods elsewhere, is the Minister of Justice considering ways to increase the resources dedicated to enforcement and policing in rural Alberta?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's why we announced the RAPID force, to enhance the authorities of 400 peace officers, sheriffs in the province of Alberta, to make sure that they're there to help respond to 911 emergencies, to help make sure that we can reduce the response times for Albertans in need, to make sure that they can feel safe. As well, we brought in the scrap dealer measure to make sure we go after all of the theft that's happening across rural Alberta, the copper wire theft, to make sure that we can hold scrap-metal dealers accountable, to make sure we don't have stolen property being sold through scrap-metal dealers. That's important.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Central Peace-Notley.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you. Given the great concern in my riding about substance abuse and the prevalence of illegal drugs in our communities and given the way that trafficking and the use of these illegal drugs bring with them other criminal behaviour, including property crime and theft, and given that illegal drug use can be so destructive to families and communities, what steps is this government taking not to just keep these harmful drugs out of our province but to help treat addictions and end these patterns of drug abuse and criminal activity?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Mr. Schweitzer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm so proud of this team. We've dedicated \$50 million over four years for the Alberta law enforcement response teams. They're doing amazing work tackling organized crime, getting the drugs off the street, getting illegal guns off the street. They're doing amazing work. We also have to make sure our prosecution ranks have the proper complement to make sure that we can prosecute the cases of Albertans, to make sure we hold these criminals accountable. That's a promise made, promise kept by this government.

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

2:30 Biologic and Biosimilar Drug Coverage

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I stood and spoke with 100 Albertans on these steps about how this government is forcing them to switch from their life-saving medications that keep them in remission from critical diseases like Crohn's and colitis. They want them to use cheaper, less well tested alternatives so that the province can save a few pennies, and this government has used NDAs to shut out medical experts from that decision, experts who have told this minister that drug companies have lowered the cost of their drugs to match the price of alternatives. To the minister: why is your government so determined to tell Albertans what level of care they should be happy with and what treatment they should be receiving?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, as Budget 2019 said, we are looking at ways to expand the biosimilars initiative in this province. As the hon. member knows, though, those decisions have not been made. I've said that before in this House and outside of this House. I hope those decisions are made by the end of the year. We will have an announcement by the end of the year. Before we do that, we're

going to continue to speak to other provinces. On Friday I was happy to be able to speak to Minister Christine Elliott from Ontario, to speak a little bit about what they're doing, meeting with patient groups like the Arthritis Consumer Experts and, as well, physicians and pharmacists.

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this government's dictatorial and condescending approach gives patients no reason that they should trust this government and given that I've gotten numerous e-mails from Albertans who are worried about how this change would drastically impact their lives, like the 24-year-old oil and gas worker who told me, "My environment is working against me, my own body works against me. And now [my] government is working against me," to the minister: did you consult any actual IBD patients before you inserted yourself between them and their physicians to decide what medical treatment they should receive?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is using the past tense. I'm going to say it again for him: we're in the middle of consulting with patients. Have I met with any IBD patients? Yes, I have. I've had them in my office. I've met with them.

Ms Phillips: How many lobbyists?

Mr. Shandro: None.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to meet with these patient groups, we continue to be able to speak with physicians, we continue to meet with pharmacists, and we're going to continue to do that before we make our decisions by the end of the year so that it's going to be in the best interests of patients.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that I've also heard from a mother who's had three bowel resections due to Crohn's and a 17-year-old who had her colon removed due to colitis and given that she said that this switch would not only force her to change medications but will take her away from the treatment practitioners she's been with for 11 years and given that she wonders why this government has broken their promise of transparency and maintaining the province's quality of health care, to this minister: please assure us that you will not put the well-being of these chronically ill Albertans at risk as one of the corners you're willing to cut to pay for your government's \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate giveaway.

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, as we look at the expansion of the biosimilars initiative and what we're going to be doing as a province, my commitment to all Albertans is that whatever medication people use, if they're on a biologic or a biosimilar, whatever they get is going to be safe and appropriate. That's my commitment to Albertans. Thank you to the hon. member for his questions.

Holocaust Memorial on Legislature Grounds (continued)

Mr. Dach: Mr. Speaker, given that the Holocaust monument has provided a solemn place for Albertans to gather every May since 2003 to celebrate Yom ha-Shoah, or Holocaust Memorial Day, to honour victims of the Holocaust, six million of whom were Jewish, and given that it's been almost 20 years since the memorial sculpture was unveiled on the site just north of the Terrace Building

on the Legislature Grounds and that no major maintenance or repairs have ever been done, will the Infrastructure minister commit today to maintaining an open dialogue with members of the Jewish community and myself to plan how to get the necessary repairs done before May 2020, this coming spring?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, as you'll remember, just a few minutes ago I answered the question from the Member for Calgary-Glenmore. I'll repeat that. Yes, I met with the Jewish community of Edmonton, and I assured them that I'll work with them as per the agreement we made in 2003.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the initial project and contract work was approved by Alberta Infrastructure in 2003 and that estimates for the current required granite repairs, cleaning, and coating of the monument itself and site maintenance are estimated to be under \$20,000 and given that this expenditure would mean a great deal to the Jewish community, to have the Holocaust monument, a provincial monument to Holocaust victims, respectfully maintained, and given that it took the advocacy of an opposition MLA to light a fire under this minister, will the minister commit today to funding the refurbishment of this meaningful provincial memorial so work can be completed before next May?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, Infrastructure has guidelines regarding construction and placement of monuments. When specific requests are received, maintenance requirements are specified. Usually the sculpture costs over \$128,000 to erect. In 2003 that's what was spent on that monument. We are aware of the concerns, and we are looking into that.

Mr. Dach: Given that this government apparently prides itself on reducing red tape, I challenge the Infrastructure minister to use this project to demonstrate how fast a government apparently free of red tape can move when they put their mind to it and when an NDP opposition MLA advocates on behalf of his constituents. Will the minister commit today to the House and to the many members of the Jewish community who have joined us in the gallery as my guests today that he will do everything in his power to have the refurbishment of the Holocaust monument completed before we gather to celebrate Yom ha-Shoah once again in May 2020?

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, as I assured the Jewish community of Edmonton, I will continue to work with them and look into the matter. Conservative parties around the world, including Narendra Modi of BJP in India, support the state of Israel and Jewish people and grieve the events of the Holocaust. I will meet with the member opposite and address these concerns as well.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Recycling Regulations

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Waste management is a real concern to Albertans and municipalities. RMA and AUMA have both asked for an extended producer responsibility regulation in Alberta. The Recycling Council of Alberta has been proposing a made-in-Alberta EPR program for paper and packaging for years. EPR is self-funding, costs government nothing, yet Alberta is the only province in Canada not to use it. To the minister of environment: will this government establish EPR in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Environment and Parks.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the important question. He is correct. Both RMA and AUMA have asked us to look at EPR. We continue to consult with RMA, AUMA, and other stakeholders as well as taking time to look at other jurisdictions across this country and the world, to look at other ways that we can manage waste and recycling inside our province. We've heard the concerns from Albertans across the province. We'll continue to work to balance recycling with economic needs in the province going forward, and we'll find a solution that works for Alberta.

Mr. Orr: Thank you for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, given that agricultural plastics are a growing concern – a 2012 report found that 50 per cent of farmers either burn the plastic, creating pollution, or send it to landfills – and given that there have been multiple studies and pilot programs on how to better handle this growing challenge, including another three-year pilot currently running, and given that Saskatchewan currently has an agricultural plastics EPR regulation, to the minister: are you considering an agricultural plastic recycling regulation?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you again to the hon. member for an excellent question. Yes, we are looking at ag plastics. I've heard from my constituents loud and clear that that's something they want us to look at and that the agriculture industry has asked for for a long time. The minister of agriculture's department and my department are working together on a pilot project which goes till 2022. We're evaluating that in real time. As that progresses, we'll be looking at what has worked and what has not worked, ultimately, though, towards an agriculture plastic solution in this province because that's the direction that we promised Albertans that we would go.

Mr. Orr: Mr. Speaker, given that the Alberta Recycling Management Authority supervises the recycling of paint, tires, electronics, and oil and given that the Alberta Recycling Management Authority operates under provincial regulation and is funded by the fees that are charged on the sale of these products and given that the current regulation is outdated – some new electronics are not included; fees have not kept up with costs; some tires are not being collected in a timely manner – will the minister commit to a review of the Alberta Recycling Management Authority regulation?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, yes.

2:40 Investment in Alberta and Fiscal Policies

Mr. Singh: Last session we passed 13 bills which were designed to fulfill our platform commitment of getting Albertans back to work. Already we are seeing investor confidence up and small-business owners feeling relieved, although it takes time, as any good economist will tell you, for government economic policies to be felt, and there is still much work to be done to reverse the damage the NDP did. Can the Minister of Finance please update the House on our government's next steps to get our economy and our finances back on track?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. In recent years Alberta has faced some of its most challenging economic times since the global financial crisis, and in response to this challenge the previous government

did the unthinkable. They imposed a carbon tax, they hiked taxes on businesses, and they borrowed unsustainably to fund government. Our approach is fundamentally different. By reducing business taxes, by repealing the carbon tax, by implementing the accelerated capital cost allowance provisions, we are attracting investment and opportunity for Albertans.

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

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

Given that under the previous government we saw investment decrease in almost every industry – a 61.3 per cent decrease in the mining, coring, oil and gas extraction sector; a 27 per cent decrease in the finance, insurance, and real estate sector; and a 21 per cent decrease in the construction sector – can the minister update us on the government's plan to bring investment back to Alberta?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, when the previous government hiked corporate taxes by 20 per cent, investment left the province by the billions and, with it, jobs and opportunities. Moreover, they collected \$5.8 billion less in corporate revenue over the next three years. It was a failed experiment. Our government is taking a different direction. We are making the most competitive business environment possible to ensure that we attract investment, create jobs, opportunities, which will lead to increased government revenue in the long term.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

Given that over the past four years everyday Albertans were tightening their belts and paying more for the cost of living and given that the NDP's out-of-control spending put Alberta on the path to being \$100 billion in debt by 2023-2024 and given that our government was elected to clean up this fiscal mismanagement, can the minister please update this House on the status of the government's effort to balance the budget?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, our province has had a long-time spending problem, and this fact was made abundantly clear by the MacKinnon panel. In Budget 2019 we laid out a credible plan to get Alberta back to balance. We're committed to finding efficiencies, reducing redundancies, and reducing operating expenditures by 2.8 per cent, which will lead this government and this province back to balance. We will deliver responsible financial management to the people of Alberta.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will proceed to Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

Health Care System Layoffs

Mr. Carson: Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of the year, the bad news for Albertans just keeps coming from this UCP government. Albertans have had to watch levels of corruption and betrayal usually only seen on *Game of Thrones*, and while this government enjoys taxpayer-funded pancake parties and lavish trips to five-star London hotels with historic champagne bars, Albertans have to pay the price for their \$4.7 billion no-jobs corporate handout.

On Friday Albertans learned more about how they will pay the price for this government's failed policies as the UCP cut over

5,100 public health care jobs in a single day. These cuts will have devastating impacts on Albertans, our health care system, and the families of health care workers. These losses will be felt everywhere in Alberta, not just this year but for years to come. The health care workers that the government fired put everything into taking care of our families. Over the last few days I have seen many touching stories of health care workers going above and beyond while having their good name smeared by this government. Just this spring the UCP told Albertans that they would never cut public health care, but now we see that it was just another fake promise told to Albertans to get elected and return to their Tory land gravy train.

Now that this UCP government shredded the last copy of its public health care guarantee, they are taking steps to implement their vision of American-style health care. Albertans do not want these changes, Mr. Speaker. American-style health care makes access much more difficult and expensive. It will lower the quality of care for Albertans and cause longer wait times. Albertans were never told that they would have to pay for this government's \$4.7 billion corporate handout in health care. In fact, they were told it would have no impact on them at all, but on Friday we could see that this promise wasn't worth the paper it was written on.

This UCP government needs to stop attacking Albertans to pay for their failed policies. Albertans deserve much better.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I also understand birthday wishes might be in order for the hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Small Business and the Christmas Season

Mrs. Pitt: People in Alberta are struggling, and for my constituents in Airdrie-East there is no exception. Airdrie is home to many small businesses, and it is no secret that under the leadership of the past government, they suffered immensely. Before our government, people were frustrated by having to navigate needless government red tape and pay additional taxes. Alberta's economy was in shambles.

Finally, we are starting to see a light at the end of that tunnel. I've heard from my constituents that they are relieved by our efforts to reduce red tape, increase investor confidence, and get our economy back on track. It will take time. Some are starting to get back to work and keep their businesses afloat. However, so many of them are not so lucky. They are still looking for work, and their businesses are at risk of going under.

Just a couple of weeks ago I attended an event that hosted workshops to help local entrepreneurs grow their businesses with social media. The room was filled with eager Albertans ready to learn how to reach new clients and promote their business. Albertans are hard working, innovative, and adaptive. They are ready to move forward, and so are we.

As many of you are aware, Christmas is just around the corner. All of us here will go home to our families, and when the celebrations are over, we will come back here to quite possibly one of the best jobs in the whole world. We as MLAs are privileged to be able to come to this Legislature, represent our constituents, and get this province back on track. Especially during Christmas, I will remember that there are Albertans that are struggling, from small-business owners to people in the trades. There are children who won't see any presents under the tree, and there are parents wondering how they will put food on the table and keep the lights on.

Let's remember them and support local organizations like the food bank, the Lioness Club, and the Mustard Seed, who will make

Christmas a little more hopeful. Christmastime is the best time of year to practise what we read in 1 Peter 4:10, that says, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

The Speaker: Hon. members, at some risk of being accused of being partisan, I understand that the hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika is also due a birthday wish or two.

Notices of Motions

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

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give notice of a motion under Standing Order 42 at the appropriate time.

The Speaker: If you can read us your motion, that would be appreciated. Maybe if the hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre could pass it to the Member for Edmonton-Manning, then she could read it into the record.

2:50

Ms Sweet: On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-City Centre:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to take immediate steps to protect the public health care system in Alberta by working with Alberta Health Services to cancel the recently announced layoffs of health care workers, including nurses, and any plans for the privatization of health care services which are contrary to the publicly stated goals of the government.

Speaker's Ruling

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: Hon. members, at the appropriate time the hon. member will be able to move the motion under Standing Order 42. Just by way of procedure, it would be possible for the Member for Edmonton-Manning to move it on behalf of the member if he was perhaps at a meeting or some other function. I would hate to refer to the presence or the absence of a member, but in the future that would be the appropriate path forward. Having said that, we are able to proceed.

My apologies to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud if I missed you at Presenting Petitions. It will need to be done either when tabling reports or tomorrow.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: We have a number of them. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, followed by St. Albert, please.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did want to table this petition today as I do have a guest from my constituency in the gallery to hear about it. On behalf of my constituent from Edmonton-Whitemud I would like to table a copy of a petition signed by 232 Albertans which is urging the government to introduce legislation that a pet store operator and any vendor at a reptile, bird, and/or mammal exhibition shall not sell any live mammal, bird, reptile, or amphibian unless the mammal, bird, reptile, or amphibian was obtained from a public animal control agency or shelter, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, a Humane Society shelter, or rescue group that is in a co-operative agreement with at least one private or public shelter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. As a way of formalizing that procedure – you're certainly welcome to table that document

now. Apologies to your constituent. But if you will do me a favour, as petitions are managed slightly differently by the library, and also table it again tomorrow during Presenting Petitions, that will make sure that it's also dealt with appropriately.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to table a number of documents. I have another 17 letters about class size, and I have a number of e-mails just to St. Albert from concerned constituents about their pensions.

I also have some e-mails directed to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Community and Social Services. They've not heard back, so they're sending them to me to table them.

Last but not least, I have five copies of an article. I believe that this was in *Nature* magazine. It's entitled Climate Tipping Points – Too Risky to Bet Against.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora, and then we'll take you as you come.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a few letters here to table today. I'll just take a moment to highlight a couple of pieces on them as they were sent to government representatives, and the members wanted to ensure that they were on the record and that they got an adequate response. They feel that that hasn't been the case at this point. To the MLA for Calgary-Varsity a letter about the proposed voucher system, degradation of public education, and severe concerns about the direction of this government.

As well, another one . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, we're not going to be reading any of the letters.

Ms Hoffman: I'm not.

The Speaker: Okay. Let's make sure that that's the case.

Ms Hoffman: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The second one is around vouchers, budget cuts, and public education. Again, deep concerns to the local MLA, the MLA for Calgary-Varsity.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-North West, followed by Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the appropriate number of copies of several dozen letters sent to my constituency office from teachers that were concerned that this government has taken their pension without their permission.

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

Mr. Schmidt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. My first is a letter from constituent Cassandra Hodgetts. She's a 24-year-old RN who's worried about her future and has great concerns about cuts to our health care system.

The second is a letter from a constituent, Breanne Nicholson, who works as an occupational therapist and is also concerned about cuts to our health care system.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by Edmonton-Manning.

Member Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the requisite number of copies of an e-mail from a constituent, Sherry Langland,

who is writing concerning the government's proposal to take control of the assets of the Alberta teachers' retirement fund.

I also have a number of e-mails from constituents regarding cuts to education as well as the voucher system, and I table them here for us today.

Thank you.

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

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview the requisite copies of a pension e-mail received by the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview; also the requisite copies of e-mails that I have received as the Member for Edmonton-Manning; and the requisite copies of an article speaking to the firing of the Election Commissioner not being a cost saver.

The Speaker: Are there others? The Member for Edmonton-Decore, followed by Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today: two angry constituents, one talking about how the government has crossed the line by not consulting with teachers about their pension and another from a very angry teacher. They basically say that MLAs need to take their hands off their pensions.

The Speaker: Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My office continues to receive correspondence from teachers concerned about this government's move with pensions. I'm tabling the requisite copies of a number of those letters.

Mrs. Allard: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table the requisite number of copies of the Northern Alberta Development Council 2018-19 annual report.

The Speaker: Are there others? The Member for Edmonton-City Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleagues, I'd like to table five copies of e-mails from constituents outlining their concerns about this government's insistence on seizing control of the Alberta teachers' retirement fund.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk: on behalf of the hon. Mr. Dreeshen, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, pursuant to the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council annual report 2018-19.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at points of order. At 2:03 the first point of order was raised. I see the hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: I don't have a point of order, but on procedure I'd like to notify the House that the Routine will go past 3 o'clock today. We have three minutes left.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika on the point of order.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to quickly set the stage here. The time was 2:03. The speaker was the hon. Government House Leader. While he was speaking, the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, while looking at him, clearly said: stop lying. Now, we all know in this Chamber that to accuse someone of lying would be unparliamentary. I would ask that the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona apologize, retract her remarks, and, of course, raise the bar.

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

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, at 2:03 or 2:04 I think the leader did say that that's a lie in response to the Government House Leader's comments, and she would like to withdraw that comment. She meant to say that the government was misleading Albertans.

The Speaker: I consider the matter concluded and dealt with.

Hon. members, not that long after that there was an additional point of order that was raised at the time by the associate minister of red tape. I see the hon. Member for Cardston-Siksika rising on the point.

Point of Order

Allegations against a Member

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we flash forward just a few minutes to the time of 2:05, while the hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning was speaking, she said clearly in her remarks: you're "corrupt." Now, I would like to ask that she apologize and retract that comment. That would be breaking Standing Order 23(h), (i), and (j), which is the reason why I'm rising on behalf of the hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction. Again, I ask that the member retract that comment and refrain from using that kind of language moving forward.

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

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I indeed did hear what transpired. I don't believe that "corrupt" is a word that is unparliamentary. Indeed, I think it describes many of the actions of this government very appropriately, so I don't withdraw the comment at all.

3:00

The Speaker: Well, this is very interesting because it certainly wasn't anything close to what was said. I would agree, though, that if she had made a statement that said, "You are corrupt," that would be unparliamentary. If she made a statement like, "The government is corrupt," as much as I am concerned at the direction of decorum with language like this, I think that in the past I have said that that isn't a point of order. However, I have the benefit of the Blues, and the hon. member did say: "To the Premier: will you admit that you want to slow down investigations into election fraud or cancel them altogether, and is it because you deceived Albertans in your bid to become a leader?"

Now, at that point in time the hon. Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction did raise a point of order. However, I did provide caution to the member and said that she needed to be very, very cautious with the use of her words when making a suggestion that an hon. member would deceive the House or deceive Albertans. In her subsequent question she did just that, chose much better words.

As such, I won't ask for an apology today but provide all members a cautionary note that each and every one of us has a responsibility to each other and to Albertans to raise the level of decorum. I have heard

on many occasions today accusations, from both sides of the House, of the opposition misleading, the government misleading. While this certainly is within the rules, I would suggest that it is not adding to debate and adding to the decorum, so I encourage everyone to govern themselves accordingly.

As such, I consider these matters dealt with and concluded.

Motions under Standing Order 42

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

Health Care Services

Mr. Shepherd:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to take immediate steps to protect the public health care system in Alberta by working with Alberta Health Services to cancel the recently announced layoffs of health care workers, including nurses, and any plans for the privatization of health care services which are contrary to the publicly stated goals of the government.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask for unanimous consent to move this motion because, like many Albertans this past Friday, a dark day for health care workers in the province of Alberta, I was devastated to see the numbers ticking upward indicating the impacts on health care as a result of the decisions of this government. As estimates currently stand, over 5,000 health care jobs, front-line public health care jobs, are being placed in jeopardy as a result of the choices being made by this government. That number is honestly expected to rise. That's over 5,000 individuals who will no longer be caring for our loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, the response from Albertans, to say the least, has been overwhelming. My office has received a number of phone calls, e-mails, Facebook messages, including from many individuals in the constituencies of government members. Just this past weekend over 1,000 people in Calgary protested outside the UCP AGM. I should mention that in our term not once did anyone protest one of our AGMs, but I digress.

At that meeting members of this government caucus debated and passed policy resolutions that will continue to have a negative impact on all Albertans, and indeed they voted against upholding the principles of the Canada Health Act, which flies in the face of the guarantee made by the now Premier of this province less than a year ago. What was that guarantee? It was to maintain or increase health spending and maintain a universally accessible publicly funded system. His members apparently didn't get the message.

They also said that they'd be working with front-line employees of AHS. Well, I for one would like to see some proof that in working with these front-line employees – how many of them said that their day-to-day life would be better if there would be fewer of them? I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in my travels across this province speaking with front-line health care workers, I have not once had any tell me: there are far too many nurses here.

That's why this is urgent. These decisions are about job losses and privatization of the health care system, and they're coming fast and furious. Every day that these decisions go unanswered, it puts more hard-working health care workers at risk. It is this government, Mr. Speaker, that is creating fear. At risk of losing their jobs, they are putting people at risk of degrading care levels for all Albertans. It also puts health care accessibility for all Albertans at risk. Privatization is not the answer. It is fundamentally contrary to a universally accessible system. Universally accessible means that no matter who you are, how much money you have, who you know, you will have access to the quality care that you need when you need it.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore ask that this House grant unanimous consent to debate this motion and ask the members opposite to stand up for the people of this province.

The Speaker: Hon. members, under Standing Order 42(1) “a motion may, in case of urgent and pressing necessity previously explained by the mover, be made by unanimous consent of the Assembly without notice having been given under Standing Order 39.”

[Unanimous consent denied]

The Speaker: Now we are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Motions for Concurrence in Committee Reports on Public Bills Other than Government Bills

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

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my hon. colleagues. I rise today to oppose the position of the report coming back on Bill 207. I put forward Bill 207 in order to protect, to elevate to law the standards of practice that we have in Alberta protecting conscience rights for medical professionals. It is deserved that it be in law as protection as those Albertans, like the rest of us, should know that they will not enter their workplace and be forced to act against their conscience on deeply held matters of conviction and morality.

I have that benefit here, as do my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We are dealing with the important issues of government; these individuals are dealing with the important issues of life and death. Protecting conscience for these individuals is paramount not just for us, not just for the minority group that needs the protection, but for our society as a whole. That is why I am standing here today in defence.

If we look at a quote from Member of Parliament Garnett Genuis, she recently wrote:

Diversity isn't just about the colour of your skin or the symbols you wear. Respecting diversity means allowing people with substantively different views of life to express their opinions and to access professions. A society that does not understand this is not a free society. It is, therefore, vitally important to ensure that Charter protections for freedom of conscience are taken seriously.

There are a number of Albertans that have written to me, and I know that many members have received much correspondence on this issue. It affects individuals in a very deep and meaningful way, whether or not they know they have the protection of rule of law when they enter their place of work, where they're not being forced to choose between the most deeply held convictions on one hand and their job on the other.

A former ambassador of religious freedoms, Andrew Bennett, also wrote recently: “Doctors and other health care professionals cannot be uncritically bureaucratic in their work. They encounter a host of moral and ethical considerations daily, making moral judgements more often than most other professions.” I heard this time and time again, not from the majority of Albertans but from those select few that are in these professions, from those select few that do not have the same moral views as the wider society.

One palliative care nurse in Calgary wrote:

It is a real concern of mine that I would one day have to give up my calling [as a palliative care nurse] and so I feel strongly the need for the Conscience Rights Protection Act; so that my ability to nurse for those suffering and dying may not be jeopardized. That I may not have to tip-toe facility to facility in search of a job that would be “safe” for me to work.

These are real concerns for everyday Albertans. My goal is only to protect them in moving forward, because a society that protects conscience is a society that truly accepts plurality and diversity in Alberta.

One other letter I received was from a young girl who recently graduated high school and is in her first year of university. She was a Syrian refugee. She came to Canada just over three years ago. This was the same time that MAID became legal after the Carter decision. She wrote a long letter, and in that letter she mentioned a few things that I want to highlight to the Assembly today.

I never want to be told or forced to advise someone to [pursue] Euthanasia . . .

She's writing because, like many young Albertans, she wants to work in health care. She has plans to become a doctor. She wants to go to Oxford and serve.

3:10

I'll continue the quote.

In that case, the system would not be granting me freedom of conscience and belief. The system would be forcing me to do something I do not believe in and that is contradicting to what the Charter of Rights and Freedoms states. I was hungry to have the right of freedom and conscience rights and the idea of not having it is deeply [troubling to me].

She goes on to write that the happiest moment in her life was when she landed in this country, and she continues to say:

I fear that I might give up my future career and aspirations if I would be acting against my will and my conscience . . . I do not want to ever choose between my career and my moral convictions and neither do you.

I think that is particularly pointed, that she cares as much for your conscience rights, your freedoms that you have in this House and as a Canadian, as we should care for hers. She's not a doctor yet. She aspires to be one. That's why this sort of protection is so important.

I hear over and over again, not from the majority of physicians and surgeons, not from the majority of nurses – many or most of those have no problem with any of these procedures that are of deep social concern for the minority. But I ask ourselves: in a society where we know these procedures will continue on, in a society where we're committed to pluralism, to diversity – and that diversity, as Member of Parliament Genuis says, is not just a flaccid diversity, not just a diversity for show but a diversity of beliefs as well. My question to this Assembly is: how do we reconcile these? How do we reconcile these deeply held moral convictions with the fact that we will have a diverse society where there is a moral majority with a set of views, that they think services should be accessed?

I suggest that the solution is not being a bull in a china shop and running roughshod over the rights and freedoms of those individuals. I suggest the path forward, instead of turning doctors, physicians, and nurses into a question . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt; however, there is an issue that is important to the Assembly, and I'd just like to take a five-minute recess. If we can do that and if members of the Assembly want to pop into their respective lounges, I'll be happy to provide an update in moments.

[The Assembly adjourned from 3:13 p.m. to 3:22 p.m.]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the safety and the security of all members of the Legislature and staff I move that we adjourn until 7:30 tonight.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:22 p.m.]

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