



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, July 16, 2020

Day 46

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

Second Session

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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)
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Yaseen, Muhammad, Calgary-North (UCP)

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New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 16, 2020

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: 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 or desire to please or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interests and prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, joining us today in the galleries are guests of the Minister of Labour and Immigration from the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta.

Also joining us today are family members of the hon. Member for Red Deer-South: his wife, Jenny, and their daughter Mary.

Please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Also, hon. members, I'd like to take just a very tiny, little bit of latitude with our time this afternoon and wish a very, very special congratulations to the hon. the Minister of Transportation and his lovely wife. They could not be more pleased and excited to introduce the birth of their third grandchild, born this morning: Benjamin Kristian Velech. Congratulations from all of us.

Members' Statements

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

Racism

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's track record when it comes to fighting racism is abysmal. The Premier and every member of this caucus are still defending his racist speech writer, who for two decades wrote some of the most vile, racist, anti-indigenous, hateful, homophobic, and transphobic things I've ever seen. The Premier even attacked Canada's chief medical officer of health, Dr. Tam, by claiming that she is being controlled by the Chinese government, and yesterday the Minister of Infrastructure in question period accused me of knowing "fully well when and where [this pandemic] came from."

As a Chinese-Canadian MLA it is insulting and, frankly, racist for a minister of the Crown to state that I would have secret knowledge on the origins of COVID-19, especially at a time when we are seeing increasing instances of racism and discrimination against Canadians of Asian backgrounds. We have heard reports of name-calling, insults, and assaults against Asian communities across Canada. Forty-three per cent of Canadians of Chinese ethnicity have reported facing threats or intimidation. Thirty per cent have said that they've been exposed to racist graffiti or social media posts since the start of the pandemic.

When the Premier uses language to claim that Canada's chief medical officer is being controlled by the Chinese government, that is racist language that needs to be called out. When the Minister of Infrastructure tells a Chinese-Canadian MLA that they know when and where COVID-19 came from, that is racist language, and that needs to be called out. I'm calling on the Premier and the Minister

of Infrastructure to publicly apologize and commit to not using racist and insulting language in the future. Albertans deserve better.

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

APEGA Centennial

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am so proud to stand and recognize APEGA, the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta, on its 100th anniversary. The efforts of APEGA members have been critical to Alberta's growth, development, and well-being since 1920. As they mark 100 years as a professional organization, APEGA members can take great pride in the work that has contributed to Alberta's prosperity. APEGA members are responsible for modern-day luxuries that keep this province moving: roads, bridges, mines, electrical plants, refineries, hospitals, schools, water systems, and also the discovery and development of many oil and gas reservoirs.

Thanks to our dedicated engineers and geoscientists, APEGA continues to advance its profession and grow our province. Their members continue to prove every day that this province is a world leader in engineering and geoscience and necessary in creating the freest and fastest moving economy. As a professional engineer and member of APEGA since 1985 I am so proud to be part of an association that is committed to building a safe and resilient Alberta.

Like many other organizations in our province, APEGA has been affected by COVID-19. Due to this, the APEGA Council was unable to convene publicly to read out the election results at the 2020 AGM. On April 24 APEGA's 101st president, John Van der Put, an energy industry executive with 35-plus years of experience, took the helm during the unprecedented public health emergency. I congratulate and wish you the best during your term as president.

APEGA's ongoing dedication to quality, integrity, ethical practice, continued education, and professionalism at every turn ensures credibility and public safety, which, in turn, boosts investment in our province.

Thank you, CEO Jay Nagendran and President John Van der Put, for visiting us today. May I ask all members of this House to please join me in congratulating APEGA on a century well built.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Supervised Drug Consumption Site Review

Mr. Schow: Where there's smoke, there's fire; where there are drugs, there's crime and corruption. That was on full display this morning when I read the independent auditor's report of ARCHES, the drug injection site in downtown Lethbridge. This site was the NDP's failed one-pillar response to addiction, that caused havoc to small businesses and citizens in Lethbridge in the form of violence, vandalism, and theft, and it destroyed the lives of so many desperate to restore a sense of dignity and break the cycle of addiction. The former Health minister, endorsed by the Member for Lethbridge-West, completely violated the trust of taxpayers when she gave millions to an organization of poverty hustlers, money that was meant to help the most vulnerable of Albertans. That is their lasting record, and it disgusts me.

Here is just a little bit from the audit report conducted by Deloitte: \$1.6 million unaccounted for in money; \$342,000 for one senior executive pay in 2019; \$7,500 for management retreats; over \$4,000 spent on European travel for a conference in Portugal; thousands in gift cards and thousands of dollars of unverified expenses as a result of ARCHES' shady banking practices.

People struggling with addiction deserve access to properly funded health care services delivered by professionals who can help them into recovery, not overly funded injection sites where senior executives are jetting off to Europe. We need a system of care that will help my constituents and families get well, not one that causes more crime and disorder in our streets.

Our government takes addiction seriously, Mr. Speaker. That's why I was excited to see just yesterday the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions announce 400 new beds for treatment and service in Alberta. This 30 per cent increase in capacity means that more Albertans will get the help they need, access to treatment, and begin the recovery to restore the dignity to their lives. The NDP was oblivious to the pain and suffering caused by these drug sites. That's why I'm proud of our government, that's laser focused on treatment and wellness.

The Speaker: The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

Alberta Separatism

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a proud Albertan and a Canadian. Along with the entire opposition caucus I oppose any referendum on Alberta separating from Canada.

It's very disturbing that the same cannot be said for the government caucus. The Member for Red Deer-South called our fellow Canadians, quote, hostile parasitic partners. The Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo told a separatist conference: we're close. As well, the Member for Airdrie-East says that she struggles to wave the Canadian flag.

The Premier appointed separatists to steer his Fair Deal Panel, and he has refused to condemn the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat for openly calling for a separatist referendum if his set of demands aren't met.

Fifty-thousand Albertans lost their jobs under this government before the pandemic. Hundreds of thousands more have lost their jobs since then. Investors are already spooked by this government's disgraceful record on environmental, social, and governance issues.

Alberta must send a clear message that we are a politically stable province within a G-8 nation. It doesn't cost Alberta a penny to send that message, but this government refuses. They blocked a motion from this House to clearly denounce separatism, they blocked a motion at the Democratic Accountability Committee to condemn separatism, and they continue to tolerate a vocal separatist faction within their government caucus. It's clear that this government is more worried about the breakup of their political party than the breakup of Canada, more worried about protecting their own jobs than protecting the jobs of their constituents.

So while the Premier waffles and wobbles and worries, on this side of the House we are clear. We stand with the overwhelming majority of Albertans to say no to separatism and no to separatist referenda.

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

Economic Corridor in Brazeau County

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last summer at the Western Premiers' Conference and a month later at the Council of the Federation the provinces unanimously agreed to a joint communiqué with the principle of building an energy and resource corridor. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that Brazeau county, an industrious municipality within my constituency, has taken it upon themselves to establish the western economic corridor in collaboration with industries, indigenous groups, and neighbouring municipalities.

1:40

Mr. Speaker, the corridor has three objectives: firstly, to facilitate market access; secondly, to catalyze private-sector investment and economic diversification; and thirdly, to harmonize a low-tax, low-regulatory environment. The corridor is already home to countless energy, tourism, forestry, and agricultural industries, which are central to Alberta's economic recovery plan and diversification efforts. I firmly believe that the corridor will establish an economic recovery ecosystem that can be leveraged by the government of Alberta moving forward. This visionary endeavour will extend through British Columbia and to the port of Prince Rupert, enhancing access to international markets, and this corridor will strengthen regional planning and intermunicipal collaboration, ensuring Alberta's economic prosperity.

To support its inception, improvements to highway 621 are vital as this route is the major high- and wide-load corridor used by industries and is the source of countless bottlenecks and safety concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the government to endorse Brazeau county's efforts and partner with them to formalize this proactive initiative that will support the well-being of Albertans. Alberta's economic recovery plan prioritizes supporting market access and opportunities for industry, attracting capital investment, and promoting regional economic development, and I believe that's exactly what this western economic corridor will do.

Thank you.

PDD Direct Operations at Edmonton's Rosecrest Home

Ms Renaud: I'm going to read a portion of a letter I was copied on.

Dear Minister of Community and Social Services: My brother Max is 15 years old, and because of the care he requires, he's been living full-time at Rosecrest Home for the last three years. Max was born with Moebius syndrome, a rare neurological condition that primarily affects the muscles that control facial expressions and eye movement. This syndrome prevents my brother from making any facial expressions. Most recently he was diagnosed with cerebro-oculo-facio-skeletal syndrome, or COFS. Respiratory infections are frequent, and most children diagnosed don't live beyond five years. Max is defying the odds. My brother can't talk; he can't chew or feed himself. He has a G-tube. He can't sit, he can't walk, he can't breathe or toilet himself. He can't communicate with sign language or electronic devices, and he does not have the reflexes to put his arm out to break his fall. My brother's disability makes him an extremely vulnerable person, vulnerable to both illness and the possibility of abuse from the wrong caregivers. While my brother doesn't communicate verbally, he does make different sounds that mean different things. His mad cry is different from his sad cry; he waves his fingers to say yes; he laughs when I sing to him or when I gruffly say: Merry Christmas, you filthy animals. Max has the best laugh. Max knows and loves the caregivers he has at Rosecrest, and many have worked there for decades. Privatizing these programs will compromise the supports currently provided to my brother and to hundreds of other children. It's unconscionable to target critical services provided to people who can't speak up for themselves, particularly when the cost savings would be relatively insignificant. My brother has had a hard enough life. Please ensure he gets a fair deal, too. Respectfully, Abbey Whittaker, future voter.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein has a statement to make.

Energy Industries

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is unique in that we as a province own over 80 per cent of our mineral rights. No other jurisdiction in North America has this resource in their government portfolio. We have resources that are in demand. Our heavy bitumen has chemical and physical characteristics that make it unique in the world and sought after. We have a full spectrum of hydrocarbons from bitumen to sweet oil and almost unparalleled natural gas reserves. We are literally standing on top of our own solution. It is up to us to be sure that we execute our own success plan. We know that we do not receive our fair share of support from the federal government, so it falls on us to make sure that we have our own platform that will bring prosperity.

Alberta boasts the highest ratio by population of citizens with postgraduate education. With our educated and innovative residents we will create our own solutions. This is not new for us. The famous Alberta advantage was based exactly on that: the backbone and the strengths of our fellow Albertans, our spirit of never giving up, never looking for nor expecting a handout. We are world leaders in geology, engineering, equipment design, and, yes, environmental standards. Our innovations in designs are utilized the world over no matter topography, the climate, or any other challenges that face the industry. Our Alberta-created inventions such as multistage completions have ushered in an entirely new world to the hydrocarbon industry. We as the Alberta government have the ability to continue to build strong relationships with the oil and gas industry. It has never in the history of our province been more important that we partner with them. By implementing industry-based solutions, not only will we once again be industry leaders in the energy industry, but we will create our own solutions to the catastrophic situations that others, including the previous NDP government and our federal government, have foisted upon us.

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

Affordable Housing Review

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Affordable housing is a critical issue for many Albertans, and the platform upon which Albertans overwhelmingly elected us included commitments to make housing more affordable and accessible.

Mr. Speaker, you may be surprised to learn that nearly half a million Albertans spend more than 30 per cent of their household income on rent, a standard by which we determine affordability. Currently more than 110,000 Albertans live in affordable housing, yet demand continues to grow. Currently more than 19,000 households are on wait-lists for subsidized housing.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue spending money we do not have on a housing system that is not fully meeting the needs of Albertans. We know that to succeed, Alberta's affordable housing system needs to be financially sustainable and able to address growing demand.

Last week the hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing launched the affordable housing review. An expert panel has been appointed, and I am very proud and I am very honoured to say that I will be chairing this panel to lead the review and identify how we can make the system more efficient and more effective. This review sets us on a path to rethink our approach to housing delivery. The Affordable Housing Review Panel will consider market trends and projections and hear directly from key groups to identify innovative solutions for Albertans in housing need. Their insights and advice will help inform our government's new vision for affordable housing in Alberta in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the diverse group of panel members for agreeing to spend their valuable time and effort on this review. I also want to thank the hon. minister for sharing the findings with the Legislative Assembly when they are completed.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain.

Mining

Mr. Turton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While oil and gas have always topped the list when talking about Alberta's natural resources, mining has remained an important part of the Albertan economy. From the first coal mines in Alberta being set up in the area surrounding what is now Lethbridge to the coal mines west of Spruce Grove and Stony Plain to the current mining operations for metallurgical coal and precious gems, Alberta's mining industry has been one of the most reliable elements of the Albertan economy since Alberta was founded. I'm glad to see our economic recovery plan note this and provide this important sector with further support.

Alberta is finally updating our coal mining framework, and it means more jobs for hard-working Albertans in a field that will continue to grow for as long as steel is needed. Steel is still heavily being used in construction projects around the world and in renewable energy projects such as the massive new solar farm being built at the airport.

I was also excited to see a commitment to developing a new mineral strategy here in the province. Alberta is fortunate to have an incredible variety of minerals that can help diversify our economy and ensure good jobs for tradespeople all over Alberta. The global demand for minerals is rising, and Alberta has access to vast supplies of strategic resources, including lithium, helium, potash, titanium, and other rare elements. This means well-paying jobs for Albertans well into the future and building a stronger economy for all of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, our government's economic recovery plan puts forward a bold new road map for the future of our province, and I look forward to seeing more and more rolled out.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Physician Retention

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta doctors are in the fight of their lives against a deadly pandemic. They're heroes. But instead of thanking doctors, this UCP government tore up their contract, cut their pay, imposed hundreds of pages of new paperwork, and accused them of being lazy, greedy, and dishonest. It's no surprise, then, that almost half of Alberta doctors are ready to find a new province to work in. Now the UCP is making a desperate attempt to prevent those doctors from leaving. Why is this Premier trying to force doctors to practise in Alberta against their will?

1:50

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, a series of falsehoods are embedded in that question. First of all, there has been no pay cut. The budget incorporates \$5.4 billion for physician compensation this year, as it was last year; that's not a cut. No such accusations have been made,

as he alleges, against doctors. This is not a prohibition on doctors leaving practice. In fact, the college has already said that in some circumstances, [it] could be considered unprofessional behaviour if the intent [of a physician] is to leverage the community and the physician's patients to advocate for their own personal livelihood in threatening to leave the community.

Mr. Shepherd: Sure, Mr. Speaker, and the Health minister just stopped by Dr. Zaidi's driveway for a friendly chat.

Now, as recently as last Tuesday this government told the Assembly that doctors weren't actually leaving Alberta at all – it was just another regular year – but in court documents filed just last week the government says that there's been so-called job action by as many as 54 doctors in 10 communities. Now, both those statements can't be true, so to the Premier: is this government lying to the Assembly or lying to the courts?

The Speaker: The hon. member will know that I have made significant comments around the use of the word "lying." There are many ways to be creative in the Assembly. I encourage you to do so.

Mr. Kenney: The answer is neither, Mr. Speaker. In fact, based on information from the College of Physicians & Surgeons and Alberta Health Services, we know of only one physician who is planning on leaving the province in July and has submitted the formal paperwork that has always been required to do so.

Mr. Shepherd: The stories continue, Mr. Speaker.

On Monday this Premier said: "There is no mass exodus of physicians." But his Health minister wrote to the CPSA: "Communities should not have to face an entire group of physicians withdrawing services." The minister says that he will ask his cabinet to "prohibit an entire group of physicians from withdrawing at the same time." The exodus is real, and the minister is making a desperate bid to try to force the medical regulator to clean up his political mess. When will the Premier finally just fire that member and get back to actual work and negotiation with Alberta doctors?

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, what I'm going to do is thank the Minister of Health for his determination in ensuring quality care in Alberta while preventing completely out-of-control costs. If we did not take measures now, we would see, we project, a \$2 billion increase, a 40 per cent increase, in the cost of physician compensation, who are already the best compensated physicians in Canada, with the highest per capita number of physicians in Canada, after having enjoyed a 23 per cent increase over the past four years while our economy shrank by nearly 20 per cent. We know that the NDP just wants to squeeze taxpayers for more and more, but there is a limit.

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

Child Care

Ms Pancholi: There is no economic recovery without child care. Mr. Speaker, a new report from the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Muttart Foundation makes it clear, quote: the broader recovery of Alberta's economy will rest in a significant measure on the successful reopening and resumption of child care services. Yet this government has provided little to no funding, guidance, or support to child care centres that were forced to close during COVID-19. Premier, your decision to short-change child care centres is crippling our chances for recovery. To the Premier: why is child care not a priority?

Mr. Kenney: It is, Mr. Speaker, and the member is completely inaccurate when she says that the government has provided no funding, guidance, or support for child care providers. That is completely contrary to the truth. The government has in fact provided extraordinary funds to assist child care operators with reopening. It's provided detailed guidance throughout the COVID crisis, including how to operate within the public health guidelines of the chief medical officer of health, and will continue to do so. And we are determined, by the way, as well to ensure the reopening of the schools in September, to ensure that that support is also available to parents.

Ms Pancholi: Well, I encourage the Premier to read the report because the report is clear.

While other provinces protected child care, the UCP abandoned it. In Alberta more than half of child care centres received no direct funding compared to 9 per cent in Ontario; more than half in Alberta have laid off all of their staff compared to 19 per cent in B.C. Now 1 in 5 child care centres in Alberta say that they might not reopen and are facing permanent closure. That's three times as many as in Saskatchewan. Across Canada Alberta centres are the least prepared to reopen and the most likely to close. Premier, why do you choose to pile one crisis on top of another, jeopardizing our economic recovery?

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, my ministry received this report yesterday and expressed some serious concerns that, at first glance, there are a number of inaccuracies but also that that data is over two months old and doesn't reflect our current situation. I would encourage, in fact I'd implore the member opposite to step back from the fear, the hyperpartisan anger, the misinformation to take some time to gather the facts, to maybe speak to a variety of parents and operators, not just her supporters. Right now only half of centres have reopened. Occupancy is at 41 per cent. This is the time for facts, calm response, listening to centres, listening to parents, not fear and misinformation.

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

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, who I'm listening to are Alberta families and the child care sector and businesses, who want economic recovery now.

COVID-19 is going to present long-term challenges in child care that will require more funding and not less, yet budget reports show that this minister took at least \$89 million out of the system. One provider said, quote: we are still looked at solely for providing a place to put children, with no real investment; they don't seem to care. Another asks, quote: why are we being shorted? Premier, where did this money go, why is child care being ignored, and why don't you understand that child care is essential to economic recovery?

Ms Schulz: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the member opposite is still angry that Albertans rejected her billion-dollar campaign promise. They doubled down. Today she tripled down on an untested and half-baked plan. In fact, the member opposite is asking for a task force that already exists, a website that already exists, and – you guessed it – data that already exists. We have committed \$18 million in redirected funding to support child care centres across this province. I'd like to quote Anita Turna, chair of the Alberta Association of Child Care Operators, who said:

We appreciate the government's efforts to assist operators . . . This money will help operators start reopening their centres and support parents' return to work.

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

PDD Direct Operations

Ms Renaud: This government is making a heartless move to privatize care for Albertans with severe disabilities during a pandemic. While this government has found billions of dollars to spend on its failed corporate handout and it's handing out quarter-million-dollar salaries to unqualified UCP insiders, they're jeopardizing the care of Alberta's most vulnerable population. Premier, why, during a pandemic, when Albertans with disabilities need more support, are you trying to walk away from your responsibility to them? Will you please stop this appalling privatization plan?

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member for that question. There is nothing further from the truth. In fact, all of our disability programs are fully funded. AISH is fully funded. The PDD program is also fully funded as well as the FSCD program. We are looking at direct operations because we're looking at the government's footprint to make sure that we are delivering the best services possible for our disability community.

Ms Renaud: There's a difference between fully funded and less funding.

Pamela Bloomer, who is deeply concerned about the impact that this government's plan to privatize care will have on her family, said about the government, and I quote: they're hoping the family members and guardians aren't going to complain. Well, the family members and guardians are speaking out and telling this government to stop this plan that will compromise the care of their loved ones. Premier, why are you ignoring the families and guardians who are telling you that this change will endanger the care of the most medically fragile people in this province during a pandemic? We're in a pandemic. Please answer.

Mrs. Sawhney: Mr. Speaker, as I'd mentioned in the House yesterday, we are undertaking a consultation right now. No decisions have been made. We are engaging with all stakeholders, including parents. The reality is that 90 per cent of services for the disability community across the province are undertaken by civil society organizations and not-for-profit organizations, and they do a fantastic job.

Ms Renaud: We have 60 days left of the 90-day notice period. Consultation so far has been a survey: "How much do you need this, 1 through 5? Choose one." The Premier has previously called people with disabilities people with limited human capacity or capital. The question is simple. Please recognize that we're in a pandemic. Please recognize that this little, tiny portion of services needs to be protected, not sold off to save a few million dollars. Please answer the question. Please answer the calls to stop this process.

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Albert just made a completely false accusation with no basis in the facts whatsoever. It's something that she has repeated many times. I've pointed this out before. [interjection] I invite her, instead of heckling me, to have the humility to stand, apologize, and retract. I have never made such a comment about persons with disabilities, with whom I have volunteered since I was a teenager. When I was speaking about human capital, I was talking about teenagers and the minimum wage, people with no job experience with significant training requirements. It had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with people with disabilities.

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

2:00 Occupational Health and Safety Act and Workers' Compensation Reviews

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When our government launched a review of OH and S and WCB laws, it was a big deal: we posted it far and wide, months of public feedback, multiple rounds of stakeholder engagement where everybody was in the same room. But this government's new review is so low key, it's practically invisible: no public announcement, no news release, not even a tweet from the minister. Oh, and the so-called consultation closes in less than a month. To the Premier. Your party talks a really big game about listening to Albertans. Why are you keeping a review of our most fundamental workplace laws a secret?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are not keeping it a secret. We are reaching out to stakeholders to seek their input in terms of changes for the workers' compensation system. The previous government made fundamental changes to workers' compensation. We heard from stakeholders the concerns about the changes and the ability of the fund to be able to maintain its economic stability with those changes. We are reaching out to stakeholders to get their input, and when we hear from them, we'll be able to report on that.

Ms Gray: So the minister is reaching out to his favourite stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, this covert OHS review asks questions that raise serious alarm bells for workers. It asks about, quote, limiting the right to refuse unsafe work, it asks about implementing, quote, less prescriptive workplace safety laws, and it questions the need to report near-miss incidents. It forecasts changes to radiation exposure levels. Yet this Premier hasn't said a peep about this review or asked workers what they think. Does the Premier really think it's fair to talk about rolling back workplace safety measures with less than a month's notice and zero public input?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, the assertion that we are only going to our friends is simply incorrect and false. We are asking employee organizations, unions for their input. In regard to WCB we also are very cognizant of the fact that the previous government did a deep dive in terms of the WCB review. There was a written report. There were a number of submissions. We are relying on those submissions as well. We're asking targeted questions so that we can do a targeted review. We will rely on the previous submissions, and we'll get these changes right.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, the Premier is running a 007 consultation: don't raise the alarm until everything blows up. Let's compare it to the WCB review I launched. We had an expert panel that held in-person meetings and submitted an independent report. I spent months meeting with injured workers. This Premier is doing none of this, not even a survey for the review of everything from WCB governance to benefit payouts. Will the Premier commit today to extend this consultation to at least the end of the year, add some in-person meetings, and talk to injured workers before introducing legislation?

Mr. Kenney: Well, Mr. Speaker, that hyperpartisan question gives me the opportunity to remind the Assembly of the time that when she was minister of labour, she attacked some of the most courageous entrepreneurs in our province when she boycotted a

Restaurants Canada meeting. She said that she refused to even be in a room with entrepreneurs, who put their life savings on the line. The largest sector of employment in the province is the restaurant sector. That member, when she was a minister, attacked the restaurant owners, who create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Ms Sweet: Point of order.

Mr. Kenney: Shame on her.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted at 2:04.

The hon. the Member for Livingstone-Macleod has a question.

Supervised Drug Consumption Site Review

Mr. Reid: Thank you. The results are in on the ARCHES organization in Lethbridge, the operators of the supervised consumption site. The independent audit conducted by Deloitte found \$1.6 million unaccounted for, international travel to Portugal, and senior executives taking home over \$340,000 a year. It is disappointing to think that money meant to help the most vulnerable instead went to line the pockets of the ARCHES organization and their senior executives. Mr. Speaker, through you to the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, how will ARCHES be held accountable for their actions?

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

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for a great question here. It is more than disappointing for me. Upon receiving the funding – we ceased all the funding to the current organization. We're going to hand over the facts over to Justice for further follow-up. What's more troubling is that this is a typical example of the failed NDP government approach. They piled millions of dollars to a one-pillar approach. We're going to fix that.

The Speaker: The Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the list of findings goes on, given that over \$7,500 was spent on management retreats, given that thousands of dollars were spent on international travel to Portugal, given that over \$1,000 was spent on buying gift cards, oh, and given that \$1.6 million is unaccounted for due to missing documentation, again to the associate minister: how can the government be expected to continue to support this organization when they are obviously incapable of managing taxpayers' money?

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

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You are absolutely right. We're not going to fund this organization, period. We're going to have higher accountability across the whole sector, but let me get back to what I was saying earlier. This is a typical example of the failed NDP one-pillar approach. They shuffled millions of dollars through a pet project. Stuff like what you see here created chaos in the system. We're going to replace that with a full continuum of care with a laser focus on recovery, to get Albertans out of addiction into recovery.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Reid: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Given that the operators of these sites repeatedly state that they are supporting the most

vulnerable in a noble pursuit and given that this money was meant to provide a health care service to the most vulnerable Albertans in the community of Lethbridge and given that we now know that this organization is not noble at all, again to the associate minister: how will you ensure that, moving forward, money is kept to account and that individuals whom this funding is meant to support are receiving the services that they need?

The Speaker: The associate minister.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member. Great question. Under the previous government what you see here is a failed approach that kept thousands of people struggling in the system. It's chaotic, even the service provider growing from a seven-person organization to 177 in three years. We're going to clean up all of that. We're going to replace that with a laser-focused, recovery-oriented continuum of care. This is taking notions throughout the country. That's what leadership looks like.

Oldman Dam Recreation Area Land Use

Mr. Schmidt: Castlevue Ridge Estates is a residential community located in Oldman dam provincial recreation area, near Pincher Creek. Homeowners in this community lease land that their homes are on from Alberta parks. Residents were surprised when earlier this year the UCP announced that this park was going to be removed from the system. Residents were not consulted before this decision was made, and calls for more details around how they'll be impacted to the parks department and their local MLA have yielded no answers. Can the minister assure residents of Castlevue Ridge Estates today that they will keep their homes?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, we've been clear that some parks will remove themselves from the parks act and will move to the Public Lands Act. They will still remain open to Albertans. Albertans will be able to recreate in them the same way that they have for years. Nothing changes, really, from the perspective of recreation except that we provide some more efficiency in certain areas to be able to use the public lands division of the department, who are closer to the parks, to be able to help them manage those facilities. But we will stop the practices that that hon. member did of spending millions of dollars flying firewood to campgrounds in the backcountry or having staff drive six hours round trip to collect money at campsites.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, given that I don't think that that answer will provide any relief to the residents of Castlevue Ridge Estates – those residents have also told me that Alberta parks currently provides those residents with drinking water. Local news recently reported that Alberta parks and the MD of Pincher Creek are in talks to turn this responsibility over to the MD, but residents have asked both the parks department and the MD for updates on these discussions, and again neither can provide any answers. Will the minister commit to these residents today to tell them who will be responsible for providing their drinking water in the future?

2:10

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, the parks department is spread across our province, which is larger than most European countries. I'm not familiar with that specific waterline, but if the hon. member reaches out to my office, we'll be happy to get him the information that he needs for his constituents on this issue.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the environment minister's office responding to me ever.

Given that the incidents with the residents of Castleview Ridge highlight how reckless and irresponsible it is to close down or sell off hundreds of Alberta parks, will the minister admit today that his decision was wrong and commit to putting an end to this plan, or if not, will he at least admit that he failed Albertans by not consulting with them before making this decision and commit to conducting consultations before closing or selling off any of these parks?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy next week to table several letters of communication to the hon. member when he's reached out to my department. I'll do that next week.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, everything that the hon. member just said there is categorically false. We have not shut campgrounds, and we not shutting access, and we certainly are not selling parks. That's been clear in this Chamber despite the fact that that hon. member continues to come to this House and say that and his party continues to mislead Albertans about that fact. We continue to operate parks all across this province, and we will continue to for the decades to come.

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

COVID-19 and Care Facilities

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Royal Society of Canada recently published an excellent report regarding the long-term care system in Canada during COVID-19. They not only speak of a communicable disease crisis but also a humane crisis. They describe that many of the deaths in facilities were preventable. Seniors died because there was a lack of care, water, food, and basic hygiene. To the Minister of Health: have you read the report, and will you implement the seven recommendations in your preparations for the second wave?

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

Mr. Shandro: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have, and we are reviewing those recommendations. I again point out to this Assembly and to the hon. member that while the national mortality rate during COVID-19 and the response to COVID-19 in our continuing care system was 142 per million, we in Alberta experienced 23 per million – 23 per million – as opposed to the national rate of 142, which shows that our province, in listening to and following the expert advice of the medical professionals, proved that our response here in this province was quite successful.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that the average percentage of the total deaths due to COVID-19 in long-term care in OECD countries is 42 per cent of the total deaths and given that here in Alberta 73 per cent of the total deaths was in continuing care facilities, will the minister acknowledge his failure to keep seniors safe in our province and ensure that the report's recommendations are fully implemented immediately?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, that's absurd and not accurate at all. As I said, our mortality rate here in this province was 23 per million as opposed to the national mortality rate, which is 142 per million. Now, if the hon. member wants to abuse the fact that our denominator was lower because we had fewer deaths in this province, it's up to her to be able to play with the numbers that way, but the fact is that the mortality rate in this province in continuing care for COVID was 23 per million, far less than the national rate.

Ms Sigurdson: Given that the authors identified the workforce crisis in long-term care as the most serious issue in the sector and

given that a high-quality, resilient, and supported workforce is the major component of quality care and given that improvement in this area will immediately and positively impact the quality of care and life for seniors, will the minister implement the nine steps to solving the workforce crisis identified in the report?

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, if that's true, then why, through the four years of the NDP, did they try to squeeze out the 300 independent providers in the system? Why did they make it more difficult for those providers to add more capacity and more beds to the system? Why did they make it more difficult for those operators to be partners in the continuing care system? The NDP in their four years failed those independent providers. We're going to support them, including that very soon we'll be announcing the second stage of bringing back ASLI so we can work with independent providers in being partners with this government in providing good care to the residents who need that care.

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

Canada Pension Plan

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Albertans deserve fair and unbiased treatment from the federal government, yet the only time that Ottawa seems to pay any attention to our province is when they might lose out on our hard-earned tax money. The Fair Deal Panel has made suggestions such as a provincial pension plan, which would provide Albertans with more autonomy, control over our own affairs, and a service that would be run for Albertans, by Albertans, and, perhaps best yet, not by Ottawa. To the Minister of Finance: could you please outline the benefits that we could potentially receive from a provincially run pension plan?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Albertans consistently contribute more to Canada pension than they receive in benefits. In fact, a recent report by the Fraser Institute found that Albertans contributed \$28 billion more than they received in the decade ending 2017. An Alberta pension plan has great potential to lower Albertans' pension contributions while maintaining benefits. This would lower payroll costs for both employees and employers and create more job opportunities for Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, given that over the last few weeks several deceptive figures and statements have been thrown around and given that this has led to a situation that is clouded with misinformation and distorted truths and given that the NDP has repeatedly stated that an Alberta pension plan would create over \$130 billion in unfunded liabilities, can the minister explain how this figure is inaccurate, out of context, and fails to consider a number of important factors?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. To clarify this for Albertans, the reality is that Albertans would have the same amount of liability under a Canada pension plan or an Alberta pension plan. An Alberta pension plan would not expose Albertans to additional liability. The members

across the aisle continue to demonstrate their financial incompetence and create unfounded fear with Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Mr. Amery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that decentralizing some of the services currently provided by the federal government could have massive benefits for our province and given that Alberta has the youngest population of all provinces and one of the highest workforce participation rates and given the massive discrepancy between the contributions Albertans make and the benefits we receive, Minister, how is our government working on making sure that the pension plans fairly compensate the people of our province?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to fight for a fair deal for Albertans, something the members opposite never did. An Alberta pension plan has the real potential to, again, materially reduce payroll taxes for both employers and employees, improving our competitiveness and productivity. My department is studying the cost benefits and potential structure of an Alberta pension plan. If this analysis shows that an Alberta pension plan would be a positive for Albertans, it will be put to Albertans for a referendum. Ultimately, Albertans will decide. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

The Official Opposition House Leader has the call.

Alberta Energy Regulator

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Government House Leader, in a desperate attempt to distract from his government's hiring of a climate change skeptic to a senior role of the AER, chose misleadingly to claim that our caucus had attempted to, quote, misappropriate or attempt to misappropriate intellectual property of the Alberta Energy Regulator. Now, that's just flat out inaccurate, and the House leader knows it. Now that he's had some time to reread the report and he sees his mistake, will he be willing to correct the record?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that. What I said is that under the NDP's watch \$2.4 million went missing at the Alberta Energy Regulator. The Auditor General has been clear about that. In fact, they've been conducting investigations trying to locate that money. My question to the Official Opposition was: when they were in government, did they know what took place with that \$2.4 million? Do they know where it is? The reality is that the big problems that took place at the Alberta Energy Regulator took place under the NDP, when they were the government, under their watch, and under our watch we fixed the Alberta Energy Regulator.

The Speaker: The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the minister misquoted the Public Interest Commissioner in this House, given that the commissioner clearly wrote that Jim Ellis "grossly mismanaged public assets by misappropriating or by attempting to misappropriate the intellectual property of the AER" and given that the minister chose to deliberately tweak the words of the Public Interest Commissioner by claiming that our party somehow was responsible for this, has the minister apologized to the Public Interest Commissioner for deliberately misquoting her report? Why

does he think he can alter findings of an office of the Legislature? Is that really the conduct of a Government House Leader?

2:20

Mr. Kenney: Mr. Speaker, what an ironic question. Will the member – she has another question coming up, so I will give her the opportunity to rise on behalf of the NDP and to apologize to Albertans for overseeing the AER scandal that resulted in over \$2 million that went unaccounted for, ultimately the firing of the president. This government had to replace the entire board because the NDP swept it under the carpet. While they're looking for that \$2.4 million, maybe they can help us find the \$1.6 million that has gone missing at ARCHES in Lethbridge.

The Speaker: The hon. Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Sweet: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Premier could also stand up and tell us where the \$2.5 billion from AIMCo has gone, that would be great, too.

Given that what the House leader read into *Hansard* yesterday does not appear anywhere in the report of the Public Interest Commissioner and given this House leader generally lacks credibility on many fronts and yesterday's terrible misrepresentation hurts that even further and given that since we can assume the House leader knows that "Ellis" and "NDP" are, in fact, different words and given that this desperate smear was an attempt to distract from his defence of a climate change skeptic being hired to the highest level of the AER, would he like to correct the record and apologize?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, here's a quote from the Public Interest Commissioner: "[the NDP AER leadership] actions demonstrated a reckless and wilful disregard for the proper management of public funds, public assets, and the delivery of a public service." It's shocking what the NDP did with the AER. I'm proud that our government was able to get that fixed and the AER moving forward. Again, where's the \$2.4 million? I know the Auditor General would be very interested. That hon. member was part of a government where that money went missing under the AER at that time. I'm not saying that she knows where it is, but if she does, she should probably call the Auditor General. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

School Bus COVID-19 Related Safety Measures

Member Loyola: Mr. Speaker, parents have contacted our caucus that are concerned about their fears of sending their children on a yellow bus in September. Everyone can see that because of the threat of COVID-19 the buses cannot be operational the way that they used to be. In some cases children were sitting shoulder to shoulder, crammed, three kids in one seat. There is no room to physically distance. To the minister. Protocols need to be developed with the consultation of the chief medical officer. Are you going to release these strict protocols on how yellow buses can run safely, or are you going to pass that on to the school boards?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will say to the hon. member that it's a fair concern, how kids are going to get to school on the school buses in September under COVID, a situation that we never had before. But I know that the school boards are each working on protocols in co-operation with the advice from the chief medical officer of health. I have great confidence that they will do

a great job. I guess about 60 or 61 school boards; I imagine there might be 60 or 61 different answers. It's all okay as long as the kids are safe, the drivers are safe, the parents and teachers are safe.

Member Loyola: Given that the minister has gutted funding for student transportation and removed the ability for school boards to run a deficit and keep the fees low and given that the Calgary board of education has already increased their fees from \$365 to \$800 a year and this increase does not account for any additional expenses for COVID-19 protocols, to the minister: will you provide school boards increased funding to pay for the extra cost to keep Alberta students safe on their bus rides, or are you going to download the cost to families that are already struggling?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education has risen.

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. If boards are reducing their services to students, they're doing it despite receiving increases in operational spending, including a 5 per cent increase for transportation costs.

Mr. Speaker, what is extremely shocking is that when the Member for Edmonton-Glenora was in cabinet, she let \$1.6 million go missing under her watch. When our government commissioned an audit of the ARCHES supervised consumption site in Lethbridge, the auditor was unable – unable – to review all the allegations due to ARCHES' poor records management. This is just . . .

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

Member Loyola: Mr. Speaker, given that this government has chosen to give away to Alberta's wealthiest corporations a \$4.7 billion corporate handout and given that this government also chose to invest \$7 billion into the Keystone XL pipeline when experts are giving it less than a 50 per cent chance of being built, to the minister. Parents are focused to trust you with their children's safety. Will you here and now promise to develop safety protocols and provide the needed funding to keep our kids safe on their bus rides to school, or does your government only open their wallets for oil companies and large corporations?

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

Member LaGrange: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. As a mother, as a grandmother, as minister I am totally focused on ensuring that our children return back to school safely. That is the primary focus that we have.

But what I think the NDP should be focused on is how they are unaccountable for taxpayer dollars. They have totally ignored financial accountability. Under the Member for Edmonton-Glenora's watch they misappropriated – there were funds. Excuse me. There were funds that went missing. There was \$1,100 for gift cards for board members, \$2,100 for gift cards for business owners.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

Bill 32 Labour Relations Code Amendments

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government made a platform commitment to restore balance in the workplace because under the previous NDP government we saw a shift in the labour dynamic away from the rights of workers and towards the schemes of Gil McGowan and their union bosses. Alberta needs balance in the workplace to ensure that job creators are able to compete globally in order to create the jobs that Albertans so desperately need. To the Minister of Labour and Immigration: what is our

government doing to help create balance, and how will these changes benefit the Alberta worker?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. Last fall we consulted with thousands of Albertans. This included employees, employers, unions, and labour groups. We heard that, in general, employers needed more flexibility, particularly under the Employment Standards Code, to help them save time and money and get Albertans back to work and keep Albertans working. We are listening to Albertans by making changes to sections of the Employment Standards Code, including simplified general holiday pay, payment of final earnings, payroll processes, and averaging arrangements. We are supporting job creators and the province's economic recovery by restoring balance to labour laws.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank to the minister for the answer. Given that some workers in my constituency have contacted me and have been led to believe that our government is removing their right to picket and given that picketing is a constitutionally protected right, to the same minister: is there any truth to the rumours being spread that claim their right to picket is being infringed upon?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is no. Our government supports the worker's right to strike and to picket. Now, we are making some changes in regard to picketing regarding secondary picketing. We're also making changes in regard to how the labour board manages picket lines, but we are doing this using the B.C. model that is in place. We are not infringing upon workers' rights. We support workers' rights to be able to picket, and we are restoring balance to the labour laws in Alberta. That's what we promised we would do, and that's what we're doing.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, given that Gil McGowan and some union bosses are using mandated union dues to fund political activities that run counter to a worker's best interest such as funding antipipeline campaigns and given that we promised to protect workers from being forced to fund political parties and causes without explicit opt-in approval, to the same minister: what are you doing to protect the rights of workers to prevent union dues from funding activities that go against the will of these workers?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Mr. Copping: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the hon. member for the excellent question. Our government made a platform commitment to protect workers from being forced to fund political causes without the explicit opt-in approval, and we are delivering on that promise in Bill 32. We support individual workers' rights, and we're protecting workers by giving them choice. As said many times in this House, some national unions have used workers' dues, Albertan workers' dues, to actively campaign against Albertans, their jobs, and foundational industries like pipelines. We are making a change in the act to give those workers a choice. We are supporting Albertans, and we are supporting jobs.

Arts Programming and Funding

Ms Goehring: The Stampede puts Calgary and Alberta on the world stage. It also provides an actual stage for artists to share their

talent. Last night our caucus hosted artists from Calgary for an online arts showcase. Check it out on my Facebook page. The artists shared their talents and their stories about being an artist during these uncertain times. Even in the middle of this uncertainty they are still bringing forward their talents to help people cope and feel a sense of normal during this unprecedented pandemic. To the minister: Artists are supporting us. What plans do you have to support them? Be specific because so far I've heard nothing.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

2:30

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, again, the member is misinformed and obviously hasn't been looking at the work that's been done by this government. We actually just started a program called spotlight, which highlights some of the incredible artists here in Alberta. There is an opportunity also to be able to tip online, which is incredible because right now, as we know, with this sector it's very difficult to be able to perform in public.

Further to that, the dollars that we're funding the AFA have continued on. It's \$26.8 million or so. We're very excited to see the work that comes out of those projects. Applications are coming in, and we're very much looking forward to seeing what these artists produce in these difficult times.

Ms Goehring: Given that the Calgary Stampede provides opportunities for artists through concerts, its marching bands, and by simply bringing millions of people to Calgary and given that the Stampede and other festivals such as the Calgary folk fest were cancelled this year because of COVID-19 and given that organizations have said that they can likely scrape by this year with the cancellations, but they are worried about needing to cancel again next year, to the minister: do you have a plan to work with organizations and festivals to ensure a transition plan to return to gatherings that respect health measures while still remaining financially viable for events such as Stampede?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you very much. That's a really great question, actually. We're working with the sector right now to find out and with our ministers at the federal level. As the member knows, it's a global issue. Many of those organizations and festivals also depend on many foreign acts that come in, so absolutely everybody's been impacted. I believe that this will be one of those moments where the sector will have to work right across the globe to figure out: what is the best method? We are working with the chief medical officer on a regular basis to find out what the best protocol is and with the sector to make sure that we are best capable to handle the situation.

Ms Goehring: Given that this UCP government cut \$3 million from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, proving they don't care about artists and that protecting the arts is not a priority for this government, and given that when asked that the economic recovery council have an artist representative, staff in the Premier's office laughed at the idea, laughed at an industry that contributes over \$5 billion to our economy and employs nearly 60,000 people, to the minister: will you apologize to Alberta artists for mocking their profession, and will you immediately restore funding you've cut? Yes or no?

Mrs. Aheer: Too bad. I thought we were on the path of, like, really good questions, but here we go. Actually, the NDP continue to forget, Mr. Speaker, that we were in a fiscal crisis before COVID even hit. On top of that, when you take what we are actually doing in leveraging the dollars, we are working with the sector. In fact, right now, given the global pandemic, we are going to have to work together. This kind of divisive rhetoric does absolutely nothing, provides absolutely zero solutions to a sector that's literally had its legs cut out from under it. If the member has something wonderful to add to the conversation and a solution, I would love to hear it. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Government Policies

Mr. Carson: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Speaker ruled earlier this week that we can call each other puppets in this House, and this is thrilling to me because the UCP lately have acted a lot like puppets. They're puppets of big, profitable corporations, giving them a \$4.7 billion corporate handout and leaving the rest of us to pay for it, and they're puppets of the insurance industry as they removed the 5 per cent rate cap, forcing some Albertans to pay \$600 more in car insurance. To the Minister of Finance: don't you agree that it's time to cut the strings and start listening to Albertans?

Speaker's Ruling Challenging the Chair's Ruling

The Speaker: I would provide caution when asking a question of such nature. I have very little challenge with the content of the question. What I do struggle with is an hon. member of this Assembly utilizing the chair to intervene in debate or a ruling that the chair made because it could be perceived that that is, in fact, challenging a ruling of the chair. The hon. member knows better, and I expect better.

The hon. minister.

Government Policies

(continued)

Mr. Toews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to puppets, I just have to first say this, that the NDP are clearly a puppet of Mr. Gil McGowan. That is for sure.

With respect to automobile insurance we recognize that there are cost pressures that have been driving up automobile insurance premiums. Mr. Speaker, the NDP did not deal with the challenge. They put a Band-Aid on it, which just created a greater festering wound. We have commissioned a report. We've received a draft report now from the panel. We're taking a look at that report. We'll be coming forward with real solutions for Albertans.

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

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that I've only begun on this puppeteering prognostication and given that the UCP are also puppets of those who would poison our environment as they stripped away monitoring with no consultation with Albertans and given that this move was taken to court by First Nations, who have a legal right to be consulted, and given that this move also drew the ire of the Northwest Territories government, who also have a legal right to be consulted, to the minister: is being a puppet to those who would poison our environment more important than your relationship with other governments?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Mr. Speaker, what a ludicrous question. Our relationship with the Northwest Territories government is fine. I talked to the Northwest Territories environment minister just the other day. Here's the reality, though. That hon. member and his party continue to want to attack the energy industry. They only want to protect employees that are not in the energy industry from COVID. This government took steps to work with our largest industry to be able to help protect people from COVID-19, the largest pandemic in a century in this province and in the world. We're not ashamed of that. Of course, we stood with workers to make sure that they were safe. That's exactly what we should have done, and we did it all the while protecting the environment.

Mr. Carson: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that this government is also a puppet of restaurant lobby groups, who seek to squash workers' rights, and given that they danced around like Pinocchio as they slashed the youth wage and then introduced legislation to cut overtime and holiday pay for Albertans and given that when they claim that all of these moves will create more jobs, most Albertans can noticeably see their noses growing longer, to the minister of labour: isn't it time to forgo the puppeteering lifestyle and actually stand up for Alberta workers?

The Speaker: I have a very difficult time connecting the third question to the first question, with the exception of a bad analogy. He knows the rules in the Chamber, and I expect much better from him next week.

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, I can connect the three because once again the NDP is providing misleading information when they ask those questions.

The fact is that when it comes to overtime – overtime for people working regular jobs, daily overtime, weekly – that doesn't change. The only thing we have changed is making it easier for employers to enter into overtime arrangements. This is not a reduction of overtime. The 44 hours a week still remains. What is being suggested by the members opposite is false, and I wish they would stop doing that.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Economic Recovery and Job Creation

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jobs allow Alberta individuals and families to be self-reliant, to seek happiness as they individually see fit. Jobs must be integral to any economic recovery plan. Under the destructive socialist NDP policy tens of thousands of private-sector jobs were lost, inflicting great harm to Alberta families and businesses. To the minister: what steps will the government undertake to unwind the destruction of jobs inflicted by the NDP on Alberta businesses?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our first act of government, of course, was to repeal the job-killing carbon tax that the NDP saddled on Albertans. Since then we've been working hard to ensure we have the most competitive business environment possible by reducing layers of red tape left for us and to Albertans by the NDP. We then accelerated our job-creation tax cut from 10 to 8 per cent effective July 1 so that our job creators can be competitive, which will attract investment, create jobs and opportunities for all Albertans.

Mr. Stephan: Given that this government terminated the NDP job-killing carbon tax and given that the job-creation tax cut cut corporate tax by one-third, rejecting mediocrity and restoring Alberta as the most competitive Canadian jurisdiction to grow business, and given that this government has and will erase and exterminate destructive NDP labour policies penalizing businesses for hiring Alberta employees, to the minister: what additional steps is this government undertaking to support jobs for Alberta individuals ...

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

2:40

Mr. Toews: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to join the Premier a week ago Monday to announce this government's Alberta recovery plan, economic recovery plan. A big part of that plan is to make key infrastructure investments across the province. These are investments that will create jobs today, but, as importantly, they will improve our productivity, our competitiveness, lead to long-term investment attraction in this province, and create jobs and added economic fiscal capacity in the future.

Mr. Stephan: Given that high payroll taxes reduce jobs and given that Alberta businesses and workers pay a \$3 billion annual subsidy to the CPP and given that an Alberta pension plan could end this subsidy and produce a game-changing competitive advantage for jobs in Alberta, reducing payroll taxes to the lowest in Canada while maintaining the same benefits, to the minister: how will this government explore this potential game-changing competitive advantage for all Alberta businesses and workers?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member pointed out, Albertans consistently contribute more in CPP than they receive in benefits, and my department is working to conduct and complete a detailed study that will identify the costs and the great opportunities and potential that an Alberta pension plan could provide. What I cannot understand is the fact that the members opposite do not even want to review, encourage, and understand what potential an Alberta pension plan might provide Albertans. We will stand up for Albertans on Alberta pensions and for Alberta businesses.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds or less we will return to the daily Routine.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there tablings? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview has risen.

Ms Sigurdson: Yes. I have five copies of Restoring Trust: COVID-19 and the Future of Long-term Care, created by the Royal Society of Canada.

The Speaker: Are there others? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have five copies of an article in the *Calgary Herald* on June 13, 2020, entitled Collecting Race-based Data is Key to Real Change, Say Advocates, an interview with sisters Sinit and Semhar Abraha, who say, "We know that the Black community is facing hardships, but we don't know the nature of these hardships. When we don't have the data, we can't prove it."

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there other tablings?

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. Schweitzer, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, pursuant to the Legal Profession Act the Alberta Law Foundation financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2020.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at points of order. At 2:04 a point of order was raised. The hon. the Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods and the deputy Official Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At 2:04 a point of order was raised. In response to a question, the Premier repeated twice that I personally “attacked” people. This point of order is under 23(h), (i), and (j). I found it particularly insulting because I have never attacked anyone. The Premier was very specifically talking about me declining to attend the launch of a third-party advertising campaign pre-election that was advocating for positions that I disagreed with. I chose not to attend a meeting, and the Premier chose to use insulting language, accusing me of attacking groups of stakeholders. For this reason under 23(h), (i), and (j) it certainly is language “likely to create disorder” in this House. That is the point of order. I respectfully ask that the Premier apologize and withdraw that comment.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will refer you to several rulings from the chair last night on this very issue and this very word. Repeatedly the chair last night ruled that the exact same type of language was in order when being used by the Official Opposition, just to be clear on that. That doesn’t mean that there couldn’t be a different ruling from the chair, but certainly we are trying to comply with rulings that we’re hearing.

The Premier was referring to an incident, as the hon. deputy Opposition House Leader refers to, when she was the labour minister in which she deliberately – I am just quoting a newspaper article involved, which I will table tomorrow – skipped the morning event after learning Restaurants Canada was using today’s event to launch what I would consider an antiworker campaign. That’s what the former minister said. The chair of the Restaurants Canada board at the time said in regard to the NDP policies at the time: it feels as if we’ve had someone’s foot on our throat. It certainly goes on in great detail, feeling that they’ve been attacked by the government and the minister of the day in that industry.

I would say that this is a matter of debate based on the rulings that I’ve seen in this Chamber in the last 24 hours, Mr. Speaker. That’s what the Premier was referring to in those comments. I don’t actually think it’s a matter of debate. There’s no doubt the attack by the NDP on the industry is pretty clear. They’re quoted saying how much they felt attacked by the minister.

The Speaker: Hon. members, thank you for your submissions. I assume there are no others.

Seeing none, I am prepared to rule. With respect to the comments by the hon. the Premier and this particular point of order I do know that from time to time members of the Assembly will make an accusation or a statement about what another member has done or hasn’t done and in particular with respect to the policies that they

have represented or meetings that they’ve attended. I do find it difficult to find a point of order with respect to the comments of the Premier today. I think that it is a dispute of the facts, and I will consider this matter dealt with and concluded.

Having said that, we are weeks, perhaps, away from the conclusion of the legislative session. Of course, that is up to all members as to when that will take place. I would implore all members of the Assembly as we head home this weekend to spend some time with those we love to think about the decorum inside the Assembly. I think perhaps one might suggest that we’ve been in a race to the bottom to see how close we can get to a Speaker’s ruling without having a point of order called or how we can use “misled” better or how we can use “lies” or whatever the language might be. I think that this is a good opportunity, this weekend, to consider the ways that next week and the following weeks that come, in the middle of summer, how we might do our best to represent our constituents and all Albertans in a way that they can continue to be proud of.

With that, we are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 34

Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020

[Adjourned debate July 13: Mr. Sabir]

The Speaker: Hon. members, is there anyone else wishing to join in the debate on Bill 34 today? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity just to say a few words around the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020. I guess I maybe drew the short straw to say a few words about it. Of course, what this represents is a series of, I would say, 16 or 17 different acts that are being described here. This is a typical procedure, for anyone who is wondering, that allows for changes, technical changes, to be made for various reasons, and it’s generally agreed upon between the opposition and the government as well.

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

I mean, I think this is a good example of how the parliamentary system can work, and it’s a way by which we could help to expedite, you know, time and effort in the House so that we can move on to other issues to debate that are perhaps more contentious and so forth. I will venture to say as well that, I mean, this represents putting together, as I say, probably 17 different acts, some changes in 17 different acts, and it does it in a constructive sort of way.

2:50

In stark contrast, Mr. Speaker, you have an increasing encroachment by this UCP government on using omnibus legislation, where you are again changing different acts, multiple acts under a single bill, but they are substantial changes. That offers a number of problems, not the least of which where, with omnibus legislation, you might have a couple of useful, utilitarian ideas or things that can be agreed upon between the opposition and the government stacked in amongst other changes to other acts that are not agreeable and are difficult or contentious, right? So you lose the process in the House where you can move forward ideas that will help Alberta families and help to move forward our economy and/or

environment and/or schools or hospitals and so forth. You lose those good ideas by a large, clunky, omnibus bill.

This is an example, Bill 34, of how it should be done, where we talk about the things that need to be done, we come to an agreement on it, and we move on. Always when miscellaneous statutes acts come forward, I think it's a good idea to remind ourselves to not be tempted to build large, onerous, omnibus bills that are not helpful and instead relegate that sort of procedure to the miscellaneous statutes acts as we see here with Bill 34. So, yeah, we're in complete agreement with it. We would urge all members to vote in that same way.

You know, how we get to choose who speaks on the miscellaneous statutes acts is whoever can spell "miscellaneous." You're looking at the guy over here who can actually spell "miscellaneous." Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make some brief remarks regarding Bill 34, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020, that is before us now in the Legislature. I as well believe that this is the proper use of the miscellaneous statutes amendment act procedure, by putting together pieces of legislation with respect to different bills and sort of tidying things up and getting the housekeeping done using a miscellaneous statutes amendment act.

Conversely, what this government has done in omnibus bills that we've seen before this House lately has been kind of an abuse of the sort of miscellaneous statutes amendment act. Many of these measures in the omnibus bills that we've seen could certainly have been captured within miscellaneous statutes amendments acts much more readily, and I think much less contentiously. We look forward to seeing the more expeditious use of miscellaneous statutes amendments acts to accomplish more of the housekeeping-type items that the government wishes to accomplish rather than engrossing them in a large, omnibus bill unnecessarily.

I appreciate the expeditious manner that this bill was brought forward with and that we were able to tidy up some pieces of legislation with it in a forthright manner. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to join debate?

Seeing none, the hon. Minister of Environment and Parks to close debate. I'm seeing that it's waived.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. members. Well, I would like to first take this opportunity to call the committee to order.

Bill 34 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020

[Adjourned debate July 13: Mr. Sabir]

The Deputy Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill at this time? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has risen.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to just make a brief comment about Bill 34. The opposition appreciates

the opportunity to have discussed the contents of this bill prior to the bill actually being submitted into the House. I've been very discouraged that the government has not done that with other legislation, but in this case, we had an opportunity to see what was in the bill; therefore, it makes it easy for us to support it and to thank the government for acting in a reasonable and fair way in the Legislature.

I end my comments with that. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to join debate on this bill?

Seeing none, are you ready for the question on Bill 34, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020?

[The clauses of Bill 34 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Deputy Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Chair: Any opposed, please say no. That is carried.

I see the hon. Deputy Government House Leader has risen.

Mr. Nally: I move that the committee rise and report Bill 34.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Milliken in the chair]

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock has risen.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 34.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, please say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Acting Speaker: Any opposed, please say no. That is carried.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading (continued)

Bill 33 Alberta Investment Attraction Act

[Debate adjourned July 13: Mr. Deol speaking]

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

Are there any hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud has risen.

Ms Pancholi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and speak to second reading of Bill 33, the Alberta Investment Attraction Act. As I understand it, this bill is intended to, well, establish the creation of the invest Alberta corporation and to attract investment to Alberta. I understand, looking at the bill, that section 3 of the bill sets out the mandate of the corporation and identifies that the mandate would include identifying investments that could be attracted to the province, attracting these investments, supporting the

government of Alberta's trade activities, and making the process of investing here easy.

At this point, in second reading, of course, Mr. Speaker, we're speaking to generally the principles of the bill. Of course, I wholeheartedly support attracting investment to Alberta, particularly at a time that we're in right now of deep economic troubles because of the pandemic and the drop in oil prices. Certainly, more than ever we need to send the signal out to the world and across our country that Alberta is a place that people want to invest in, want to grow their business, and I certainly want to encourage any measures that will do that.

However, I have to express, of course, my skepticism, Mr. Speaker, about all the other actions that this government has taken repeatedly in just over the year that they've been in government that have actually deterred investment and attracting new businesses here to Alberta. Now, of course, there's a bit of a philosophical difference, an ideological difference, I suppose, between the government and the opposition as to what the best tools are to attract investment. They believe, of course – and they've doubled down on it and will continue to double down on it – that giving significant tax cuts to already profitable corporations to the tune of \$4.7 billion and growing is going to attract investment in Alberta. Now, of course, there is a copious amount of evidence to show that that is actually not going to be the case, particularly since, well, Alberta already had one of the lowest corporate income tax rates prior to the government taking over. Certainly, lowering it faster is not going to make any difference to those large corporations that have already been making their plans about investment.

3:00

To date, Mr. Speaker, all we've seen is that the \$4.7 billion corporate handout has actually resulted in big corporations taking investment out of Alberta. We've seen big companies actually move their headquarters. EnCana, Husky took the big gift that the current government handed them and ran with it, but it certainly didn't result in any increase of investment or any creation of jobs here in Alberta. I'm skeptical, I have to say, of this government's approach to investment.

Also, I have to take this opportunity to express my personal disagreement with the notion that somehow investment in the economy is separate from the people who make those jobs work, who work in those jobs, who run those businesses, who are looking at Alberta and trying to make a decision about whether or not this is the place where they want to establish and grow their business. You can't separate people from the economy, Mr. Speaker. What they're going to see, those potential investors and current Alberta businesspeople who are looking to potentially grow their business here in Alberta, is a province that is actually creating a decreased quality of life for the people who live here.

It's actually a province where the health care system is under attack. The government seems dead set on trying to push out as many doctors as they can during a time of a pandemic, remarkably. They see an education system where – let's remember that these are people who are business owners. They are looking to invest. They want to attract employees to come to work here, and those people come with families. Those people come with families who need access to a strong health care system. These people need to enrol their children in school, and what they're going to see is an education system that is being cut at a time, again, when we should be investing more in education not only because of the fact that we have a growing population and we have more children who require diverse support needs in school, but, of course, we're coming through a pandemic.

The number one question for Albertans and anybody looking to come here is: how will my family fare in Alberta? How will they do here? How is this province actually designed to make this a place where people will want to live? Because investment in business also requires people choosing to live here, and right now this government has attacked all of the things that I took pride in as being part of our quality of life here in Alberta: a strong public health care system, a strong education system.

Also, of course, investment in new businesses means that we need people who are creative thinkers. Entrepreneurs have incredible skills and want to create what will be the industries of the future. This government is also attacking the postsecondary system at a time, again, when they're saying that they're trying to attract investment. I'm not sure if they understand that investment comes with people. So I have to question how the establishment of the invest Alberta corporation can be distinguished from the fact that the quality of life here in Alberta is getting poorer under this government. It's more expensive for Albertans to live here. They're paying more in fees. They're paying more in taxes, heaven forbid. Whoever thought that this Premier, the one who was the champion against increases in personal income taxes, would – one of the first budgets he brings in, what does he do? He increases personal income taxes for all Albertans. So I'm confused as to the message that this government is trying to send to the world.

This is also a government that has chosen to establish a corporation, the Canadian Energy Centre, better known by the world, mostly because of the very embarrassing reputation it's established for itself in such short period of time, as the war room, another corporation that this government has set up which not only fails to provide the transparency around the tens of millions of dollars that are being provided to basically send out incredibly embarrassing tweets – well, that's shameful enough as it is, Mr. Speaker, the idea that, really, we're spending all this money on people in closed-door rooms to send out mean tweets. The more troubling part of that is that the intention, apparently, of the war room was to attract investors, to tell the truth about Alberta's oil and gas industry, and promote and tell people about why Alberta is the right place for them to invest.

Instead, what they've done is that they continue to, through the war room, disseminate tweets that show this government or at least its war room and, certainly, some of the people who work there, do not take climate change seriously, do not take environmental responsibility seriously. Again, that's not an ideological issue; that's actually from a pure economic perspective. The global investors in this world right now are saying: we care about climate change, we care about environmental responsibility, and we want to invest in a jurisdiction that's going to show that it's committed to those things. Instead, what we have is a government who is embarrassing Alberta's oil and gas industry and making it harder to attract global investors to come here.

While I appreciate that this passage of Bill 33, should it pass, of course, this reading and finally third reading, might establish this wonderful invest Alberta corporation, I look at that mandate, and I think: well, how is that going to fit in with the actions, the very real actions that we've already seen this government take, which seem to be dead set, Mr. Speaker, on actually driving away investment, making it less likely that companies and businesses that are looking for a forward-thinking jurisdiction would want to be here? Because it's also not a great place under this current government for Albertans to live, to raise their children.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I've risen a number of times in this House already – and I will continue to do that – to talk about how you can't have economic recovery without child care. We also see, again, businesses come here. People want to work here. Guess

what? They have families. They have children. In order to go do their work and to be producing the investment and the growth that we desperately need in this province – instead, they'll have no place to put their children because this government doesn't take families seriously. It doesn't take child care seriously. It certainly doesn't take working women seriously.

I think that, really, perhaps this bill might be helpful, but what's really needed is a significantly different approach from this government. To think about the economy and think about growth in our economy as about supporting people and understanding that it's people that need to want to live here, and without people wanting to live here, without it being a good place to want to raise your children, to access health care, to go to postsecondary, businesses are not going to want to invest here.

I also have to mention, Mr. Speaker, you know, looking at that mandate of the investment Alberta corporation and looking at all its objectives about identifying investments that could be attracted to the province, attracting them, supporting trade activities, and making the process of investing here easy, I look at that description, and it sounds an awful like what the job description should be for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism here in Alberta. So I wonder why the minister is passing on her responsibilities, her obligations to attract investment to Alberta onto a corporation. Why is she not taking responsibility for that job which she has been given by this government and is accountable to Albertans?

I also want to add, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this bill, that I also think it's important to note that it's, again, nice to see that there's a bill coming forward, but to date, during the toughest time for Alberta businesses and for Alberta families, during the pandemic and the economic slowdown, this government did almost nothing to support businesses to stay open. Only now, for example, months later, after the Official Opposition has been calling for months to have some significant commercial eviction support, that's only now being brought forward as legislation, and there are significant weaknesses in the legislation that they've brought forward.

There were no direct supports provided to Alberta businesses during the pandemic; instead, it was deferrals and deferrals and deferrals and: talk to the feds. This government, who claims to be the big champion of business, the big champion of investment, was telling Alberta businesses: you're on your own, and anything we're going to give you will just be in the process of deferrals, which means – guess what? – that you're still on the hook for it, even though we don't see a significant economic recovery coming any time soon, particularly not with the failed policies that this government continues to bring forward. Again, speaking out of both sides of their mouth, Mr. Speaker, talking about caring about businesses but doing absolutely nothing for them during the pandemic.

Now they have a small- and medium-business relaunch fund, up to \$5,000 that each business might be eligible for, which again is peanuts. It's peanuts to reflect the dire situation that businesses are in in this province. They're not really willing to do what's needed to actually grow business here in Alberta.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I stood up a few weeks ago on the issue of child care, and I stood up with a child care operator, a private operator, so a small business, and in her comments to the press she said: "You know, this Premier claims in the economy recovery that he's wanting to attract new businesses, but what about the businesses that are already here? What about my business?" This is what she was saying. She said: "What about my business? I'm a small-business owner. I own a private child care centre. Am I not a business owner? Am I not worthy of support from this government?" And the answer, of course, is clearly no. Of course, if you're a large corporation, if you're an already profitable corporation, you get tens of millions,

hundreds of millions of dollars in your pocket already from this government, but a small business, no.

3:10

That's actually what we in Alberta are pretty proud of. We have a very strong small and medium-sized business community. Those are Albertans who are creative, who are those entrepreneurs who are coming up and investing in Alberta, have chosen to do that here, and this government has provided next to nothing for support.

Mr. Speaker, as we go forward in debate on Bill 33, I will certainly be – while I'm in favour of attracting more investment to Alberta, I have to say that to date the government's record has been extremely poor, and I don't have confidence in the choices that they're making, and I don't understand why they don't have confidence in their own minister to perform this work, that they're now trying to hand off to an established corporation.

Mr. Speaker, those are my initial thoughts, and I look forward to further debate on Bill 33.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for brief questions or comments.

Seeing none, are there any hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has risen.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 33. I am, as is the previous speaker, happy to see the government put some focus on trying to bring investment into Alberta. It is a role of government, I believe, to help to set the circumstances for business success in a province. I know I've heard the Minister of Finance talk about the need to create a good climate for effective business in the province of Alberta for us to get investment. It is something I certainly believe in. But, you know, I have serious doubts about whether or not the UCP government has any understanding about what those aspects of climate are that would actually create more investment.

I certainly know that they have been able to create a few jobs. Lots of UCP members have found themselves with new jobs since they came in: Tom Olsen, Janice Harrington, Dave Rodney, Jeff Callaway, Lenore Eaton. All of these people, who were members of the UCP, now suddenly find themselves in positions where they're earning great sums of money. In fact, one report indicated that there was approximately \$10 million a year in these do-nothing jobs. We know that when it comes time for some very narrow-privileged people to receive patronage appointments, the government knows how to do that.

The question is whether or not they have a greater understanding and does this bill reflect a greater understanding in creating investment in the province of Alberta, particularly given that there already existed, prior to this bill, an investment attraction arm, the EDT, Economic Development and Trade, here in the province of Alberta. They had, actually, some fairly successful years before this government came in. For example, in 2018-2019 through the international offices they managed to sign 393 contracts for \$5.3 billion of investment. Clearly, investment was going on. Of those 393 investment and trade contracts, 179 were in the Asia Pacific area, 70 were in Europe, the Middle East, India, and Africa, and 144 were in the Americas. That constituted \$62 million in trade, \$4.6 billion in greenfield development, \$630 million in brownfield development, and \$6 million in signed contracts. It seems to me like there was some real success going on.

Now, every once in a while I know that somebody on the government side accidentally suggests that somehow while the

NDP were in government, we chased investment away from the province, a completely ridiculous comment, of course. What they're relying on is the absurd use of correlation rather than causality, something I've spoken to in this House a number of times, and I'd be more than happy to describe the difference between correlation and causality. We certainly did see some investment leave the province of Alberta at a time that investment was also leaving all of the other provinces in the country of Canada.

In fact, if you look at Alberta's loss of investment at the same time as Saskatchewan's loss of investment, our loss of investment was less on a per-capita basis than the Saskatchewan government's loss, yet they were a Conservative government. You'll notice that the UCP never mention those kinds of statistics because it's easier to cherry-pick a statistic that's based on correlation – that is, two things that happen to happen at the same time – when they can't understand the underlying causality, that maybe it was the result of oil going from over \$120 a barrel under their last Conservative government down to \$29 a barrel during our term in office. They never mention those kinds of factors in why investment maybe had decreased in this province because that would be too close to speaking the truth.

I'm very concerned that they continue to say that somehow our policies and practices have discouraged investment when I've clearly shown you that in the last year of our government we had a substantive amount of investment. I just went through a list of 393 contracts for \$5.3 billion worth of investment during the last year of our tenure. Yes, things did go down at the beginning of our time, directly correlated with the decrease in the price of oil and, therefore, government revenues, and the expansion of work in the oil fields went down because the price of oil internationally was not such that it would allow good businesses to make decisions for investment, lo and behold.

Now, if I were to use that correlational approach to statistics that the UCP uses, I would be saying things like: you know, under the UCP, since they arrived in government, we have seen the greatest rise in unemployment in the last century in this province. That's correlationally true. Now, I do have some understanding as to why some of that may have happened. There have also been troubles with the price of oil in the time that they've been here. There's also been trouble with COVID and how that's changed some things. So I would never throw it in their faces, the idea that they have seen more unemployment than we have seen since my grandfather came back from the First World War. You know, given that that's the reality and knowing that they like to compare the number of jobs in our province to who the government is at the time, I would say that they have been a complete and utter disaster at this particular time.

I know that they started off with one of their bills giving out a \$4.7 billion windfall to corporations that were not only already profitable, because you can only get this money by being profitable and paying fewer taxes on it, but, secondarily, were frequently international corporations that did a number of things that had nothing to do with increasing employment. We did not see any of these corporations suddenly create jobs because they suddenly got extra money in their bank accounts from not paying taxes and not contributing to the benefits of the province of Alberta. What we did see is that we saw them buying back shares; in other words, paying themselves, paying their international stockholders. Literally we took money from the province of Alberta and helped people buy property and build swimming pools in Texas. That's what we did with that money.

Now, this was pointed out to the Minister of Energy at the time, that this is what the corporations were doing with that money and not creating the jobs. The Minister of Energy merely said that it was disappointing that they chose to do this. That's it. That's what you

get for your \$4.7 billion of windfall giveaway to large corporations. You get to say: oh, I'm disappointed that the net result was not an increase of jobs but, in fact, before COVID, a decrease of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 50,000 jobs in the province of Alberta. Using the standard that the UCP has set for describing jobs, that is utter and complete failure on the part of this government, using the measure that they have articulated repeatedly in this House. You'd think they'd be ashamed given that.

3:20

What we have now in front of us here is a bill that is hoping to turn around the disastrous effects of their previous legislation, but, alas, we have some major problems here because they have failed to understand that value is not created singularly by business. Businesses have an extremely important role, but no businessman has ever been successful without customers, not once. No businessman has ever decided to create a job that they did not believe customers would be present for. So when they refer to businesses as job creators, I go, "Okay, but" or "Okay, and." Sure, certainly, they create jobs, but they cannot create jobs just by having money and doing it on their own unless there is a customer to come and buy those wares so that the jobs have value.

Real value is not created by businesses. Real value is created by the synergy between businesses, customers, employees, and governments. That's how it's done. You really need all four partners to play their role. We would not have an oil and gas extraction, oil sands organization in this province had it not been for Premier Lougheed at the time making major investments from the government and had it not been for the University of Alberta research developing the very techniques that are used in oil and gas. We would not have had any of it without customers to come and buy that, and that means Albertans with good jobs, who then go out and buy homes and cars and go on vacations and use the oil and gas that we have extracted. All four of those things are important if we are actually going to have success, yet this government completely fails on three of them.

They certainly understand the support of business, and I welcome their support of business because I certainly would like to see successful businesses in the province of Alberta. But you cannot do it unless you provide them with highly educated, healthy, happy citizens to participate as employees and to participate as customers. What have they done in that area? Is there anywhere in this Alberta investment act an analysis of what is it that attracts people to come work in the province of Alberta? No, there isn't, but I can tell you, being an old researcher, that I've done some research on this. I've looked at: what is it that makes someone want to arrive in Alberta to get a job? First of all, the availability of jobs, of course. But I've already described that that's a four-part system that creates that kind of value, creates those jobs.

What they're also looking for is a life, a lifestyle, and a place to find happiness, perhaps with a partner, perhaps with children, perhaps with community. That becomes extremely important in the decision-making, then, of major corporations as to where they'll invest because they want to attract the best people from around North America and the world. If you're running a corporation, an Internet corporation, for example, and you really want to have some of the best performers in that area, you want to be able to say: come to Calgary, come to Edmonton, come to Red Deer because these are great places to have a family, to live your life day to day.

What is it that people look for? Well, I can tell you that people look for very particular things. In fact, I have a little story from my own family about my grandparents on my mother's side getting married in Winnipeg, Manitoba, after my grandfather returned from the First World War. Being offered a job with Marshall-Wells,

working for them for a number of years, and having been very successful, they offered him a job to run the western Canada marketing section. They offered him a job in a city with no university, and my grandmother said: we will not move to a city with no university because I want my children to have the option to be highly educated and to get good employment. He turned down the job for being responsible for western Canada.

A year later they came back to him and offered him the same job, except this time it was in Saskatoon, where they did have the University of Saskatchewan. They told him: if you don't take it this time, you're not getting it again. Thank goodness, he took that job, and my mother's family moved to Saskatoon, where she was born, where she went on to get the first of her four degrees – sorry; one honorary, so four degrees altogether – and moved to Alberta because it was a land of opportunity.

That's exactly what happens a thousand times over in families all across the world, yet what we see is this government attacking all of the things that would attract people to this area; for example, the University of Alberta. The University of Alberta has been decimated under the budgets of this particular government. We have seen them have to lay off thousands of individuals, lost jobs, but that also means lost families who can't be here anymore, who have to start looking somewhere else. We've seen them actually shut down libraries. The Education library, which I spent a great deal of time in even though I wasn't in Education because it was well-positioned at the university, has now been shuttered and no longer exists and no longer serves the population at the University of Alberta. How can you take a university which has ranked in the top 50 universities in the world – the world. We used to be able to say, "If you want to come to a place with a great university, come to the University of Alberta, situated in Edmonton, Alberta, a great place to be," and now we are actually taking away their libraries.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available, and I believe that the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has a comment on it.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford to expand a little bit on some of the effects on the University of Alberta in particular and other campuses in the province that have occurred as a result of the funding squeeze by the current government. In particular, what I want him to touch upon is the melding of faculties into one another – for example, in the past the Dentistry faculty has been going into Medicine, and now we're looking at things such as the Pharmacy faculty suffering the same fate – and what effect that has on the university itself and its ability to attract top academics and therefore what compounding the difficulties has for a company trying to therefore attract the best possible candidates to fill executive positions and attract investment that way.

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

Mr. Feehan: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the member for the question. I am very concerned about the universities in this province. I use the University of Alberta as an example because it is our foremost university in terms of international rankings, as I say, having achieved a ranking in the top 50 universities in the world.

I'm very concerned about what's happening. I know that we actually have a reputation in some areas at the university that is being threatened by some of the decisions by this government right now. The areas are often, ironically, ones that are used by the government to stand up and say how proud they are of Alberta. Just last week I noticed an article in the paper where the Premier was

talking about research that was done on COVID and the development, perhaps, of a vaccine for COVID and talked about how great that was, great things coming out of the University of Alberta. Ironically, I happen to know that that very particular lab that was doing the research on COVID has had a reduction in staffing because of financial cuts from this government.

While on the one hand they celebrate, as they rightly should, the successes of the labs and programs at the University of Alberta, they are undermining them and cutting them, and I can tell you what's happening. Researchers who used to come here because we had an excellent reputation in health research, one of the best in the world – we were attracting some of the best scientists from around the world, developing huge labs that were bringing in tons of dollars to the University of Alberta to develop things exactly like a vaccine for COVID – are now saying: there's no reason for me to stay here anymore; I can't build the lab because I don't have the money to hire the staff and create the value that we should have.

The same thing is also true in terms of AI. This university has a very strong reputation in terms of artificial intelligence. Again, this government's cuts have led directly to the diminishment of some of the labs and some of the programs within the AI research program. If you're thinking of investment, you have to think about: what is it that people want to invest in? Mostly what people are doing when they're investing is that they're thinking of the future. They're not thinking of the present. You invest because you believe that you will get a return somewhere down the road. We understand that that costs some dollars. Everybody who saves for their retirement understands that they will no longer have those dollars available to them today, but they will certainly have those dollars available to them in the future. That's what we're doing when we say: you must invest in universities, not dismantle them, not close down their libraries, not close down their labs, not close down their programs and lose all of their researchers and their laboratory staff. That's devastating to a university.

3:30

If you keep attacking our universities, then you will have fewer and fewer people coming here saying: you are producing the kind of people we need. When a big corporation comes along and says, "We're going to develop a big program," like a Google or an Amazon or a BioWare or a Beamdog or any of those places, what they're looking for is: are you training people who will be able to step up, take the jobs that we are going to create, and help us to build an industry that we would like to have and that would provide value to the province of Alberta? If they have to answer no to that question, if they say, "You are not producing those people; your university is no longer a top-50 university; it's sunk way down, and as a result we are going to look around and find other places to invest," that's what you've got to be thinking about. I see this government doing it time and time again.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung has risen.

Mr. Dach: Thank you. Pleased to join debate on Bill 33 proper, the Alberta Investment Attraction Act. I must say that this piece of legislation falls right in my wheelhouse, having been involved in the business community for over 30 years as a realtor prior to my being elected to this Assembly. As a salesperson I know definitely that when one makes a sales presentation or pitch or an opportunity is presented to a potential client, if somebody doesn't buy your product or invest in your company or list their house with you, as it was with my case, I tell you what, Mr. Speaker. After taking dozens

and dozens of real estate courses and programs, I can say, in all honesty, that not one of them told me to tell my client that it was their fault that they didn't make the decision, that it was irresponsible of them to not list their house with me. None of those courses that I took said that I should scold my client for failing to adopt my presentation and do business with me.

Yet that's the attitude that we have expressed in this House and outside by our current Premier, who suggested that indeed it would be the fault of business if indeed they chose to irresponsibly not invest in Alberta given the table that they've laid before them by lowering taxes and so forth. It was shocking to hear the Premier suggest that it was the fault of investors, that it was an irresponsible act on the part of investors to choose not to invest in Alberta because we've, for crying out loud, made it so attractive.

Well, I tell you what, Mr. Speaker. That type of an attitude is one of the things that will deter investors from coming forward. For sure, if indeed that was the attitude I took with my clients and if I chastised those individuals who chose not to invest with me or chose not to list their house with me, that word would certainly get around, and I'd be having a lot more trouble trying to attract new people to present to because they would certainly not be too impressed by the attitude I was displaying in presentations made to those who were supposedly going to make referrals to others.

If indeed we want to attract new business to this province, new investment, we have to make sure we have a right attitude in place. That goes right from the top down. We seem to be playing the victim card repeatedly, this government does, in terms of telling the message to the world that indeed they should be investing here and that if indeed it's not, it's because somebody is telling them stories that they're believing, that they're believing the wrong message. I tell you what, Mr. Speaker. It's up to us as Albertans to tell that story and not by scolding or chastising or creating another corporation such as this Bill 33 intends to do, the invest Alberta corporation. That message is something that was being carried loud and clear and very positively through our NDP government's invest Alberta, which was within the economic development and trade ministry.

That is something that this government chose, I guess, to replicate and now outsource through this invest Alberta corporation, but indeed underlying it is an assumption that somehow the story has been poisoned by outsiders. In fact, it's up to the presenters, up to the salesperson, up to the educator to make sure that the student or the client gets the message correctly, not to be pejorative about how they might interpret somebody else's information but to actually go forward with your own positive message, knowing and believing fully in it and not suggesting that somebody who doesn't quite buy it has somehow been influenced negatively or that they are opposing reason and have no good reason to decide not to accept your argument.

There are differing views in the world right now, Mr. Speaker, and climate change, being the reality that it is, is something that governments around the world and major investments around the world are looking at adapting to and being innovative with. This government of Alberta currently really has failed to track that trend and to understand exactly what it means to be aware of climate change and to incorporate that into their strategy to attract investment to the province.

I was very struck earlier this year when the Premier suggested openly and quite vehemently that companies who wouldn't automatically jump to it and invest in Alberta simply because we'd lowered the tax rate – we'd given them a \$4.7 billion holiday by reducing the corporate tax rate – would be irresponsible to their shareholders if indeed they didn't come and invest right away in Alberta. That was a disappointment because it really belied an

underlying misunderstanding about the many different reasons that a corporation or an individual will invest in Alberta or, in fact, why individuals might come to the province, Mr. Speaker. Of course, as a real estate agent I know what the market was driven by, and it was employment.

Certainly, it's important to have that investment but also to be aware as to where most of the employment actually is. Any economist, even in economics 101, will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the bulk of your economic activity, 65 to 75 per cent of your GDP, is actually the result of small-business activity, and that's more local business activity.

That's basically what one of my arguments is, Mr. Speaker, that right now the types of decisions that are being made by corporations to basically wait it out and sit on the sidelines are being made – they're doing that because of uncertainty. The world is full of uncertainty, and that is not something that's conducive to major investment decisions and long-term decisions. It's basically going to be something where individual corporations will put their money into cash and hold on until they know exactly where the area of lower risk and greater return might be, which is, of course, how major corporations behave.

We have to recognize that in this province, and creating this Alberta investment attraction corporation or Alberta investment corporation – to insist that it focus right now on attracting large investment and imploring those decision-makers to make the decision to come here is perhaps a bit misguided at this point in time. There should be, I think, a larger focus put upon what we have here already. We have businesses here already, and we have, certainly, other elements to the corporate decision-makers' process that should be highlighted in our presentations.

We have of course mentioned things like child care and the availability of it, affordable child care for individuals to bring their families to. It's a very, very important element of a family's decision and a corporate decision to want to locate here because it's increasingly known how critical appropriate child care is to families to sustain themselves, especially given the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's really shown us how critically important affordable child care is, and I think that's a lesson that this government and governments around the world are learning. If you want to attract investment to your area, perhaps make sure that your area is a jurisdiction that has very, very good and affordable child care.

3:40

On top of that, you want to make sure that the individual families that are coming here actually choose to buy locally and invest in the small businesses that are here. That leadership, I think, has to come from government as well and that focus. I don't know if it's really been the bailiwick of this particular government because their focus has been on large corporate tax giveaways, \$4.7 billion to reduce the corporate rate, which has really not resulted in major employment decisions or major investment decisions coming to this province.

Certainly, one of the things we want to do in this province is to increase business activity, whether it be in the agricultural field, which is one of our most opportune industries, or oil and gas and diversification, and export those value-added products from either of those industries.

But, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, one of the exports that we are increasingly seeing get larger and larger is the export of people, Albertans deciding to leave the province. That comes as a shock to many Albertans, and it certainly is disappointing to me. But people will make decisions based on their sense of economic well-being and also how they feel their family is accommodated in the province.

We've certainly seen it with doctors, some of whom have already left the province, one in particular who went to the Northwest Territories, who spoke about going there not because she could make more money; she was going to make less money. The Premier thought: well, why would anybody leave, as a doctor, if they're going to make less money? Well, that doctor who went to the NWT spoke very eloquently about being in a work environment that wasn't intimidating and bullying and was much more comfortable to work in.

Those are things, Mr. Speaker, that individuals will look to when they're deciding upon investing in a particular jurisdiction, and this Alberta government has to be cognizant of that. It's certainly not only a tax rate drop that a company might consider. If indeed it was only a tax rate drop, then we should have had businesses flocking to us from all over the world because we have one of the lowest tax regimes corporately in the world. Certainly, many other items come into play. Corporations will be happy to pay a fair and competitive tax rate and even perhaps a higher than average tax rate if other things are there to attract them to locate their business there. That means being an attractive place for their workers to exist, to get a collection of individuals who form an intellectual capacity that their company requires in order to thrive.

I know that the government likes to tout itself as being experts in business, but they seem to forget that it's more than just numbers on a balance sheet that are involved in a corporate decision-making process. They do look at the corporate culture, the culture and climate of an individual jurisdiction. The value of the local educational capacity is certainly considered. The lifestyle and ability of a family to find safety in a community and enjoy a quality of life that they may not find in other jurisdictions is something that's attractive and, certainly, our health care system, Mr. Speaker, where we've reduced the premiums to zero in order to make sure that universal health care truly was affordable. That certainly is an attraction to investors to all Canadian jurisdictions, in particular to Alberta, because of the health care costs that corporations will have to suffer in other areas, which are huge, particularly in United States jurisdictions. We're seeing in some cases right now where people are being turned away from hospitals in the United States because they can't afford to get in or are not able to afford their own personal protection items. These are serious considerations when a corporation is looking to attract investors, and I think that we need to be ever vigilant in this country about making sure that our public health care system is maintained at a high standard and one that isn't chiseled away at to emulate the system to the south, which is a much more high cost per capita system of providing health care than our public system is. I know that that element of the Canadian landscape is a huge consideration for corporations when they're looking at moving to Canada versus other jurisdictions because your health of your population, of your workforce and ability to maintain their health at an affordable cost is truly paramount.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available for brief questions and comments.

Seeing none, are there any other hon. members looking to join debate? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood has risen.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise this beautiful afternoon and speak to Bill 33, which is the Alberta Investment Attraction Act. You know, I've been quite impressed by the comments of my hon. colleagues in the House today. I always learn a lot hearing from the members for Edmonton-Rutherford and Edmonton-McClung. They both have a lot of wisdom. I'm not

calling them old, but they have a lot of wisdom, and they have a lot of really great stories to share as well. I do want to echo a few of the comments that both of them made, as well as the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud, who is equally wise although not quite as old. She had some very good comments as well. I'm not being ageist. I'm just impressed by their wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, we absolutely support the attraction of investment to Alberta. You know, that's been made quite clear by many of us in this House. As you all know by now, but in case there are new viewers at home on this Thursday afternoon – they may not know that I was not part of the previous NDP government, but I watched in awe at a lot of the work that they did to attract investment to Alberta, particularly the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, who, as part of economic development and trade, pushed for a lot of investment in tech and in innovation and created invest Alberta. There was a clear record. I remember that same Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview just talking about a lot of the accomplishments that he had while minister of that portfolio, not bragging, certainly not, because I know he would be the first to say that it's part of a robust team that he had and, of course, the leadership of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona as well, so a really strong track record, for sure.

We're concerned when we see that this government, you know, claims to be wanting to sort of replicate some of that same work, yet their track record to date is much different. What have we seen? I'm going to kind of outline some of the things that have shown us that we ought to be quite concerned about this government's plans to attract investment.

Their international reputation on a number of fronts has been quite troubling. You know, I'll give the example of the UCP's war room. I do remember that stories around the mismanagement, the mockery of that war room received international attention. In fact, our Member for Calgary-McCall, I believe, was quoted in I think it was the BBC on that very story. This is a government that's spending millions upon millions on a war room with seemingly little outcome.

3:50

As many of my colleagues have already mentioned today in the Chamber, you know, this is a government that continues to prioritize billions of dollars to corporations, to this Premier's wealthiest friends and, in so doing, neglecting people. As has been said many times in this House already, you cannot attract investment when you're taking the approach that this government has.

Let's talk about some of these things. You cannot attract investment when you're openly encouraging talk of separation – right? – when you've got folks within your own party who are flirting with these ideas. You cannot attract investment when so many countries, so many jurisdictions around this world are showing environmental leadership, are showing climate change leadership, are making it clear that climate change is not an issue that we can wait for future generations to address. Yet this is a government that hires climate change deniers in key leadership positions. This is a government that continually attacks our environment, our beautiful province. Selling off parks is just one example.

Mr. Nally: Point of order.

Member Irwin: Oh, boy.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, a point of order has been called. I see the hon. Deputy Government House Leader has risen.

Point of Order Relevance

Mr. Nally: Mr. Speaker, 23(b). In terms of relevance I know that we give a lot of latitude in here, but I think that we're starting to cast the net just a little bit too wide. If we could bring this in and talk about Bill 33, that would be wonderful. Yeah.

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods has risen to debate.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much. I have been listening attentively to the debate this afternoon, and all of the comments have been related to what attracts investment, what might influence investment decisions, and having a strong, stable parks system is something Alberta is incredibly proud of. The member is simply talking about recent changes in the context of investment. She has been on the theme entirely, so I do not think that this is a point of order under 23(b), and the member should be allowed to continue her comments.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

At this stage, especially with regard to that this is also second reading, which is the first opportunity for members in this House to discuss, I would find that there is not a point of order.

I would, however, just take the opportunity to remind all members to, as best as they can, try to at least stay on focus or at least try not to create disorder in this House. I will note that there was an individual in here who actually discussed the fact that perhaps the word "attack" could be considered a point of order previously or earlier on in the day, and that was also used today. If we're moving towards language that potentially could go towards disorder, I think that that would probably not be an effective use of our time in this House.

If the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood could please continue.

Debate Continued

Member Irwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I am not intending to create disorder. What I am intending to do is outline for you a short treatise on why it is that it's very challenging for this government to attract investment, given a lot of the decisions that they've made. I will continue upon that train of thought.

I was talking about the fact that, you know, Alberta is world renowned for its parks and for its beauty and for its nature. This is a time in which we know we're in the midst of a pandemic, in which we should be encouraging Albertans to get out and to explore, so I find it troubling that this government is, we'll say, delisting parks and closing parks, which is, of course, a fact, at a time, Mr. Speaker, when we should be supporting that very system.

What else? Well, let's shift gears a little bit. Let's talk about health care. One of the things we know – and I know that one of my fellow colleagues spoke about this quite aptly. He mentioned the fact that, you know, one of the reasons why folks are attracted to another province or are interested in moving to another jurisdiction is because they look at things like investments in public services, health care of course being a big one.

Again, this government is asking corporations, is asking folks to be interested in investing in our province, yet the health care system is currently under attack, and we see that in Bill 30, which I had the opportunity to speak to in quite a lot of detail last evening, in fact. If you're having doctors fleeing in large numbers, leaving rural Alberta in large numbers, 42 per cent of doctors, in fact, who are considering a move, it's going to make it really hard to attract folks

to come to this province. I talked about this at length last night, the importance of a strong, publicly funded health care system, yet we see a government that's moving towards privatization – privatization of clinics, privatization of lab services – in the midst of a pandemic, a time when we should be absolutely investing in lab services.

What about education? Again, if you're wanting to attract businesses, you're wanting to attract people who are behind those businesses, those corporations. They will want to know that they're moving to a jurisdiction, to a province that has a strong education system. Yet cutting supports for students with special needs, firing off educational assistants, 20,000 education workers.

We have a world-class education system. We absolutely do. Our system has been a model for a number of systems globally, right? For years we had – you all know my background in education and working with the province in education as well. We had folks from countries all over the world who would come to Alberta to learn from our educational model: Finland, as an example; Japan; countless other countries; parts of the United States as well. Countless other countries. New Zealand is another one.

Mr. Nally: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, another point of order has been called. I see the hon. associate minister of natural gas.

Point of Order Relevance

Mr. Nally: Thank you. Standing Order 23(b), speaks to matters other than the question under discussion. Again, I know we're casting a wide net, but the educational system in Japan and understanding it is not going to get us any further along with Bill 33, Mr. Speaker. Again, if we could leave Japan's education system alone and if we could talk about Bill 33, that would be fantastic.

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, I note that it is 3:58 on a Thursday afternoon, and I would suggest that the members opposite are becoming maybe a little prickly, maybe anxious to head out for their weekend.

First off, the member has not correctly addressed what was actually being said, leading me to believe that he's perhaps half listening. Secondly, this member is responding in second reading to the general themes of the bill about the Alberta Investment Attraction Act, and other jurisdictions are also trying to attract investment. Talking about Alberta in the context of the world is entirely appropriate here.

I suggest that members settle, that they listen, and that the member be allowed to continue her conversation.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members. At this stage, I do not find that there is a point of order. However, I would just mention that I am eagerly listening to the hon. member as to how it ties to the bill.

Please, if you would continue.

Debate Continued

Member Irwin: Absolutely. I'll repeat my point that within Bill 33, the Alberta Investment Attraction Act, this government is hoping to, quite simply, attract investment to Alberta. I'm clearly outlining that if you want – we can't talk about faceless corporations being drawn to Alberta. We're talking about people. We're talking about talent behind those corporations. If I'm a young person, a person with a family who's thinking, "You know what? Alberta is a place that I'm looking at setting up shop," I'm going to look at the health

care system. I'm going to look at the education system. I'm going to look at how that government protects and supports the environment. I'm going to look at how they invest in the arts. If I'm a person with a family thinking about coming to Alberta, I would want to be moving to a province that takes that holistic perspective. This is absolutely relevant to the content of this bill, so I will continue.

4:00

It's so important. If we're going to attract families, young people to this province, there needs to be a hospitable environment for them to come here. Again, who wants to come when there's so much uncertainty around the protection of public services in this province? What about advanced education, investments in tech, right? We've seen that there have been cuts to a lot of the programs that our government was so proud to invest in. What about rising tuition costs? Perhaps you're a family and you're looking ahead already to your children's future education: rising tuition costs, increases to interest on student loans. Again, this is all part of the bigger picture. Child care: I want to know, if I'm a person with young children, that I'm going to a province that values quality, affordable child care.

What I think that member opposite is missing is the fact that, you know, we're talking about people here. I worry that this is a government that's trying to attract investment, and investment to them is just dollar signs, just bags of money. But there are people behind those bags of money. There are people behind those corporations and behind those ventures that we want to bring here.

It's a hostile environment right now for investment because it's a hostile environment for people. If you don't invest in people, you won't attract investment. It's just that simple. This is why we're warning this government as we analyze Bill 33. This is why we're warning this government that, mark our words – mark our words – if you don't start investing in people, you are not going to be attracting investment to this province. You are not going to be attracting those young people, those families that we need here, that we need for our province to thrive.

I might look at, you know: what have been the priorities of this government over the last little while? Again, this is all hypothetical. I certainly have been a lifelong Albertan, and I'm certainly not someone who's looking to move any time soon, as unfortunate as that might be, disappointing to some folks in this House. I think it's fair to hypothesize that young people and families would be thinking of these exact issues that I've outlined when considering a move to Alberta. I would look at: okay; what are some of the priorities of this government? Perhaps they don't know about the UCP, right? Perhaps they don't know about the political and economic climate in Alberta right now.

What have been some of the priorities of this government? Well, we just saw that, you know, one of the bills we're debating right now is Bill 32, which is the Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, right? Perhaps I'm a young person who's wanting to set up a tech shop here in Alberta, and maybe my partner is a spouse who works in health care, maybe is unionized as a nurse. I might be a little bit worried to think about: "Wow. This is an environment in this province that is seemingly increasingly quite hostile to unions."

What else? Bill 30, health care. Again, it's got to be one of the top reasons that folks would consider a move to another province, looking at a robust, strong, health care system. I think many of us know folks who've left America because of their pretty weak health care system.

You know, I might imagine that folks would also be looking just at: what are the things that the government at the time is pushing?

If anyone has been following the debate in the Legislature lately, some of the bills that have been . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, 29(2)(a) is available.

Seeing none, are there any other hon. members looking to join debate on this matter? I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods has risen.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to join in the debate at second reading on Bill 33, the Alberta Investment Attraction Act. I've appreciated the debate that I've heard so far from the members of the opposition on this particular bill. I look forward to hearing more from government members as the debate continues through the various stages on this important piece of legislation because, absolutely, I support the attraction of investment to Alberta.

Alberta has a lot going for it, and we are beginning from a position of real strength in our province, with such positive features as having a young and highly educated workforce. We know that already our starting position is that the investment per capita is almost double the Canadian average here in Alberta. We know that we have the second-highest exports per capita within Canada. There's a lot going for Alberta when it comes to attracting investment, and a lot of work has already been put into the process of attracting investment.

When we were in government, under the leadership of Premier Rachel Notley, creating invest Alberta within the economic development and trade ministry was, I think, an incredibly positive move forward. Bill 33 appears to be kind of taking that positive move and then turning it into a Crown corporation that, to my reading of the legislation, would be essentially duplicating the job description for the minister of economic development and trade and taking something that's currently happening with invest Alberta, within government, within the department, through a number of really important measures and instead creating a new outside-of-government corporation. I have some concerns specifically around some of the other corporations that this government has already created. I'm thinking about some of the disastrous news stories we've seen coming out of the energy war room, et cetera, et cetera.

I look through Bill 33. I think about where Alberta currently stands and what we need to be focused on to attract investments, as the title of the bill suggests. I think a lot of my colleagues in the opposition have hit the nail on the head with their comments about how it's about so much more than just creating a new corporation. Attracting investment, attracting companies, attracting citizens, having people want to come to Alberta is a complicated mix of a lot of different things, and this bill doesn't seem to be addressing some very major concerns that I would have and that I think are really important that we focus on.

I talked about that young and highly educated workforce which Alberta has and has been of great benefit for our province, with some of the highest labour productivity in the country, but we look at what recent budgets have done, the last two in a row from the current government, and the impact that that will have on postsecondary education. This is something that people do consider when considering both investment as well as potentially moving to a new jurisdiction: what is happening in that postsecondary sector? Right now what we're seeing is a lot of chaos and a lot of fear with layoffs, with departments downsizing, with research grants being withdrawn or not renewed, and a real exodus of some of those very, very smart people that we want to have here in Alberta.

4:10

I remember, when I was the minister of labour, my then critic at the time asking me very considered questions about what I was doing to stop the brain drain that he was concerned was happening with the drop in the world price of oil. Well, right now we have a very real brain drain happening because of the negative impacts of successive budget cuts to our postsecondary system. The Member for Edmonton-Rutherford was able to tie that directly to some of the most recent COVID research. As I understand from what he was sharing with the House, he knows people within that area of the university. Their staffing levels have been reduced, their resources have been reduced, and experts across their field are aware of what's happening here in Alberta.

When somebody googles Alberta right now, one of the top stories that they will see – to be honest, everything is very COVID focused right now, but you will see a lot of articles and information about doctors leaving the province at the moment, with the recent AMA survey suggesting that 42 per cent of doctors are considering leaving. If somebody is searching in particular rural areas, there is lots of coverage around the potential instability of the health care system in those areas. The conflict between this government and the doctors is a real blow to our ability to tell people, “We have a free, strong public health care system,” and to attract people from, potentially, countries and areas that cannot say the same.

Right now somebody googling Alberta and looking into what's happening in this particular province as part of a decision-making process that they may be making about moving to or investing in Alberta would see story after story about the Alberta Medical Association having to sue the government because of the labour negotiation breakdown and terminology about lack of respect. I think that when we are talking about attracting investment, it's really important that everybody is working collaboratively together, coming to the table to avoid those kinds of headlines that could make someone think twice.

Other things someone might see when they're searching Alberta or trying to understand the climate that we're currently in: this government has actively talked about separation through the Fair Deal Panel process that they went through, through supportive comments about the recent Buffalo Project report. I believe that the government was also supportive when the Buffalo Declaration was originally released. If somebody is looking to invest in, move a company to, move their family to a jurisdiction and they perhaps are already living and proud to be Canadian, I think that would give investors pause. This is not something that somebody would have to work hard to find because it's an active part of the conversation that's happening. The opposition tried to pass a motion that would let us put the separation anxiety to bed, to allow the government to say very clearly that we're all proud Canadians. This government did not want to have that debate. I believe that was Monday.

Secondly, similar to that separation concern, I mean, I have been doing a lot of work around pensions and the discussion around the Canada pension plan and whether or not somebody who currently lives in another part of Canada would want to move to Alberta knowing that there is this looming pension question mark around an Alberta pension plan. That immediately introduces concerns about: “What will happen to my own CPP, that I have been paying into? What happens if that is withdrawn?” As well, the number of concerns that have been raised clearly in Alberta, where separatist sentiment is higher than in other parts of the country, we've seen. When people talk about leaving CPP and they currently don't live here – they're considering that move – I think that would be incredibly dissuading to those individuals.

Also, in the headlines right now – again, when somebody is thinking about investing, I know that investors do their homework. They look at many, many different factors within a jurisdiction. Some of those many important factors include things like a stable labour relations environment, and right now the government is looking at updating, changing the labour relations framework. Their approach to negotiations with the various trade unions, with doctors, just as an example, has been very, very confrontational, with already multiple court challenges of legislation. People see this. People take that into account when they are considering investing, moving, choosing new headquarters. I think it's really important that we be able to talk about the picture of Alberta that we are presenting through the policies, through the direction that is being set and that we continue to move Alberta forward.

Someone looking into Alberta and bringing children would certainly be looking into questions of child care, which has been a major topic of discussion here in the House, and would be interested in making sure that there is a strong educational system for their kids. We have wonderful schools and school boards, but also the most recent headlines are about thousands of EAs being laid off, about school boards being concerned about reduced amounts of funding, funding that does not take into account population growth and inflation. The people who understand what population growth is would include people who are, like: “I would be a new member of the Alberta population. So if I move to Alberta, there would be no new dollars for my children. The pie won't get any bigger. It just needs to get sliced up into more pieces.” I think that that is something that somebody researching Alberta would find and would have to consider.

The environment is an incredibly important discussion when it comes to investment, with a number of insurance agencies, global ones in fact, putting climate change as one of the number one risks right now when it comes to looking forward and what we can expect to see as our economy changes and grows. Climate change is a very real concern that must be addressed. On that topic, the most recent headlines someone searching about Alberta would see are that a climate change denier was given a job of prominence, a vice-president position, with the Alberta Energy Regulator. Following that article, they would find one where environmental monitoring was suspended and articles musing about the impact of that on Alberta's reputation. These are the things we see in the media at this moment about Alberta.

So when we're talking about attracting investment, taking something that is already existing within economic development and trade, created by our government, that duplicates the job of the minister of economic development and trade, in an environment where public services and public servants are feeling under attack, where separation is actively being danced with to some extent, all of that will come into play. In fact, we heard from a number of tech companies who abandoned plans to invest in Alberta and to set up new companies here because of this separation issue. I remember thinking at the time: yeah, that makes sense; somebody would be concerned about that.

I understand that around the time that Quebec was talking about separation, a lot of the major financial companies, a lot of businesses changed location in that uncertainty and in those conversations. Here we are in Alberta trying to attract investment and, at the same time, talking about the potential of a referendum for leaving the Canada pension plan, something that Canadians strongly value, not rejecting the idea of referendums on separatism, and certainly encouraging them when it comes to equalization. Interestingly enough, a referendum in Alberta on equalization has no ability to effect any change. It is really just a way to continue

that discussion in a way that I think is detrimental to attracting investment.

As I look at Bill 33, I have very, very strong concerns about this piece of legislation at the same time as wanting to support the attraction of investment to Alberta. What I'm hoping is that through debate with the colleagues in this House we will be able to hear some different perspectives, some more concrete information about the work of the corporation and how it will be separate from and complementary to the work of the minister of economic development and trade.

I flagged at the beginning of my remarks concerns about the energy war room. I would love to, through the debate, learn more about how this corporation will be held to a more transparent measure than we've seen from the energy war room so far. What checks and balances will be put in place on this corporation so that Albertans can be confident in its creation?

4:20

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available should anybody have some brief comments or questions to make. Under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Eggen: No.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. Seeing none under 29(2)(a), then, moving to the debate proper, I believe I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-North West.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to perhaps provide a few comments in summation. I think that my colleagues have outlined a number of concerns that the Official Opposition has around this bill and the creation of this corporation to attract business for Alberta. You know, the concept certainly is beyond reproach: we want to attract investment, and we want to help to grow the economy. I mean, these things are self-evident and should be part of the efforts of the whole government and this Legislature as well, but I think we need to make sure that we are doing so in a way that is efficient and is focused and is working with all the ministries and all of the capacity that we have available to us here in the Legislature and as the government of Alberta.

You know, my first concern is this. This government has created quite a number of committees and blue-ribbon panels and the Canadian Energy Centre, for example, and I don't know how effective it really has been up to this point, quite frankly. I think the Canadian Energy Centre, otherwise known throughout the world as the war room, is sort of a good example of a bad example of how you might move forward on having an independent corporation that does work to attract business here in the province of Alberta.

I'd venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that the best form of investment that we can aim for is where people are making investment that provides employment here in the province of Alberta. If you follow that concept – I think everyone in this room would agree with that, that you want the sort of investment that creates jobs and industry and diversification here in the province of Alberta – then the next thing to follow is: what do corporations and what do investors look

for when they're potentially creating a business that would have the inhabitants of that region working in that business, right?

I mean, I would say that I know that probably many people in this room might read *The Economist* – right? – a periodical that talks about world affairs and so forth. It's quite a conservative document, but it's very instructive as well. What they will often do is a regional or a country report on the state of opportunity for business investment in any given jurisdiction around the world. You know, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, what sort of criteria they will use to determine how good a jurisdiction is to make investments in, and the number one thing that they look for is stability. They look to ensure that there's a healthy population, to ensure that there is a high level of education provided to the population, and an educated workforce and a healthy workforce, too. These are all criteria in every single country report or regional report that I've read in *The Economist* talking about where and how to invest.

I would say that at the very least – I mean, I'm a little skeptical of this bill, quite frankly – this corporation that it might start needs to make sure that they look at those economic indicators with at least an equal weighting to other issues that do attract investment as well like tax credits and stuff like that. These are criteria. I think a lot of my colleagues have outlined how those should be in place, and we know, for example, that a strong public health care system is giving at least a 10 to 20 per cent premium of a discount for a company to actually establish itself in a jurisdiction.

If you go between Arizona or Alberta – Arizona, with a private health care system – Alberta provides right off the hop at least a 10 to 15 per cent advantage for that company's payroll because health care is part of the public system. Let's not forget those things and other things that we're debating here today or over the next few weeks or so, that we don't look at things like health care and education as a liability on the ledger sheet. They are an investment that can be incorporated into an Alberta investment attraction scheme. These things do work together, and people do look at them when they're making choices on where to build businesses.

I look forward to, you know, continuing that thought. I'm very proud to have the last thought of the afternoon here. So you guys can think about that all weekend long, and we'll get back to it on Monday and work from there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time.

The Acting Speaker: I would not presume that perhaps somebody else does not want to partake in debate. Are there any hon. members looking to join debate on Bill 33?

[Motion carried; Bill 33 read a second time]

The Acting Speaker: I see the hon. Deputy Government House Leader is rising.

Mr. Nally: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see by the clock on the wall that our time today is coming to an end, so I move that the Assembly adjourn until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, July 20, 2020.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 4:27 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 2nd Session (2020)

Activity to Thursday, July 16, 2020

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

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

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

Bill 1 — Critical Infrastructure Defence Act (Kenney)

First Reading — 4 (*Feb. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 12-18 (*Feb. 26, 2020 morn.*), 96-98 (*Mar. 2, 2020 aft.*), 791-98 (*May 27, 2020 morn., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 859-61 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed*)
Third Reading — 861-69 (*May 28, 2020 morn., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 cC-32.7]

Bill 2* — Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Amendment Act, 2020 (Hunter)

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 857-58 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 1004-09 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1238-44 (*Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 1364-70 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 17, 2020; SA 2020 c9]

Bill 3 — Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 30 (*Feb. 26, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 431-46 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn.*), 458-65 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 465-76 (*Apr. 7, 2020 aft.*), 477-507 (*Apr. 7, 2020 eve.*), 572-83 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 659-66 (*May 6, 2020 morn., passed*)
Third Reading — 703-09 (*May 7, 2020 morn., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on Proclamation; SA 2020 c8]

Bill 4 — Fiscal Planning and Transparency (Fixed Budget Period) Amendment Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 858 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 869-75 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 933-35 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft.*), 970-72 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1040-43 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve.*), 1077 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1257-66 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1311-16 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1442 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1452-55 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c14]

Bill 5 — Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act, 2020 (Toews)

First Reading — 110 (*Mar. 3, 2020 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 224-32 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*), 222-23 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*)
Committee of the Whole — 232-33 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 234-41 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 241 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft.*), 242-48 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)
Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House Sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c3]

Bill 6 — Appropriation Act, 2020 (\$) (Toews)

First Reading — 215 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 216-22 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Third Reading — 222 (*Mar. 17, 2020 aft., deemed passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c1]

Bill 7 — Responsible Energy Development Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)

First Reading — 827 (*May 27, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 858-59 (*May 28, 2020 morn.*), 891-99 (*May 28, 2020 aft.*), 972-76 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1266-72 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1370-75 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve.*), 1406-11 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft.*), 1413 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1479-81 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1539-40 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1636-37 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., adjourned*), 1678-79 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c16]

Bill 8* — Protecting Survivors of Human Trafficking Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 431 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 509-21 (*Apr. 8, 2020 morn.*), 551-58 (*Apr. 8, 2020 aft.*), 559-72 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 593-618 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 671-73 (*May 6, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 709-12 (*May 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, except Part 2, which comes into force on July 1, 2020; SA 2020 cP-26.87]

Bill 9 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 276 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 277-80 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 280-82 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 282-83 (*Mar. 20, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 20, 2020 Outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on March 20, 2020; SA 2020 c2]

Bill 10 — Public Health (Emergency Powers) Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 296-97 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 307-20 (*Apr. 1, 2020 morn.*), 337-44 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 354-57 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft.*), 407-09 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn.*), 426-28 (*Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 428-29 (*Apr. 2, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on April 2, 2020; certain sections took effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c5]

Bill 11 — Tenancies Statutes (Emergency Provisions) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 297 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 298-301 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 301-03 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 303-05 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2020 c6]

Bill 12 — Liabilities Management Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Savage)

First Reading — 297 (*Mar. 31, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 320-25 (*Apr. 1, 2020 morn.*), 344-49 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 350-54 (*Apr. 1, 2020 aft.*), 401-05 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 406 (*Apr. 2, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Apr. 2, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c4]

Bill 13 — Emergency Management Amendment Act, 2020 (No. 2) (Madu)

First Reading — 431 (*Apr. 7, 2020 morn., passed*)

Second Reading — 521-26 (*Apr. 8, 2020 morn.*), 537-51 (*Apr. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 583-93 (*Apr. 8, 2020 eve.*), 619-35 (*Apr. 9, 2020 morn.*), 648-57 (*Apr. 9, 2020 aft.*), 673-74 (*May 6, 2020 morn.*), 688-99 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 699-701 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c7]

Bill 14 — Utility Payment Deferral Program Act (Nally)

First Reading — 687 (*May 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 724-45 (*May 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 758-86 (*May 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 786-90 (*May 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*May 12, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on May 12, 2020, with certain provisions having effect as of March 18, 2020; SA 2020 cU-4]

Bill 15 — Choice in Education Act, 2020 (LaGrange)

First Reading — 887-88 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 937-54 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1011-40 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve.*), 1058-67 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft.*), 1228-38 (*Jun. 9, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1375-78 (*Jun. 15, 2020 eve.*), 1470-79 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1541-51 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1575-88 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft.*), 1620-25 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft.*), 1639-47 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1657-59 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force September 1, 2020; SA 2020 c11]

Bill 16 — Victims of Crime (Strengthening Public Safety) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 888 (*May 28, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 954-70 (*Jun. 1, 2020 eve.*), 1109-12 (*Jun. 3, 2020 eve.*), 1127-35 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft.*), 1179-81 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1209-22 (*Jun. 9, 2020 aft.*), 1285-96 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1428-29 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1455-59 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1551-55 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1588-90 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft.*), 1647-50 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1676-78 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020, with exceptions; SA 2020 c18]

Bill 17 — Mental Health Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1203-09 (*Jun. 9, 2020 aft.*), 1272-74 (*Jun. 10, 2020 aft.*), 1316-23 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1396-1406 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft.*), 1413 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve.*), 1461-70 (*Jun. 17, 2020 eve.*), 1605-08 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve.*), 1630-36 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft.*), 1650-54 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1675-76 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation, with exceptions; certain sections come into force on June 26, 2020; SA 2020 c15]

Bill 18 — Corrections (Alberta Parole Board) Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 912 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 989-1004 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft.*), 1011 (*Jun. 2, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1413-24 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1655 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c12]

Bill 19 — Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 989 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 1079-98 (*Jun. 3, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1424-28 (*Jun. 16, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1495-97 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft.*), 1555-56 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c17]

Bill 20 — Real Estate Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1057 (*Jun. 3, 2020 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 1125-27 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft.*), 1169-79 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1185-90 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1279-85 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 17, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2020 c10]

Bill 21* — Provincial Administrative Penalties Act (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1181-85 (*Jun. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1296-97 (*Jun. 10, 2020 eve.*), 1355-57 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft.*), 1442-52 (*Jun. 17, 2020 aft.*), 1819-22 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1983-99 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2071-74 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Bill 22 — Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020 (Hunter)

First Reading — 1301-02 (*Jun. 11, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1591-95 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve.*), 1655-57 (*Jun. 24, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1798-1804 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1879 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 1939-57 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 1965-66 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2050-51 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2053-59 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 23* — Commercial Tenancies Protection Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1392 (*Jun. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1529-35 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft.*), 1601-05 (*Jun. 23, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1879-80 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed with amendments*)

Bill 24 — COVID-19 Pandemic Response Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1537-39 (*Jun. 22, 2020 eve.*), 1569-75 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1625-30 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1679-81 (*Jun. 25, 2020 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force June 26, 2020; certain sections took effect on earlier dates; SA 2020 c13]

Bill 25 — Protecting Alberta Industry From Theft Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1494 (*Jun. 18, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1719-35 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1804-05 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1904-05 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft.*), 2031-32 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 26 — Constitutional Referendum Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1735-41 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1764-72 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1845-56 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1964-65 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2081-86 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 27 — Alberta Senate Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Schweitzer)

First Reading — 1568 (*Jun. 23, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1741-47 (*Jul. 6, 2020 eve.*), 1772-79 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1822-27 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1899-1904 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1999-2001 (*Jul. 14, 2020 aft.*), 2074-76 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 2076-81 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 28 — Vital Statistics (Protecting Albertans from Convicted Sex Offenders) Amendment Act, 2020 (Glubish)

First Reading — 1619 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1704-17 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft.*), 1779-82 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft.*), 1856-60 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1880-82 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve., passed*)

Third Reading — 1896-99 (*Jul. 9, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 29 — Local Authorities Election Amendment Act, 2020 (Madu)

First Reading — 1619-20 (*Jun. 24, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1784-97 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 1962-63 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 30 — Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Shandro)

First Reading — 1695 (*Jul. 6, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1783-84 (*Jul. 7, 2020 eve.*), 2032-37 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2086-2103 (*Jul. 15, 2020 eve, adjourned on amendment*)

Bill 31 — Environmental Protection Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1878 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2023-31 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve., passed*)

Bill 32 — Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act, 2020 (Copping)

First Reading — 1760 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1861-63 (*Jul. 8, 2020 eve.*), 2003-23 (*Jul. 14, 2020 eve.*), 2051-53 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft.*), 2059-69 (*Jul. 15, 2020 aft., adjourned*)

Bill 33 — Alberta Investment Attraction Act (Fir)

First Reading — 1760-61 (*Jul. 7, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1807-19 (*Jul. 8, 2020 morn.*), 1927-37 (*Jul. 13, 2020 aft.*), 2117-27 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 34 — Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2020 (Nixon, JJ)

First Reading — 1839 (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1966-69 (*Jul. 13, 2020 eve.*), 2116-17 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 2117 (*Jul. 16, 2020 aft., passed*)

Bill 201 — Strategic Aviation Advisory Council Act (Gottfried)

First Reading — 62 (*Feb. 27, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly*)

Second Reading — 914-26 (*Jun. 1, 2020 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1156-61 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft.*), 1337-47 (*Jun. 15, 2020 aft, passed*)

Third Reading — 1514-22 (*Jun. 22, 2020 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — (*Jun. 26, 2020 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force December 31, 2020; SA 2020 cS-19.8]

Bill 202 — Conflicts of Interest (Protecting the Rule of Law) Amendment Act, 2020 (Ganley)

First Reading — 136 (*Mar. 5, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), 1149-56 (*Jun. 2, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly;*), 1156 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., not proceeded with on division*)

Bill 203 — Pension Protection Act (Gray)

First Reading — 1148 (*Jun. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*), (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., reported to Assembly; not proceeded with*)

Bill 204 — Voluntary Blood Donations Repeal Act (Yao)

First Reading — (*Jul. 8, 2020 aft., passed; referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills*)

Bill Pr1 — The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Edmonton Repeal Act (Williams)

First Reading — 1125 (*Jun. 4, 2020 aft., passed*)

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