



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Fourth Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, December 1, 2022

Day 3

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 30th Legislature

Fourth Session

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Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie-East (UC), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Reid, Roger W., Livingstone-Macleod (UC), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Ceci, Hon. Joe, ECA, Calgary-Buffalo (NDP)
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Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South (Ind)
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Party standings:

United Conservative: 60

New Democrat: 23

Independent: 2

Vacant: 2

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 1, 2022

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our King and to his government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interest and prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all.

Hon. members, we will now be led in the singing of *God Save the King* by Ms Brooklyn Elhard. Please join in in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members:

God save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King!

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, the Minister of Technology and Innovation has a school to introduce.

Mr. Glubish: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly the students and teachers from Heritage Hills elementary. Heritage Hills is my home. I live in that neighbourhood, and I look forward to sending my son Max to their French immersion program in a couple of years. It's an amazing school, amazing teachers, and amazing students. Given the interest these students showed on their tour so far today, I wouldn't be surprised if we have a future MLA sitting right up there. I would like to invite them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

Ministerial Statements

Legislative Process and Federal-provincial Relations

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, over the past several days we have heard nonstop hysteria, both in and out of this House, as the NDP opposition, its leader, and their allies continue their desperate attempt to paint the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act as some sort of undemocratic power grab threatening the very foundation of democracy, that somehow this act gives power to cabinet to unilaterally alter legislation behind closed doors despite the fact that it does not.

It is a shameful display of fearmongering and fabrication that Albertans will remember well when they see how democratically and effectively this constitutional shield will be used in the coming months and years ahead to protect the rights and welfare of Albertans from Ottawa's continuous, unconstitutional, and harmful overreach.

But, Mr. Speaker, that's not why I'm standing today to address my fellow elected members of the Legislature. You see, as unseemly as the NDP has acted these past 72 hours, voting against a bill they hadn't even read, making accusations and statements without a shred of truth that had to be deleted from Twitter, despite it all, these sorts of antics and tactics, for better or for worse, are part of our democratic process.

In this Legislative Assembly the government proposes legislation. We debate, we argue, and we advocate our positions passionately. Then we in this Chamber each vote on the bill as duly elected members of the people of Alberta. If that vote passes with a majority, that bill becomes the binding and constitutionally enforceable law of the province of Alberta. This is how democracy works. This is the rule of law. It is the very foundation of our democracy.

Yesterday the leader of the NDP opposition spoke with the media outside this Chamber, and when told by a reporter that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was taking no option off the table, including the potential of Mr. Trudeau unilaterally revoking and quashing the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act should it pass in this elected Assembly, the NDP leader stated, and I quote: I think if they revoke the act, that would be the right thing to do. Unquote.

The meaning of the NDP leader's words is crystal clear. This member clearly believes that her dear friend Prime Minister Justin Trudeau should unilaterally quash and override a law of Alberta because she disagrees with it, and I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that in my lifetime I have never heard a more undemocratic statement or thought uttered by an elected official in this province, let alone one who sees herself fit for the office of Premier. It is astounding both for its raw, undemocratic meaning and its level of pure hypocrisy. Having later realized the magnitude of her statement, this member got up on CBC and on Twitter yesterday evening to deny she had even said it when, in fact, she could not have said it more clearly.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard this member and caucus wrongfully accuse this government of attempting to subvert democracy, yet in a moment of pristine clarity this NDP leader let it slip just how little regard she has for the very Alberta democracy she seeks to lead. Is that her plan? When the NDP leader doesn't get her way in this democratically elected Assembly, will she just call up her good friend Justin Trudeau and her federal party leader, Jagmeet Singh, to direct their coalition government to quash and override the laws of our land? What sort of rule of law is this? This member and her party are quick to dig up statements from 24 months or 24 years ago to inform Albertans of my alleged positions of today. Well, how about 24 hours ago? Because 24 hours ago this member made it clear that, in her view, when the chips are down, it's Ottawa before Alberta; it's Justin and Jagmeet before the Constitution.

This member should apologize immediately for her lapse of judgment and affirm her commitment to upholding the laws of our province, whomever may have written them. As for me, let me be clear. I know I'm not perfect, but I will never apologize for defending Albertans against federal actions harmful to our province. I will never deviate from putting this province above any federal leader. My loyalty is to Albertans. I will accept their judgment of me and this government, whatever that may be, and I will never call upon any federal Prime Minister to override or strike down a law passed by this Legislative Assembly.

That's the point here. That would be the ultimate betrayal to this Assembly, of the rule of law, and of the millions of Albertans we represent here. Albertans are a proud and free people. We are not mere subjects of politicians in Ottawa able to quash the laws of this elected Assembly upon request. I'd ask this hon. member and everyone in this

House to remember who we serve, because, for me, at this side of the House, there is no debate. We serve Albertans first, always.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

A member of the Official Opposition should they choose to respond. [interjections] Order. Order. [interjections] Order.

The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, that statement was both desperate and delusional. In the quote “they” referred to them, the UCP government. No one in this Chamber wants Ottawa interfering with our House, and the suggestion just now by the Premier is about as real as her phone call with the Arctic Winter Games, which we all know was not so much.

Now, this week the Premier and this government introduced a bill that was so bad in its intent and its drafting that the uproar has been immediate and loud from every corner of the province, not just from Alberta NDP allies, although that number does grow, but from everybody in the economy, from business leaders, community leaders, and, most significantly, many Indigenous leaders. This Premier’s bill creates deep economic uncertainty across Alberta. It is doing that already, inviting more chaos, cost, and conflict.

1:40

Let’s talk about why specifically. We know that investment and economic growth depend on clear, fair, and known rules of engagement, but this bill gives the Premier and her cabinet unprecedented and undemocratic power to change the law unilaterally without the approval of the Legislative Assembly and without notice to the Albertans who rely on those laws, including investors. The bill then restricts those Albertans who’ve been hurt by the change from challenging it with draconian timelines. It further constrains the ability of the courts to rule that any range of actions under the bill are unreasonable. Furthermore, it’s been argued by some that asking the Legislature to determine the constitutionality of a federal act is in and of itself unconstitutional, usurping the role of the courts.

In short, there are multiple, multiple layers of uncertainty, contradiction, and illegality that could impact almost any law in Alberta. Taken as a whole, investors are saying: “No. Thanks.” In a volatile world businesses must invest their money, grow their companies, and attract their workers to places that are stable, where the rules are reasonable, where they’re transparent. The Calgary Chamber of commerce and CAPP and others have all said so; you know, those NDP allies. Not only that, but treaty chiefs have stated that the introduction of this act, with zero meaningful consultation, runs roughshod over their treaty rights. This Legislature cannot scramble after the fact on these kinds of matters, and many of you over there know that. You must withdraw and consult first.

We are at a pivotal moment in Alberta. We need a clear plan to create good-paying jobs, build a resilient economy now and for generations to come. We need to drive investment opportunities, not drive away investors. My message today to the government is to simply withdraw this mess of a bill.

Members’ Statements

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act

Mr. Schmidt: The new Premier and government are working hard to spin their disastrous Bill 1. We just saw the Premier try desperately again minutes ago. They’ve tried renaming it; they’ve tried gaslighting Albertans by claiming that what the bill says isn’t actually what the bill says. One Deputy Premier spent the morning trolling credible

constitutional lawyers about the bill, claiming they were liars and wrong about the legislation. He then said that he may amend the bill: never a good sign. The other Deputy Premier admitted yesterday he hasn’t even read the bill but said he was briefed on it. The jobs minister, who called the bill a “bait and switch” before getting a cabinet job, now says that the bill is great, but he can’t say why.

Despite this, Albertans see the bill for exactly what it is. It’s the job-killing sovereignty act. The Calgary Chamber of commerce and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers have spoken out about the harm it will cause to investment, to jobs, and to our economic future. That’s just the tip of the iceberg. Our phones are ringing off the hook. People wanting to invest here or with investments already locked in here are terrified. They can’t get an audience with the government and specifically with the Premier, who is more focused on giving herself supreme power despite being selected by 1 per cent of Albertans.

I want to tell the people reaching out, the Albertans fearing for their jobs, fearing for the quality of life for their kids, that Alberta’s NDP is here. We’re listening. We will do everything in our power to stop this Premier. We will put forward a real plan to create good-paying jobs and build a resilient economy now and for future generations. I and all of my colleagues will stand in this House every day on behalf of our constituents, on behalf of all Albertans, and say no to the job-killing sovereignty act. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-East is the one with the call.

Early Childhood Educator Wage Supplement

Mr. Singh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Early childhood educators are the heartbeat of our child care system. They provide high-quality child care for Albertan kids, and they provide peace of mind for Albertan parents. Today our government announced that we are providing early childhood educators with a one-time payment and wage top-up to help recruit and retain staff and to help make life affordable for those important Albertans. This one-time payment and wage top-up represents an investment of over \$174 million in federal and provincial funds through to the end of the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Every dollar matters, Mr. Speaker. This fund will help child care operators recruit and retain staff and help critical workers pay their bills as we head into the Christmas season.

All employed early childhood educators who claimed hours in October and November of 2022 and worked an average of 30-plus hours per week and continue to work in December will also be eligible to receive a one-time payment of \$900 while those averaging fewer than 30 hours per week will be eligible for a \$450 payment. This is real inflation relief for Albertans at the most important time of the year. This also means a strong overall child care system for parents and families.

Alberta’s economy has recovered from the pandemic, and we are seen now leading the nation in job growth. A strong child care system gives parents, particularly women, the confidence they need to re-enter our workforce and participate in our growing economy. I’m pleased our government is providing this critical support, and I’m proud to know we will continue to support our early childhood educators as they continue to provide high-quality child care. Our government will continue to provide real affordability relief to Albertans in need at a challenging time. Alberta’s child care system is strong because operators and workers make it strong. We’ll be there to support them now and for years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Strathmore.

Gender-based Violence and Coercive Control Prevention

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have seen in the past week direct steps to ensure employers make responsible decisions to not discriminate against their workers with respect to vaccine mandates. In the same week, November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, marks the beginning of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. Thank you to all members of the Legislature for their commentary and to those who are actively doing work every single day to change the culture.

It seems only fitting that while we work to protect human rights in the workplace, it includes calls for action from organizations and individuals for the prevention and the elimination of gender-based violence. These co-occurring endeavours highlight the fact that this mandate has the capacity to be extended and leveraged so that organizations across all sectors are held responsible to address instances of gender-based human rights violations, sexual violence, domestic abuse, harassment, and coercive control. For these issues, prevention is key.

Women are 51 per cent of the population and in every field valued and resilient but are at greater risk of violence due to prevailing societal culture. This has a direct impact on our economy. A cultural shift is necessary in order to allow individuals to speak up and challenge the unabating violent attitudes and behaviours in our communities. All human rights violations, regardless of organization, level of government, or institution, as they occur are continuously being swept under the carpet. Clearly, we have the strength to address these issues, especially when it comes to occupational workplace safety. All Albertans expect us to expand the strength of pertinent issues such as gender-based violence and coercive control to our agenda.

Thank you.

Government and Official Opposition Policies

Member Ceci: Mr. Speaker, in the last week Albertans have had the opportunity to hear two fundamentally different visions for the future of Alberta. The UCP government's Speech from the Throne and job-killing sovereignty act envision an Alberta where the Premier and cabinet can unilaterally amend provincial laws, where citizens have severely curtailed rights to challenge unjust government action, and where the government will focus on endless constitutional bickering instead of on growing the economy and fixing the children's health care crisis. Thankfully, the Alberta NDP opposition's alternative Speech from the Throne sets out a different vision, a vision for a better future for Alberta.

With the help of former ATB senior economist Todd Hirsch we will build a resilient economy with good jobs that Albertans can rely on for generations. We'll release a new investment framework, which will outline how we can incentivize private-sector investment, pursue innovation, and grow Alberta companies by fostering economic certainty. We will bring sustained action to help families struggling to pay their bills, and we will bring forward legislation that ensures public health care is protected and strengthened and that establishes health care service standards. Albertans can go to www.albertasfuture.ca to read the full speech.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard from hundreds of Albertans in the past week. They don't see themselves reflected in this government's antieconomy, antidemocracy, job-killing sovereignty act. They want a government that will bring stability, not chaos. They want a government who will focus on growing the economy, not driving away investment. They want to know that when their children get sick, the public health care they need will be there. And they want

to know that their Premier respects democracy. I'm glad to say that they will get all those things when they vote for an Alberta NDP government on May 29, 2023. [interjections]

1:50

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. members, prior to calling Oral Question Period this afternoon, I'd like to bring to your attention that the green sheets of the new standing orders pursuant to Government Motion 9, effective March 30, 2022, have been placed on each of your desks. Updated standing order packages will be delivered to you in due course.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition has the call.

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, standing up for the rights and interests of Albertans is one of our most important jobs as elected officials, but how we do that matters, and it matters when business leaders tell the government that they got it wrong. Now, the Calgary Chamber says that the sovereignty act will introduce, quote, a very significant element of risk and uncertainty to businesses in Alberta. The question is, then: why won't the Premier take the chamber's advice? Stop, think, and dial it back.

Ms Smith: Mr. Speaker, we know that the only thing that is creating investor uncertainty right now is the anti-industry, anti oil and gas policies of the Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa. That has chased over \$100 billion of investment out of our province, and that is the reason why we need to pass the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, to draw a very clear constitutional line. They need to stay in their lane so that we can stay in our lane and create the kind of business environment that is going to attract investment into oil and natural gas and all of our other sectors.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll listen to investors when they tell me that they're uncertain.

Speaking of that, it's not just the chamber. CAPP also expressed concerns yesterday – quote: we are concerned about any government policy that has the potential to create uncertainty for investors – and there will be more. So will the Premier admit that her plan is more likely to kill jobs in the oil patch than create them and revoke her ridiculous mess of an act?

Ms Smith: Well, we know that the only thing that would create investor uncertainty is if this opposition ever formed government again. In fact, when I go back and look at the investment that fled this province once they became government, we sure don't want to repeat that again. I just saw the stats, actually. We are now at the lowest level of unemployment. We haven't seen unemployment levels this low since the members opposite formed government in 2015. I think that's a testament to the fact that people are investing in this province because they have a stable government, because they know that we will protect them against federal overreach.

Ms Notley: That's not what businesses are saying right now.

The CEO of Avatar Innovations in Calgary yesterday said that the sovereignty act signals to international investors that Alberta is not a safe place to do business. He warned that this plan risks federal funding that energy companies need to continue their efforts to create jobs and cut emissions. Once again, will the Premier answer

the question: why is she risking Alberta's future just to cater to her far-right, fringe, separatist base? Stop it. Think of Albertans and revoke ...

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: You know, the only thing that creates investor uncertainty is the kind of policies that the members opposite brought in when they were in this chair, bringing through an emissions cap on the oil sands. Where do you think the federal Liberal-NDP coalition got that idea from? Now they want to come through and bring in a 42 per cent reduction in oil and gas emissions, a 30 per cent reduction in fertilizer emissions. We know that that kind of emissions reduction is a de facto production cap. That is not in line with our Constitution. We have the right to develop our resources in our own way, and I would invite the members opposite to stand with us in supporting pushing back against Ottawa.

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Alberta Sovereignty Act and Indigenous Rights

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the serious damage this will have on our economic future, there are other reasons the act has to be withdrawn, including how it runs over the rights of Indigenous people. Yesterday the chiefs of Treaty 6 said it best, quote: we believe the proposed act is self-centred; we take this opportunity to remind Albertans that we are all treaty people, and we invite non-Indigenous people to join us in opposition to this divisive proposed legislation. We stand with the chiefs. Why is the Premier ignoring them?

Ms Smith: Now, I've been delighted to have Chief Billy Morin as part of my advisory team, and he is going to work very hard with us to make sure that the chiefs understand that this approach that we're taking in the government is to make sure that we have economic reconciliation with our First Nations partners. It's very clear in the sovereignty act that we will respect Indigenous rights, respect treaty rights. In fact, I think our approach of economic reconciliation, lending out a hand to work together on major projects going across our province and our country, is what's going to lead to the best relationship with our First Nations people.

Ms Notley: Wow. Mr. Speaker, it impacts their rights if you introduce the bill before you ever speak to the treaty chiefs. Back in July the UCP signed a relationship agreement between Treaty 6 and the GOA. It set out a formalized government-to-government relationship that was supposed to be based on collaboration, commitment, and co-operation, yet when it came to introducing the Premier's flagship bill, the chiefs say that no one spoke to them. Not one phone call. To the Premier. This is your bill. Why couldn't you pick up the phone? Why were you not focused on doing ...

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Well, I think the answer to the question is right in the legislation: because nothing abrogates or derogates from anything in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that protects the rights of our Indigenous citizens. Section 35 is very clear. I'm surprised after all these days that the member opposite hasn't had a chance to read the bill yet, because it says right in there that we are going to respect the rights of our Indigenous ... [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. Premier has the call.

Ms Smith: We are going to respect the rights of our Indigenous people. This is about asserting the rights of Albertans under the Constitution,

section 92A. We have the right to develop our resources, and we're going to continue ... [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, that's a lovely future-tense statement, Mr. Speaker, but the fact of the matter is that the Premier has already failed to respect the rights of Indigenous people. Treaty 8 says: Premier Danielle Smith, as parliamentary Crown representative you and your government are in dishonour of Treaty 8; treaties are essential to all people, including Albertans. As with many things related to this bill, the Premier is now scrambling after the fact to consult. So why will she not do the right thing? Withdraw the bill, do meaningful consultation, and then consider reintroducing it if necessary.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition will be aware that even if she is quoting someone else's words, it's inappropriate to use a proper name of a member of the Assembly.

The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very clear to me that the provisions we are setting out in this act are designed to make sure that we are protecting the provincial rights that are guaranteed in the Constitution. That is what this is about. It's sections 92, 92A, 93, 95, and that's what we're trying to do here. The Leader of the Official Opposition ... [interjections]

The Speaker: Members of the opposition, I'm having a real challenge hearing the Premier. She has every opportunity to answer a question, just like you have one to ask it.

The Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you. I have a very good relationship with First Nations. When I was in this position before in the Legislature, I was the critic for Indigenous affairs. I've reached out to various chiefs and various Indigenous leaders, and we're going to keep doing that as we develop the province. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition for her third set of questions.

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (continued)

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have heard from no less than seven different legal experts, public servants, and constitutional lawyers who confirm a simple truth: this bill gives the Premier the so-called Henry VIII power to write laws behind closed doors with zero input from this Assembly. Now, it's parliamentary to give members a chance to correct the record, so to the Premier: can you tell us where it says that the Assembly will pass a bill after the motion, or will you admit that you're the one who misread your own bill?

Ms Smith: You know, Mr. Speaker, part of the reason why we go through this process, putting through a bill and putting it through first reading and second reading and Committee of the Whole and third reading, is so that if there are any amendments that need to be made, they can be made at that time. I on this side of the Chamber am always open to hearing feedback, and if the hon. members would like to make a couple of amendments to improve the bill, we are more than happy to work collaboratively with them. I would note that in Saskatchewan, our neighbouring province, the NDP there supported the Saskatchewan

government in their effort to push back against Ottawa. They voted in favour of the Saskatchewan First Act. I'd invite them to do the same.

2:00

Ms Notley: Well, based on previous claims, I swear the Premier must be writing in invisible ink, because the things she claims are just not in the bill. On the one hand we have the Premier and her ministers saying, "Trust us; we won't abuse these extraordinary powers that don't exist," and on the other hand we have public servants, lawyers, constitutional experts, and every single person who's actually read the legislation speaking about how it overrules parliamentary tradition and attacks our democracy. So if the Premier wants to go all God mode in the Legislature, why can't she just be honest about it so we can debate what it is she is trying to do to the people of Alberta?

Ms Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who runs to her federal counterparts asking them to disallow bills that are debated in this Legislature, I believe in the process of this Legislature. We put bills forward, we allow them to go into reading one, reading two, Committee of the Whole, where we make amendments, and then pass in third reading, and it becomes the law of the land. I invite the Leader of the Opposition and her party to be constructive in this process. I will absolutely entertain any amendments that they put forward, and I hope that we will be able to secure their support in standing up for Albertans rather than standing up for Ottawa. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, this bill creates economic and investor uncertainty, no question. That is very well established. But you know what else creates uncertainty? Having a Premier who can't read her own laws, who won't admit when she got it wrong, who seizes power and steps on the rights of Albertans while arrogantly refusing to acknowledge that she's done it. Albertans just had a Premier like that, and – spoiler alert – he resigned this week. Does the Premier want to go down the same road? Is that the way she's headed?

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This, I guess, is the problem when you prewrite your questions and don't listen to the answers. I have said very clearly that we go through a process in this Legislative Assembly. This is what democracy is: you go through a process, you put forward amendments. Look, if the NDP opposition has some proposals that they want to put forward so that we can gain their support on this legislation, I would welcome it because I would like to send a very clear message to the Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa that all members of this Legislature will stand up for Alberta first.

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition for the fourth set of questions.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, the bill is beyond fixing. It must be revoked. It's a mess.

Health Care System

Ms Notley: Meanwhile the government should be focusing on the hundreds of thousands of Albertans who cannot find a family doctor, leaving many families with nowhere to go but the ER, increasing pressure there. When that happens, it creates more delays in the EMS system and more Albertans waiting in pain. So today our party is introducing a pragmatic framework to make things

better. Our bill would create a process for public health delivery standards to be set so all Albertans have high-quality care in a well-functioning system. Could the Premier consider focusing away from her mess of a bill and instead supporting our Bill 1?

Ms Smith: I'm looking forward to having more support from the members opposite on our proposal for how we're going to reform health care. We listened; we heard. We know that health care is the number one issue. It's part of the reason why we've asked the board to step aside and we've put in place Dr. John Cowell as the official administrator. And I must tell you that every single day we are going to get feedback and be able to drive changes through Alberta Health Services to make sure that we are not only addressing the long waits in emergency rooms, making sure that we have efficient drop-off for paramedics, and we're going to be reducing the surgical wait times. I'm looking forward to the NDP supporting us on that.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that instead of taking accountability and showing leadership to fix health care, she's turning around and blaming everyone else, including front-line health workers, for her own government's failure. She has collapsed accountability down to one person, as she's said, and now she's having secret conversations behind closed doors with that person and who knows who else. No one seems to know. She won't tell us. Our bill would create transparency. It would create accountability. It would ensure results for Alberta patients. Why is the Premier so afraid of those principles?

Ms Smith: Every decision that we are making is putting patients first. Every decision we are making is putting our doctors and our nurses and our paramedics and other front-line health professionals first. The members opposite want to continue to support the administration doing study after study and paying consultant after consultant. That is fundamentally the problem: way too much money going into the layers of management at the top and way too little money going into the front line to make sure that we do have enough doctors in rural Alberta, we do have enough nurses on the front line when we face pressure, and we do have enough paramedics to get people efficiently to the hospital so they can be treated. That's what we support.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the problem is that she's got no plan to deal with that. Meanwhile we have wait times in our children's hospital that are going above 15, sometimes 20 hours. The Alberta Children's hospital in Calgary has had to build a temporary trailer to extend the size of the waiting room. The fact is that this can't go on, and the fixes cannot go on behind closed doors. Our approach would guarantee that those kids are treated inside a hospital, not outside, that Albertans would see how that work was done. Why is the Premier more concerned about phoning movie sets about vaccine mandates than transparently and effectively attacking the problem and the crisis . . .

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Ms Smith: I know that the member opposite – her approach is: we'll just trust the experts, hands off, and we won't have any direction given to the biggest expense of our government. That approach has failed. It's part of the reason why we ended up in the situation that we're in today. We have made great progress in making sure that we're putting more money into the front line. We are giving more money to the front line, and we are making the decisions now that are finally freeing up decision-making at the local level so that we can make decisions in the best interests of Albertans, and we can make

sure that we are always supporting our front-line health professionals. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Peigan has a question.

Early Childhood Educator Wage Supplement

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's government is providing a one-time payment and wage top-up for early childhood educators. This is great news for child care workers, who are the heartbeat of our child care system, and this is great news for families who rely on these workers for quality child care. With Christmas just around the corner, can the minister please explain how this decision will improve wages for child care operators and when?

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

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member today identified, we announced additional support measures for our front-line early childhood educators, who will not only see additional wage top-ups, but they will also see a significant one-time cash payment just before the holidays. As you know, this is one of the most expensive times of the year for families. Full-time ECEs will receive a one-time payment of \$900, and part-time ECEs will receive \$450. Our government will continue to support families and our child care workers.

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

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the minister for that answer. Given that our government supports parental choice in child care and education and given that our government has worked very hard to protect Alberta's diverse child care system, can the minister please explain how these wage top-ups will help both private and not-for-profit operators attract new workers and create a more viable system overall?

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

Mr. Amery: Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. By increasing wages, we are encouraging and incentivizing our current and prospective workforce to attain higher level certifications, which will spur further investment and space creation by child care entrepreneurs. These new, competitive wages will be able to attract new child care workers and ensure that with increased staffing we are able to provide more spaces and improved care. Our government will ensure that both private and not-for-profit operators will have the support that they need to continue to create a more viable system.

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

Ms Fir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and again to the minister for that answer. Given that Alberta has come back strong from the pandemic and is leading the nation in job growth, creating more demand than ever for quality child care, and given that this new funding will help bolster our child care system for child care workers and the families who rely on them, can the minister explain how this funding will help get Albertans, particularly women, back to work?

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

Mr. Amery: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for that question. The majority of child care facilities in this province are in fact owned and operated by women. Our

announcement this morning will support our province's amazing female entrepreneurs and their businesses and will ensure that their employees continue to be supported while incentivizing all of our child care entrepreneurs to open new facilities and increase spaces, which will also increase employment and training opportunities for all.

Thank you.

2:10 Homeless Supports and Affordable Housing

Ms Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, a homeless Albertan died yesterday due to the lack of shelter. The same thing happened the day before and the day before. The death toll is rising and entirely preventable. Cold winters in Alberta are never a surprise, yet there have been multiple cold weather related deaths, a staggering number of injuries, and an alarmingly high rate of amputation. The minister likes to brag about his funding of temporary winter shelters, which should not be temporary and, in fact, should be balanced with funding for permanent homes. Why is the UCP allowing Albertans to live in reprehensible conditions?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services.

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for her advocacy and her passion on this issue. This is a personal issue for me, too. As somebody who used to work in shelters and has known many people who've lost their lives to cold weather, knowing many more who've lost their life to addiction on our streets, I am committed to working with our municipalities to make sure that we have an appropriate amount of shelter space in this province so that nobody has to face the cold this winter. Last night I'm happy to report that we had 88 per cent – I guess I'm not happy to report this, but last night we were at 88 per cent occupancy, so there was space in our shelter, and we're going to continue to work to make sure that there is enough space.

Ms Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, the government has failed to implement a winter emergency protocol and adequately support municipalities. Given that despite the responsibility to fund shelters and housing, this Premier has seen fit to abolish the housing ministry, expecting cities to step up while the UCP does nothing, and given that last night the city of Edmonton used their emergency reserve to fund 209 additional spaces and given that local leaders have been brought to tears begging for aid, can the minister explain the rationale for forcing municipalities to fill in the gaps created by this government's inaction and bad decision-making?

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that we are taking a proactive response to addressing homelessness. This government – this government – doubled shelter space, permanent shelter space, when we took office, and now we've doubled shelter space heading into the winter so that we make sure that nobody has to face the cold. We are taking a proactive approach to making sure that we can end people's experience of homelessness. We've added \$19 million in Edmonton alone this year to make sure that there are supports so that we can help people move beyond the street. In addition to that, we're investing in additional supports for mental health and addiction so we can help end people's experience of . . .

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

Ms Sigurdson: The price is paid in life and limb. Given that we don't know the total number of people dying on the streets as the province does not monitor deaths and given that leaving someone

unhoused costs more than housing them and given that this government may leave \$1.5 billion in funding on the table for the third time while letting the Premier's petty rivalries and sovereignty act take priority over helping Albertans, Minister, what will it be? Will this government do what it takes to prevent people from freezing to death, or will he stand by the sovereignty act and leave money in Ottawa that could literally save lives?

Mr. Jeremy Nixon: Mr. Speaker, we have an important question to ask, and I ask this sincerely: do we work towards adding more permanent shelter spaces, or do we work towards adding more solutions that are actually going to help end people's experience of homelessness? That's what we're doing. In regard to the earlier question in regard to where housing fits, I am the housing minister, and I'm taking this very seriously. We are working towards expanding housing across this province to make sure people have a place to call home. Through our stronger foundations plan we are partnering with municipalities, we are partnering with not-for-profits to leverage government resources to make the best use and make sure that we have homes for people.

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (continued)

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, all Albertans expect their elected officials to stand up for the rights and interests of our great province, no question. But this week Albertans learned that the sovereignty act is not a defence mechanism but, rather, a full on power grab. The Premier is granting herself and her cabinet the ability to write laws in secret, in the backroom, behind closed doors. No votes, no review, no checks or balances. This is the most unprecedented abuse of cabinet authority in the history of our province. To the Premier: why does Bill 1 look like something less Albertan and more like something out of Vladimir Putin's playbook?

Mr. Shandro: Oh, come on, Mr. Speaker. We're not hearing from the NDP; we're hearing from the Anti-DP over here. This is the caucus that had their leader asking Justin Trudeau to step up and void and overrule legislation passed by the democratically elected members of this Assembly. Will this member stand in this Assembly now and apologize to Albertans for that advocacy? Just say yes. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, given that all of this dictatorial power grabbing is exactly the opposite of what our investment community is looking for and given that the Calgary Chamber, CAPP, and many more are lining up against the sovereignty act because they know it will kill jobs, drive away investment, and harm our economic future, will the Premier or perhaps one of her ministers professing to care about the economy ...

Mr. Schow: Point of order.

Mr. Bilous: ... stand and explain why the Premier's push for power is more important than Alberta's economic prosperity? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

A point of order is noted at 2:16.

Mr. Shandro: Mr. Speaker, none of that is true. This begins with a process that is a resolution in this Chamber, an open, democratic process for all of us to pass and all of us to vote on. What the NDP are mad about, what they're upset about is a government that would

stand up against Justin Trudeau. What they want is for us to capitulate to the Trudeau-NDP alliance in Ottawa, and it makes them angry that this is a government that is now proposing to stand up against that alliance in Ottawa.

Mr. Bilous: Given that I was proud to serve as minister of economic development – in fact, it was a highlight of my career – I'm hearing from my stakeholders that they are terrified and they're considering pulling out of Alberta altogether. To the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development: does he commit in this House here and now that if one investor pulls out of Alberta or a single job is lost as a result of this undemocratic and harmful sovereignty act, he will stand up to the Premier and help us defeat this disastrous legislation?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I think it's rich coming from the NDP, that drove out thousands of jobs, billions of dollars in economic investment. Where are we today? We're at record levels of weekly earnings for Albertans. We're at record levels of venture capital investment in Alberta. We're at record levels of so much investment in Alberta, and no thanks to the NDP. It's thanks to this government and future-looking government that stands up and sticks up for Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Energy Industries

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's oil and gas industries are the leader in technology and innovation. We also exceed global environmental, human rights, and labour standards, which is why we are continuing to promote Alberta's energy in venues like the Canadian Energy Centre and events like COP 27. I also believe that it is important that we continue to create energy corridors while building partnerships with like-minded provinces, states, and countries. Alberta energy is the solution to the world's energy crisis. To the Energy minister: how do you plan to put Alberta on the map and make us the first choice when it comes to providing oil and gas?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Energy is rising.

Mr. Guthrie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's oil and gas industry is a leader in technology and innovation. We set the bar for global environmental, human rights, and labour standards, which is why we continue to promote Alberta's energy through avenues like the Canadian Energy Centre and events like COP 27. We also believe that it is important that we continue to create energy corridors while building partnerships with like-minded provinces, states, and countries. Alberta energy is the solution to the global energy crisis and powering a low-carbon world.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the pilots currently under consideration is the liability management incentive program. This program is two-pronged. First, it is to encourage the cleanup of some of the oldest and most troubling wells. Second, after cleanup is complete, companies will receive a royalty credit on new production. This has the potential to be a huge win for industry, the province, and the people of Alberta. To the same minister: what policies are you working on to encourage reclamation, and how will this help Alberta?

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Energy.

Mr. Guthrie: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned, the province is currently working, and under consideration is a liability management incentive program. The program is two-pronged: first, to encourage the cleanup of some of the oldest and most troubling wells, dating back decades; and second, after the cleanup is complete, companies will receive a royalty credit on new production only, creating jobs and encouraging new investment. This has the potential to be a huge win for the province, industry, and, most importantly, the people of Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. the member.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the sovereignty act will get Ottawa's attention. We just so happen to have the most affordable, reliable, responsible oil and gas on the planet. This act should be a reminder to the federal government that Alberta is the rightful owner of our resources and we're serious about defending our interests. Although diversifying our energy sector is important, oil and gas is not going anywhere in the near future. By opposing Alberta, Canada is supporting dictator oil, which should be unacceptable to Canadians. What strategies are being implemented to stand up to the federal government infringing on Alberta's resources?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Energy.

Mr. Guthrie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the sovereignty act will get Ottawa's attention. This act should be a reminder to the federal government that Alberta is the rightful owner of our resources, and we are serious about defending our interests, which just so happens to have the most responsible, reliable, and secure oil and gas on this planet. Although diversifying our energy sector is important, oil and gas is not going anywhere soon. By opposing Alberta oil in support of dictator oil, Canada is going a direction that does not align with the values of Canadians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (continued)

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an opinion piece published on August 23, 2022, the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development described the sovereignty act as "likely unconstitutional," "virtue signalling," and said that it "would create . . . worse uncertainty" for our economy and investors than anything that Ottawa had done to the economy. The minister was then trying to win the UCP leadership race, which he didn't win. Now today the jobs minister says that the act is great despite it being worse than we could have ever imagined. Can the minister explain what changed? Did he trade his own ethics for a cabinet post?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development.

Mr. Jean: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm so proud to work in a government and work with a Premier that listens, unlike what I've seen from past Premiers, especially in the NDP government. We have a Premier that listens not just to caucus and cabinet but continues to listen to Albertans. That's why we've changed some things in the sovereignty act. That's why we're continuing to be

open minded, to listen even to the opposition, that might come up with a good idea from time to time. But we're not going to take any lessons from the NDP, who drove our economy into a terrible place. We're going to take steps to make our economy better and to stand up for Albertans, especially stand up to Ottawa.

Mr. Sabir: Given that the Minister of Finance told Albertans to vote for him so that he could stop the sovereignty act, which he said was a ticking time bomb and was not a solution for Alberta's problems, but given that those people who believed him were blindsided by his rush to reclaim his seat at the cabinet table and now his steadfast praise of the bill, that's worse than anyone could imagine, and given that the minister's own stakeholders are slamming the bill, including the Calgary Chamber, did the Minister of Finance just sell out Alberta's economic future so he could keep his seat at cabinet?

Mr. Toews: Mr. Speaker, I did have legitimate concerns over the concept of the sovereignty act. I've shared my concerns throughout the development of the bill, and those concerns have been heard. My concern was that this bill would be constitutional, my concern was that this bill would not undermine the rule of law, and my concern was that it would be implemented in a way that would provide business certainty because we've done too much to attract investment and create jobs in the economy to see it unwound. This bill will not unwind it.

Mr. Sabir: Given that the Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism was a fierce critic of the sovereignty act until she got her cabinet seat under the new Premier and given that in August, while campaigning, the minister demanded a general election before it was passed so that the public could weigh in on a bill that she said provides no value to Albertans beyond thumping our chests but that today she says that her concerns were addressed when the title of the bill was changed, can the minister tell this House for the record if she has actually read the bill and what specifically changed in it and perhaps cite a section?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Mrs. Sawhney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course I have read the bill. I have read it multiple times. It's no secret that I was adamantly opposed to a previous version of the sovereignty act, but to the Premier's credit she took the feedback from cabinet and caucus and made significant changes to the bill that have made it palatable. Today I was speaking to international investors who are very satisfied with Bill 1, who are excited to bring investment into Alberta.

Organizational Vaccine Policies **Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act**

Ms Goehring: Mr. Speaker, this week many professionals in our film sector were nervous over comments made by this Premier where she claimed she and her ministers were calling groups to interfere in their business operations. One example she gave even exclaimed to have withheld government funding for a desired result. The film sector was very concerned about this. As you're aware, many Alberta projects rely on grants. Now they're fearful they will be denied the funding if they don't allow the Premier to interfere in their private business operations. Will the Premier promise this sector that she won't meddle with their business function for her own ideological stance?

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

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has always worked in hand with our partners, including stakeholders, respectfully. Regarding this change of the vaccine mandate, on November 15 my department shared my concerns over the obsolete federal vaccine policy that prevented many Albertan athletes from participating in it. To my satisfaction, three days later the organizing committee publicly revoked that obsolete policy. Today Albertans have more opportunity to participate in the games, and we are very pleased about that.

Ms Goehring: Given that one of the film groups in Alberta e-mailed the Premier's office asking for clarification on her comments, saying that, quote, productions in place are now concerned about these words; it could drive away business, investment, and production and licences being signed; the mere mention of it could limit employment projects being drawn to Alberta. End quote. Given that the Premier's investment-killing sovereignty act is raising red flags across multiple industries to stay away from Alberta, will the Minister of Culture promise film groups he will not withhold funding from projects based on what they create and secure investments on?

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased to be able to rise today and talk about the film industry. The film industry is investing record amounts into Alberta because they understand we're pro business, and this is an important industry for our future. But we will continue to strongly encourage all Alberta employers to respect the decision of their employees and customers as it relates to their personal health choices. Vaccines are certainly none of my business about personal choices, and it's certainly none of theirs.

Ms Goehring: Given that we have varying reports from this government on the controls their investment-killing sovereignty act will give them, one from the Justice minister telling the media it's correct that cabinet will have unilateral power to change provincial laws and another from the Premier claiming that's not true, and given that to have sustained and substantial investment in the province, especially in the creative industries, we need consistency and stability in our government, not this chaos and confusion we see on the other side, how are investors and film shops supposed to believe this government when they change tune moment to moment? They're like a really bad movie over there, Mr. Speaker, and ...

The Speaker: I may just provide a little bit of caution. I'm having a bit of difficulty connecting the third question to the previous two questions. I appreciate tangentially they were about the film and television industry, but the connection is broad at best.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, she is right about one thing: investors want certainty. They want to have confidence in our economy, and they do right now, so much, in fact, that net migration to Alberta is at record levels. People are moving, flocking to our province because they understand they've got certainty and they've got, more importantly, a Premier and a government that is going to stand up for them, stand up for the industries. [interjections]

The Speaker: The minister has the call.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a Premier and a government that is going to stand up for the industry, stand up for the businesses, and stand up for all Albertans against Ottawa and infringement on our jurisdiction. What more could Albertans want?

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

2:30

Athabasca University

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the great institutions in my constituency is Athabasca University. The university was relocated to Athabasca from Edmonton in 1984 to help create jobs and foster economic growth and opportunity in the northern region. I've heard from many constituents who are concerned that Athabasca University's move to a near-virtual model has diminished AU's physical presence in the area, as jobs leave the town, straining the region's economic outlook. To the Minister of Advanced Education: does this government share those concerns?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Nicolaides: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member. I want to commend him on relaying the concerns of his constituents to me and the government more broadly.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we share those concerns, which is why our government has taken action to work with the university to create more jobs in the community. More specifically, as recently as yesterday the board of governors of Athabasca University has agreed upon a new investment management agreement that provides stipulations to increase job numbers in the community. I'm very proud that we've taken this step. When the issue was raised when the NDP was in government, they did nothing.

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

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that a key factor in ensuring the development and sustainability of the Athabasca region is having physical employees in Athabasca as well as having local talent as a part of those employees and given that last night the minister announced that an investment management agreement was signed with the board of governors of the Athabasca University, to the same minister: can you provide specific details of what that agreement contains?

Mr. Nicolaides: Sure. I'd be happy to, Mr. Speaker. The investment management agreement stipulates that 44 per cent of the institution's executive team must be based in Athabasca within three years. To put that in real terms, that's 4 out of 9 executive members. It also stipulates that the university should increase the number of local employees from its current base of 252 to 277. Again, that's within three years. This is particularly important. The university has an important role to play in bringing jobs to the community.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for his dedication and for his responsiveness to the concerns community members have raised.

Given that Athabasca University was originally created as a correspondence university and given that it has grown into a world leader in higher learning for those Albertans and Canadians who can't physically travel to classes in urban centres, to the same minister: how will this new agreement ensure Athabasca remains a home for the online delivery of learning and can continue to succeed into the future?

Mr. Nicolaides: Mr. Speaker, Athabasca University is a critical gem for the province of Alberta and all of Canada. As our premier online learning provider it ensures that individuals who can't physically get on to a university campus are able to access postsecondary education. I'm looking forward to working with the

institution to continue to strengthen their online delivery model, with a strong base of operations in the town of Athabasca.

Wage Growth and Cost of Living

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, recent data shows that Alberta workers have the second-slowest wage growth in Canada. Alberta's average weekly earnings grew by just 2.6 per cent, far behind the rest of Canada. During a time of rising costs, this is completely unacceptable and shows that this government can't get the job done on protecting Alberta's economy. During the worst affordability crisis we've seen in generations, wages are not keeping up, and workers are falling further behind. Why does this government think it's acceptable that Alberta's wage growth is so far behind the rest of the country?

Mr. Jean: That's a good question, Mr. Speaker, but let me tell you that when you're number one, it moves a little slower than the rest, and we are. We have the highest weekly earnings in the country, and not only that – good news; I appreciate the member giving me this opportunity – we have 100,000 jobs here in Alberta that are not filled right now. So come on out to Alberta. It is the land of opportunity for individual employees and for businesses.

Ms Gray: Given that in budget estimates the Finance minister said, "We're predicting average weekly earnings to go up by well over 3 per cent... in excess of inflation" and given that clearly the Finance minister's prediction was incredibly wrong and many families are suffering from the additional costs that this government has put on them – deindexing taxes, park fees, new fees for seniors' medical exams, skyrocketing car insurance, utilities; it goes on and on, Mr. Speaker – does the Finance minister understand that his government's paltry utilities rebate isn't solving this crisis?

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

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government inherited a fiscal and economic train wreck from the members opposite. From day one we worked hard to position this economy for competitiveness, investment attraction, job creation, and economic diversification, and our plan worked. Our economy is growing and leading the nation in economic growth. The economy is diversifying at rates I've not seen in my lifetime. In this year, since January 1, 28 per cent of the jobs in all of Canada were created in Alberta.

Ms Gray: Given, Mr. Speaker, that it's clear the Finance minister does not understand the crisis Alberta families are experiencing and given that their poorly thought-out inflation-relief measures leave out 2 million Albertans and given that prices are continuing to grow at a rate far beyond Alberta's anemic wage growth rates under this government, I know they thought a labour minister was something optional, but perhaps, as Alberta workers fall further and further behind, this Premier may want to consider actually having one of her endless array of cabinet ministers care and fight for workers.

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Affordability and Utilities.

Mr. Jones: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everyone in this Chamber has heard from their constituents about the challenges associated with record inflation and the heightened cost of living, and that's why we're pleased to come forward with immediate relief. Over \$2 billion will be announced over the coming weeks to support the vast majority and, in many cases, all Albertans. This includes an estimated benefit of \$900 alone to an average household, and there's more for seniors,

families with children, and disabled Albertans, who we know have been hit particularly hard by the inflation and affordability crisis.

Health Care System

(continued)

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, from the day it was elected, this government's attitude towards our front-line health care workers can be summed up with two words, aggression and attack. The UCP tore up deals. They threatened pay cuts. They attacked their wages, accused them of playing politics, repeatedly chose to underfund them and the life-saving work that they do. Now front-line health care workers report that the Health minister is refusing to meet with them to talk about how they can work together to recruit and retain more colleagues to support their heroic efforts to keep our health care system going. Why is the health care minister dragging his feet on meeting with the front-line workers he claims he supports?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. His information is out of date. I have meetings scheduled with each of the leaders of the health care units to talk about that exact issue in terms of attraction and retention. I'd like to point out a few other things. We have invested more money in health care than ever in this province, \$22 billion this year. We added \$600 million this year, \$600 million next year, \$600 million the year after that. We have more doctors working in this province than ever before. We have more health nurses working in this province than ever before. We are expanding and building capacity to deliver the health care that Albertans need.

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, this government has longer wait times than ever before, more Albertans than ever before who can't see a doctor. Given that while this minister is happy not meeting with Albertans on the front lines who deliver health care and the Premier is consulting with a secret group of supposed doctors and given that she publicly stated that this shadowy group of advisers was apparently eager to talk to Paul Alexander, a man who called the COVID-19 vaccine a bioweapon, can the Health minister explain why front-line health care workers are still waiting outside the building for a meeting while fringe conspiracy theorists apparently are being given a path directly to the Premier's office?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, that simply is incorrect. Over the course of the summer and also into the fall I travelled across the province, held 41 workshops to talk with health care workers and those in the continuing care sector and the primary care sector as well as health care advocates and included a number of unionized workers, AHS employees. I spoke with over 1,100 employees and representatives from across the province, getting their input. I have heard them, and I am looking forward to meeting with the unions to talk about: how do we further expand our work?

2:40

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, given that this Premier seems to support her shadow advisers arranging to meet with Paul Alexander, who encouraged the rampant spread of COVID-19 amongst children and in addition told millions of vaccinated Albertans they were infected with a bioweapon, and given that this suggests that these discredited, disturbing views are getting an audience with this Premier while credible health care professionals are told to take a hike, will the Minister of Health advise this House just who is advising the Premier when it comes to the health and safety of Albertans? Will he table the names of this advisory group of apparent fans of Paul Alexander?

Mr. Copping: Mr. Speaker, our office continues to work with health care professionals from across the province. We continue to listen to health care professionals to be able to provide services to Albertans. We are working with the AMA. I was very pleased to get an agreement with the AMA and look at: how do we actually deal with the challenges together? We are working with Albertans. We are working with health care workers to be able to improve the services and ensure that Albertans get the health care services that they need.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that concludes the time allotted for Oral Question Period. In 30 seconds or less we will return to the remainder of Members' Statements.

The hon. the Government House Leader, I believe, has a brief question to ask.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise the Assembly that pursuant to Standing Order 7(8) the daily Routine may continue beyond 3 p.m.

Members' Statements

(continued)

Economic Indicators

Mr. Long: Mr. Speaker, when we formed government, our province was in shambles – years of economic decline, rising debts – and our future looked grim. Thank goodness we got hired, because now Alberta is on a roll with a rapidly growing and diversifying economy. We had record investments in venture capital in 2020 of \$445 million, beat that record in 2021 with \$561 million. In Q3 this year we are already at \$509 million and continuing to increase while the rest of the country is on the downturn.

On the tech front we are seeing thousands of jobs created. Infosys and Mphasis each announced a thousand jobs in Calgary, Amazon Web Services announced a \$4 billion investment and a thousand jobs in Calgary, and RBC announced a key 300 jobs. Why are those jobs key? Because we pulled those jobs right away from Toronto's Bay Street and put them where? That's right: Calgary.

We are reeling over a record year in film and television, with over a billion dollars of investment. We have had record years in agriculture and forestry. We are becoming a logistics hub with major investments in distribution centres, including little known names like Walmart and Rona-Lowe's. This is in addition to multibillion-dollar announcements in hydrogen from Air Products and an ethylene cracker and derivatives facility by Dow Chemical. Tourism is also roaring back to prepandemic levels, with a growing trajectory that I anticipate will surpass the double of revenues that we are aiming for.

All of this has led to the aviation sector flying under the radar, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it is taking off in this province. De Havilland announced a 1500-job manufacturing facility, WestJet is moving from eastern Canada back to Alberta, Flair Airlines announced a 5,000-job growth plan, and Lynx Air is expanding by several thousand jobs as well.

Mr. Speaker, we have the hottest economy in the country. There are over a hundred thousand job openings. We balanced the budget on \$70 oil, and because we have cut red tape, provided investor certainty, and lowered the corporate tax rate, we have seen a billion more dollars of corporate tax revenue than at the NDP rate of 12 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta is back, Alberta is calling, and we're just getting started.

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

Alberta in Canada

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past September 1 celebrated the inaugural Alberta Day in recognition of Alberta joining the existing Canadian Confederation on September 1, 1905. The champion and architect of Alberta joining Confederation was Sir Frederick Haultain, Premier of the Legislature of the North-West Territories. There's a building in his honour on these grounds, but few know of the heroic work he did in negotiating for a fair and equal status in the Confederation dream.

His endless challenge was to confront the colonial attitudes and behaviours of central Canada. The first great struggle was to gain recognition for the legislative authority of the Northwest Territories. We sit here today, so clearly that was wrested from Ottawa. The second, pressing great challenge was to gain adequate funding and budget control to provide the services needed for the rapidly growing west. This Ottawa continually refused to do, and it even limited the power of the province to raise its own funding.

One infamous act of skulduggery by Ottawa was with regard to Yukon, which was then part of the North-West Territories. When gold was discovered there, the Territories rightly expected that there would be a source of revenue. Ottawa also saw this need, though, and immediately carved out the Yukon as a separate territory as a way to ensure that all revenues from the gold rush went to Ottawa, not Alberta and Saskatchewan. They would continue to be hamstrung and kept in a begging status for an annual but minuscule allocation from Ottawa.

Equally egregious arrangements by Ottawa to hinder the west were the Dominion Lands Act and the Canadian Pacific Railway Act. Premier Haultain continued to seek a fair and equal deal. His success was always limited by delay and outright denial by the Ottawa elite. Haultain proposed a province which included the territories of Saskatchewan and Alberta united; he felt this would make for a stronger province with fewer expenses. Ottawa flatly denied that, wanting two provinces in order to keep them weaker and divided so that Ottawa could maintain control.

Thank you, Premier Haultain, for your determined resolve to enter into a fair and equal Confederation agreement and ...

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

Child Care

Ms Pancholi: Yesterday was the National Day of Action for early learning and child care, calling for a system of early learning and child care which properly compensates early childhood educators, provides access for all families, and ensures quality. The Alberta NDP is proud to add our voices to this call; but more than that, we will act.

Albertans know which party has always been committed to affordable, quality child care to support our economy, working parents, and children's early learning, and that's the Alberta NDP. The UCP only cares about child care when they want to play games with the federal government. They waited three and a half years to finally increase educator wage top-ups while, at the same time, the Premier's throne speech calls the federal funding they're using to do it an intentional interference and an unconstitutional federal program. They're jeopardizing parents' access to affordable child care and the child care workforce with their job-killing sovereignty act.

Since we know child care is critical to economic growth, the Premier is showing once again how bad she is for Alberta's economy. We understand that a responsible government stands up for Albertans

by doing the work. That means funding child care properly. An Alberta NDP government will increase provincial funding for child care, not underfund it, siphon dollars away to the war room, or wait for the feds to pay for it, like the UCP. We'll address the number one issue facing all child care providers: attracting and retaining qualified early childhood educators.

Let me be clear: we would have increased wages the day the federal deal was signed. While the UCP fails to meet their target of 10,000 new nonprofit spaces, we won't fail because we will work with operators, nonprofits, and municipalities to fund it properly and get it done. We won't play games and delay the cost-control framework for for-profit child care providers, like the UCP. We need new spaces for Alberta families now.

We will include the thousands of Alberta families who use out of school care, because all families are struggling with affordability right now. The Alberta NDP has never wavered on this. We are committed to a quality, affordable, accessible system of early learning and child care in Alberta, and we will get the job done.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give oral notice of Government Motion 11 in my name: "Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly express its opposition to any action taken by the government of Canada to disallow a law passed by the Legislative Assembly."

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Bill 201

Public Health Care Delivery Standards Act

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise and request leave to introduce Bill 201, the Public Health Care Delivery Standards Act.

If passed, this bill will make a real difference in the lives of Albertans who need help when they get sick or injured. This bill compels the establishment of health delivery standards and then requires the government to be held accountable on delivering on those standards. There is a crisis in health care right now. Albertans should be able to expect an ambulance to arrive within minutes, to be able to access an emergency room within a few hours, and to see a family doctor within a day or two. This legislation would require governments of any party to be transparent and held accountable to delivering those standards within public health care. I hope that all members in the Assembly will support it and allow it to be debated fully as a primary priority in this House.

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

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 2:50 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Allard	Guthrie	Sabir
Amery	Hanson	Sawhney
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Irwin	Schmidt
Bilous	Jones	Schow
Carson	LaGrange	Shepherd
Copping	Loewen	Sigurdson, L.

Dach	Loyola	Sigurdson, R.J.
Deol	Luan	Smith, Danielle
Dreeshen	Madu	Smith, Mark
Eggen	Neudorf	Stephan
Ellis	Notley	Sweet
Feehan	Orr	Toor
Fir	Pancholi	Turton
Getson	Pon	Walker
Goehring	Reid	Williams
Gotfried	Renaud	Wilson
Gray	Rosin	Yaseen
Totals:	For – 51	Against – 0

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 201 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Bill 202

Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022

Mr. Williams: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to request leave to introduce Bill 202, Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022.

Charity is the greatest amongst all virtues. It has been the watchword of Albertans and the watermark of our province since our conception. Through every crisis, from dust bowls to wildfires, Albertans have come to their neighbours' aid through charities, and these charities are beloved institutions in need of support more now than ever. That's why I am so pleased to introduce this private member's bill today.

[Motion carried; Bill 202 read a first time]

The Speaker: Congratulations to all members on a first-reading bill.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices, in accordance with section 4(7) of the Election Act and section 4(2) of the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act I am pleased to table the 2021-22 annual report for Elections Alberta. Pursuant to sections 19(1) and 19(5) of the Auditor General Act it is also my honour to table the required number of copies of the results report for the year ended March 31, 2022, for the office of the Auditor General.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-City Centre, I have you on my list.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table five copies of the Premier's policy paper in which she argues for, amongst other things, the creation of health savings accounts to help Albertans get used to the concept of paying out of pocket for health care, including currently insured services like visits to their family doctor.

The Speaker: Are there other tablings?

I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood is rising and moving about the Chamber. I'm not sure if she has a tabling or if she's just wandering while the Speaker is speaking.

Are there others?

Seeing none, I do have four tablings to make: the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner 2021-2022 annual report, the office of the Child and Youth Advocate 2021-2022 annual report, Public Interest Commissioner 2021-2022 annual report, the Property Rights Advocate annual report 2019-2021. That concludes my tablings.

3:10 **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 hon. Minister LaGrange, Minister of Education, College of Alberta School Superintendents 2021-22 annual report.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we are at points of order, and at 2:16 the Government House Leader rose on a point of order.

Point of Order **Language Creating Disorder**

Mr. Schow: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I rise on a point of order, 23(h), (i), and (j), specifically the portion about using language that causes a disruption within the Chamber. The time when the Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview was speaking, asking his question, he said – and I do have the benefit of the Blues – the following: “To the Premier: why does Bill 1 look like something less Albertan and more like something out of Vladimir Putin’s playbook?” I do find that this kind of language absolutely causes disruption within this Chamber, comparing policies or a bill in the Alberta Legislature to something out of a brutal, dare I say, dictator out of Russia who is currently invading Ukraine, and this called by a member whose family lineage is from Ukraine. I do find this to be quite disruptive, quite inappropriate, and I would ask that that member apologize and not use further language. This is uncharacteristic for that member, and I don’t understand why he would choose to use this kind of language in this context.

The Speaker: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This language and this comparison were chosen because this bill is currently debating a piece of legislation that looks remarkably similar to the actions we see from dictators in other countries. Putin is a dictator who makes decisions behind closed doors, who denies evidence and says that things are one way when there is proof that they are not. True democracies debate legislation and laws in public. They don’t, quote, try something new by subverting democratic debate and transparency. In Bill 1 we see powers allowing cabinet to make decisions behind closed doors. The language chosen was deliberate. It is not a point of order. I think it is an apt comparison, and I look forward to continuing to debate Bill 1 here in the Legislature as well as in the public, in the media, where similar comparisons are being made. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. The hon. the Government House Leader will come to order.

Are there others who wish to join or provide new information to the debate?

I am prepared to rule. While I would provide caution to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview – it is a very slippery slope that one heads down when making such comparisons, but for the purposes of this point of order I will quote the hon. Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker of the House of Commons in the U.K., when she said: you’ve got to ensure that the holders of an opinion, however unpopular, are allowed to get their views across. I consider this matter a matter of debate. However, I do provide some caution

to the hon. member when making comparisons to such world leaders or dictators. I consider this matter dealt with and concluded.

We are at Ordres du jour.

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders **Second Reading**

Bill 1

Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act

[Adjourned debate November 30: Mr. Hunter]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie has risen to join in the debate.

Mrs. Allard: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my honour to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 1, the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act. This bill seeks to provide a clear framework outlining how Alberta will stand up to Ottawa and federal overreach and preserve our constitutional and provincial rights as Albertans. Albertans are proud to be Albertan, and we are proud to be Canadian. We love both our nation and our home province dearly. That said, Albertans are tired of having our economic prosperity obstructed and provincial jurisdiction encroached upon by federal overreach and federal politicians such as Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh.

The Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, if passed, will be used as a shield to protect Albertans from any federal overreach and interference in areas of Alberta’s jurisdiction, overreach, Mr. Speaker, that is costing Alberta’s economy billions of dollars each year in lost investment and is costing Alberta families untold jobs and opportunities, damaging interference in the areas of private property, natural resources, agriculture, forestry, firearms, regulation of the economy, and delivery of health, education, and other social programs. We want made-in-Alberta solutions. Through this legislation the Premier has not only shown that she listens to Albertans, but she’s also demonstrated her dedication to protecting our province and its people.

[Mr. Reid in the chair]

If passed, this act will address federal overreach by providing a legislative framework to protect Albertans from federal legislation or policies that are unconstitutional and/or harmful to our province, our people, or economic prosperity. It will address federal interference by enforcing the Canadian Constitution’s division of powers in recognition of both the federal and provincial governments’ respective exclusive and sovereign areas of constitutional jurisdiction. That’s both, Mr. Speaker. The act will protect our province by providing authority to the cabinet when authorized by the Legislative Assembly under the act. I’ll say that again: it will protect our province by providing authority to the cabinet, when authorized by the Legislative Assembly under the act, to direct provincial entities to not enforce specific federal laws or policies with provincial resources.

Despite these numerous benefits, the legislation introduced has been vilified by the NDP as being divisive and unconstitutional. In reality, Mr. Speaker, this bill was created to be respectful of court decisions, respectful of Indigenous and treaty rights and the constitutional rights of diverse provinces within a united Canada. It is notable, for example, that our neighbouring province of Saskatchewan has passed very similar legislation in that province. Despite dangerous and false rhetoric coming from the NDP, the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act will assert provincial jurisdiction already delineated in the Canadian Constitution. Additionally, Alberta will continue to respect,

not disregard, court rulings. If the Alberta government's use of the act against any federal initiative is challenged in court, the decision of the court will be respected and upheld.

While we are on the topic of disinformation, I'd like to take this time to clarify the intent of this bill. There is nothing in the act that relates in any way to the topic of separation. This is simply fearmongering from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. The act will not be used to create an independent Alberta. Rather, it is about making Alberta more prosperous while remaining within a more unified Canada.

Speaking of fearmongering, the NDP also like to argue that the act will risk creating economic chaos. Mr. Speaker, in fact, the use of the act won't harm Alberta's economy whatsoever. Instead, it will help protect Alberta's freedoms, interests, economic growth, and prosperity from intrusive federal policies and legislation that have caused hundreds of billions of dollars – hundreds of billions of dollars – to flee Alberta to other jurisdictions over the past decade. By re-establishing the rule of constitutional law back into the Canadian legal system, businesses will be able to flourish from the resulting increase in stability and predictability here in Alberta and right across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been committed to ensuring that Alberta's voice remains strong on our priorities, our interests, and our concerns. As we continue to remain true to our word, our government is now taking action to stand up for Albertans and get a better deal for Alberta within Canada. Protecting Albertans from federal government overreach, defending Alberta's interests, and enhancing trade and investments are critical to Alberta's economic future and, by extension, the future generations of Albertans that we are here to serve. The Premier has been clear that we will respond to unconstitutional federal encroachments on areas of provincial jurisdiction and develop made-in-Alberta strategies to manage our own resources.

Mr. Speaker, this act allows us to stay true to our word, to stand up for Albertans and the future of our province, and that is why I support Bill 1, so that we can continue to focus on the meaningful work that keeps Albertans prosperous and our voice respected. Thank you.

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations, officially being in the chair as Deputy Chair of Committees. It's my pleasure and honour to rise to speak to Bill 1 today, the sovereignty act, and I want to start off by stating what we all know. I want to start off by stating that every legislator in this Chamber stands up for Alberta first and foremost and that Alberta's interests are our top priority. That is why we are provincial politicians and not federal politicians.

3:20

Mr. Speaker, I understand the rationale behind the Premier bringing up this bill. However, this bill is damaging and has already caused damage to Alberta's reputation. I'm not speaking just from my own words. I appreciate that members may say, "Well, that's your opinion," but we as a caucus and myself personally have talked to many business leaders across the province and have heard not just the concerns but the fact that the tabling of this bill has already caused damage to Alberta's reputation. It's caused damage because, as most members know, the business community globally looks for jurisdictions that are stable and predictable and have certainty. The very act of tabling this legislation – in fact, this uncertainty in the business community started months ago, when the current Premier was campaigning on this notion.

Now, as I started off – we have examples, and I'll talk about a few examples, Mr. Speaker, where our government, when we were government, stood up to Ottawa and stood up to Ottawa for Alberta's interests.

As you know, there has been a process for provinces to interject when the federal government overreaches into provincial boundaries. That's why we have the courts. It's decided by a separate entity. Our very democracy relies on the division of powers. This bill puts those powers directly into the hands of legislators. Quite frankly, it's dangerous. There are examples of when provinces have challenged the federal government through the courts when they've deemed an action of the federal government to be unconstitutional, and provinces have won those appeals. To say that Alberta needs this to stand up to Ottawa is false because there are mechanisms that are already in place.

Now, maybe the government doesn't like that process, but it doesn't give them the right to introduce a bill that usurps and undermines democracy. The fact that this bill allows cabinet to amend legislation without having to bring legislation through the Chamber is in and of itself undemocratic. All legislation must pass through the three readings and Committee of the Whole before receiving royal assent. This bill completely undermines the process of our Westminster system.

Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the current government, who claims to be allies of the business community, isn't standing up for the business community, who is ringing the alarm bells about investment. Anyone who says, "Well, this hasn't or won't impact investment coming to Alberta": they're wrong. It has. We've been in touch with companies that were looking to invest in Alberta and have said: Alberta is off the table; we need stability.

The fact that the CEO of CAPP, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, has sounded the alarm bells: if that's not a wake-up call for members on that side of the Chamber, then maybe they still have their earplugs in from the former Premier. You have the Calgary Chamber of commerce sounding the alarm bell. Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that this government will hear more businesses getting vocal about the damage that this bill has caused and will continue to cause.

Now, again, as I started my comments, I'm in favour of when Alberta needs to stand up to the federal government, whoever the federal government is. On bad decisions we should be standing up to the federal government to say: that's not in the best interest of Alberta. Again, there's a process and a mechanism for that.

I'll give you a great example, Mr. Speaker, of how, when we were government, our former Premier, the Leader of the Official Opposition, not only stood up to Ottawa but ensured that the only pipeline that is being built and that has been built in the past 30 years wasn't going to die. She forced the Prime Minister to buy the TMX to ensure that it would be built. That's standing up. That's actually getting more done for the oil and gas sector than this current government has done. In fact, I was out for a coffee with an executive from one of the largest gas-producing companies in Canada, and he said to me: your government did more for our sector than the current government has in three and a half years.

From modernizing the royalties, which meant that producers could continue to be profitable through the full life cycle of the well – I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we also engaged in a campaign to promote the need for pipelines as the safest way to transport our energy resources in Canada. It was called the Keep Canada Working campaign. [interjection] I encourage the minister to listen to this; he may learn something. Four in 10 Canadians were in support of the TMX before we launched our campaign, Keep Canada Working. The campaign was a national campaign across the country. By the end of that campaign 7 in 10 Canadians were in favour of the TMX being built. We moved the needle more effectively in our time in government than predecessors did.

In fact, I remember when former Premier Redford was in this Chamber. She continued to go on trade missions to try to sell our product, but the approach was all wrong and didn't end up moving the needle at all. As we saw – I mean, even under this government they bet \$1.5 billion on Donald Trump and lost that bet. We've seen not just meaningful action, but we've seen outcomes, positive outcomes, for our energy sector and for Canadians under our government.

Under this government what we have is a bill that is creating chaos. It's creating chaos in investments. In fact, I know that investors have either moved off of Alberta – Alberta was one of the jurisdictions they were looking at investing in, and they said no. If we're lucky, at best they've pushed the pause button. The only way that this government can bring back that confidence is to scrap this bill. Start over. This bill, the way it's currently written, will continue to do damage to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I am moving a referral motion. I'll just pause while it gets to you. With your approval, I'll read this referral into the record.

3:30

The Acting Speaker: Yes. If you could read it into the record, please. Thank you.

Mr. Bilous: I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 1, Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, be amended by deleting all of the words after “that” and substituting the following:

Bill 1, Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, be not now read a second time because the Assembly is of the view that the bill is negatively impacting investment decisions and the Alberta economy and should not proceed in order to protect the economic well-being of Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, this reasoned amendment is just that. It's a reasoned amendment, and the approach that we are taking is that this bill needs to – I appreciate that earlier today the Premier talked about amendments. The problem is that the bill is so problematic that it cannot be amended to be good enough to be legislation that's passed in this Chamber, so this bill needs to not proceed. The government needs to go back to the drawing board on this.

Part of the reason that this bill is also so problematic: I know my good colleague the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has been in constant contact with many chiefs in Alberta, and our Indigenous sisters and brothers have not been consulted on this bill. They have not been contacted at all. So for the Premier or any minister to say after a bill is tabled, “We will go and consult with you,” that's not consultation. That's actually insulting, and the chiefs recognize that talking to them after legislation is already written is backwards, that the government should be consulting with Indigenous communities, Indigenous leaders before the bill is drafted so that they can have not just meaningful input but to be able to sit down and provide their insights and perspectives on the bill to ensure that there aren't unintended consequences.

Now, I don't know if the Premier and cabinet realized in their debates, when they were talking about this bill, what some of the unintended consequences are, but I know for a fact that a member cannot stand up in this House and say: oh, no, the business community thinks this is great, and I've not heard one negative thing about this bill or the chill that it has put on investment decisions. I know for a fact that every MLA has been receiving correspondence, whether phone calls or e-mails, about this bill and its impact. [interjection] I see my friend the Member for Edmonton-North West would like to say a few words.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks. I appreciate you giving way. I know that we've been out canvassing a lot, and I know you've been helping in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. Thank you very much for that. In all

the many kilometres that you've put in throughout Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview talking to people, has the sovereignty of Alberta ever come up at the door as a top-of-mind issue for your constituents? I certainly have not seen it, you know, and I've not just been in my own constituency. I've been in Calgary and Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, Red Deer, suburban Edmonton, Edmonton, and I've never had anybody come up and tell me about this thing. So I'm just curious if that has ever happened to you.

Mr. Bilous: Great question. The short answer is no. Now, you know, I will say that at times as I've canvassed around the province, whether door-knocking or meeting with stakeholders, people have expressed frustration with Ottawa, frustration with Ottawa's decisions. I share that frustration for some decisions that they've made. I share some of the frustrations with the current government, and I also have different opinions on policies from the federal NDs. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that, again, there is a process. If the federal government passes legislation that impacts Alberta that we believe is unconstitutional, then absolutely we will take them to court and we will fight them, and I'm confident that we will win if they are overreaching and reaching into areas of provincial jurisdiction.

But what this bill does is that it undermines our very democratic system because you have cabinet being able to amend legislation. That has never happened in Alberta in our history, that through a simple motion cabinet can go back and completely rewrite a bill that was passed by all 87 members through the process of passing legislation. If a motion in this Chamber is the exact same as a bill, which it's not, because a motion doesn't go through three readings and Committee of the Whole – so for the government to try to argue that a simple motion in the Chamber gives them the right to amend legislation, it honestly shocks me, Mr. Speaker, that members of the other side have accepted that. Members who have railed about democracy over the past eight years that they've been in this Chamber suddenly now feel that this is acceptable.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, just for the record we're referring to this amendment as RA1.

Anyone else wishing to speak to the amendment? I see the hon. Member for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Getson: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member opposite. Unfortunately, he didn't accept an intervention. I think we're just getting back there. I'd love to speak to the point where he said that in all the plethora of doors – and I have a ton of respect for this member because he's literally, like, the sole person of the capitalist caucus over there. There was one other member, actually, who wanted a correction on that because he also understood business. I do respect when that member speaks.

But something I have as a bit of a quandary is that when a member of his own caucus asks if there was anybody that showed concerns about overreach from the federal government in the context of a sovereignty question or how this act was going to stand up for us, his answer was that, no, he's never heard that once. As a former minister of jobs and economy he's going to tell me in this House – like, this House is supposed to be a place of truth and sometimes, on their side, truthiness – as a moment of truth, that no one in the business community has ever experienced any issues with Ottawa overreach or bills that would harm our economy?

Mr. Bilous: That's not what I said.

Mr. Getson: Well, if he would have accepted the intervention, through you to him, maybe we could have had this dialogue, but he had his member prescribe if anyone has asked him specifically about this bill and if anyone asked him about sovereignty. So I'll

give him the slippery slope and the truthiness that he likes to utilize. I'll give him the same courtesy he gave me.

With that point, he claims that no one has any concerns in this province about government overreach impacting them. He's concerned about the flight of capital from this province because of us standing up for Albertans. His own leader is convinced that she can lay prostrate and have Trudeau override what we come up with in this House, and he has the audacity to talk about democracy and the nuances of putting a motion in the House versus a bill. This is wild.

To the people out there at home who might be tuning into this on Bill 1, here's what the NDP – and they kind of act like a gang of bullies sometimes down in Ottawa, and maybe that's why Jagmeet and Trudeau are there. You know, I watch this show called *Sons of Anarchy*, and usually what happens is that they patch over at the other club. I'm wondering when that's going to become formal, because they basically wrote a little contract with each other to backstop them and keep going on this. They've been overreaching nonstop.

The Fair Deal Panel went around. That was one of the things that came back, and I'm sure that that member has heard that on his doors in Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. I have a shirttail aunt and uncle that live over there. They've had some concerns for their entire life over the overreach of Ottawa and some of the connotations that take place, and their business decisions have been impacted by a lot of that as well. Anybody in the energy sector had been impacted. Trudeau Sr. with the national energy program: that didn't affect any business? We're seeing the same methodology.

I spoke in here about economic corridors, literally a way of pulling together northwest Canada to work together and collaboratively, and that member knows full well what that means. That opposition voted against that motion. Now we have economic corridors right to the minister of transportation's door to do that. When we're talking about standing up for Albertans and what's in the context of this act, it is one hundred per cent within the Constitution. But in dealing with bullies in the schoolyard, sometimes you've got to let them know that if they keep coming across that fence, if they keep coming into your way, maybe you might bop them in the nose. We're not going to put the onus on business to do that. The government will take it on, and we'll take it on through this House. That's the concept.

3:40

Here's what the opposition is so worried about: inflammatory things, that we want to scare away business. Right from the bill:

Whereas Albertans possess a unique culture and shared identity within Canada.

Oh, my gosh.

Whereas it is the role of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and the Government of Alberta to preserve and promote this unique culture and shared identity.

Oh, my gosh. Outlandish. Oh, pack up the wagons; we're heading east.

Whereas the Constitution Act, 1867, the Constitution Act, 1930 and the Constitution Act, 1982 are foundational documents that establish the rights and freedoms of Albertans and the relationship between the provincial and federal orders of government, including the division of legislative powers between them,

recognizing that our Constitution is valid, all of those constitutional acts that got us to this point.

The reason is that we're tired. Albertans are tired of it. We fight way above our weight class. We pay more. We're disproportionately allowed in the voting process. Every time it happens. Their methodology before was appeasement, kind of like Chamberlain did with the leader of Germany. Churchill had to come in and fix that because you know what? Keep giving more, and they just take it all.

Whereas the Province of Alberta is granted rights and powers under the Constitution Act, 1867, the Constitution Act, 1930 and ...

Let me guess.

... the Constitution Act, 1982.

There you go. These are things that just freak them out. When they talk about democracy, they have this other construct. It's more of a socialist democracy. It's right in the way they operate.

Whereas actions taken by the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada have infringed on these sovereign provincial rights and powers with increasing frequency and have unfairly prejudiced Albertans.

I remember seeing cartoons from 1910 talking about that out west. This isn't something new. This isn't something that happened in the last year. We're not doing this on a whim. We've tried a ton of other things, and it's not working. Finally they're paying attention.

The fact that, again, their leader, when asked by CBC if she would allow Trudeau to overrule us: "Well, that's a grand idea. Oh, oh, oh. What did I say? Oh, inside voice came out. Oh, my gosh. Let's delete my tweet." But, you know, the good thing with Twitter now? Elon Musk bought it. I'm actually tempted to go and sign up on it because I might get my voice heard versus this other slanted stuff we keep hearing and hearing otherwise.

Whereas the people of Alberta expect the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada to respect the Constitution Act, 1867, the Constitution Act, 1930 and the Constitution Act, 1982 as the governing documents of the relationship between Canada and Alberta and to abide by the division of powers and other provisions set out in those documents.

Now, the opposition was heckling because I'm just reading the whereas. It's kind of the context of how it sets it up, not some fairy tale, pixie dust, Trudeau-loving, fan-waving, Jagmeet thing. Like, why don't they just call it the National Socialist Party of Canada and do us all a favour? They're all one party anyway. Like, just knock off the posing.

That's the problem when you call a bully on it. You call a bully on it, and all of a sudden they're crying, wailing, gnashing their teeth, running back to mommy. "That little kid beat me up. He said no. He wouldn't let me take his lunch money anymore." I'm tired of this.

Whereas it is necessary and appropriate for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to set out measures that the Lieutenant Governor in Council should consider taking in respect of actions of the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada that are unconstitutional or harmful to Albertans and for Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to have a free vote ...

Free. Imagine that. What's more free than that? Democracy. Thank goodness we're standing up for it.

... on such measures according to their individual judgment.

[interjection] They're heckling. I'm sure he'll get his point to intervene. I'd like to take an intervention from that fellow because, wow, can he weave a good yarn.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

Mr. Getson: The part that they're getting tied up in is parlance of when this is being introduced into the House.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order has been called. The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under 23(h), (i), and (j). I've been listening to the member for a while now. He's making wild comparisons, referring to Nazis, and now attacking an hon. member personally, making fun of him. I think that if he has

anything to add to the bill, he should talk about the bill, talk about the amendment that we are on, how this bill impacts the business community. The language the member is using is grossly insulting, and it should not be used in this Chamber.

The Acting Speaker: The deputy government whip.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's clear that this is a matter of debate. I've heard no offensive language that would bring the House to any kind of disunity or discord. I would also make the point that I can't wait to hear which it is going forward, (h), (i), or (j) in 23. It's been driving me nuts for four years. I wish we could pick one of these subclauses.

The Acting Speaker: Something extra to add to the debate, hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview?

Mr. Bilous: Yeah. Mr. Speaker, you know, I appreciate differences of opinion, but the member did refer to the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford as "gnarly" when he gets up and speaks. That is calling an individual member a name and is unparliamentary.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
Something extra to add?

Mr. Getson: Yeah. Just clarity. You know, I don't have the benefit of the Blues, but I do have the benefit of what I said. Now, how they heard it is different. I said that he could "weave a good yarn". Weave a good yarn. So if they hear "gnarly," I can't help what they hear, but what I said – and perhaps they're not picking up my my Albertan accent, who stands up for the province, very well.

The Acting Speaker: All right. Hon. members, in relation to this point of order that's been called, I do want to caution members about inflammatory or disruptive language. I did say a couple of days ago, when I was running for Deputy Chair of Committees, that one of my hopes was to ensure that we do have healthy debate and decorum in this House. At this time I do not find a point of order, but I will again request of all members healthy debate and respect for one another.

Mr. Getson: I appreciate the ruling, Mr. Speaker, and bringing me back to a higher degree of decorum. I shouldn't be sinking to their level when they reference, you know, foreign leaders invading countries, as an example, and those types of things. But that's not offensive to them, only to us.

Debate Continued

Mr. Getson: Back with the amendment. They basically want to gas the whole thing – can it, send it back, everything else – instead of following the democratic process as outlined in this House itself. This is the second reading, where the amendments typically come forward on the act and we get a chance to debate it. We're all for that. We heard our new Premier say that today, but instead: fire and brimstone. We want to say that everyone is fleeing the province because – oh, my gosh – we're standing up for them and following the Constitution. Really? Really?

Mr. Speaker, as you can probably tell and those at home, I am not in favour of this amendment. I strongly encourage my fellow members to vote no to this. Let's get back to the bill. Let's do what we can to help Albertans stand up against Ottawa and the NDP, federal and provincial, Liberal alliance, against the nonstop overreach into our areas. It's time to tell the bullies that we respect the rule of law, that we know the rules of the law, that we're equals

in this country. You better start treating us like it, or we're just going to tell you no.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Are there other members wishing to speak to amendment RA1? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome to the chair. I would love to have an opportunity to speak to this bill because, of course, it is quite a contentious bill, for good reason. It is rejected largely by all segments of society other than the government members, and as such it is one that we should take very, very seriously.

I know that, you know, such left-wing people as the CEO of the Calgary Chamber of commerce and the CEO of CAPP, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, have come out and said that this bill is – using words like "dangerous" and "problematic." So it's not really an issue of left versus right – is it? – when these kinds of organizations are coming out and saying that this bill is deeply problematic.

3:50

I know that constitutional scholars from across Canada have weighed in on this and have addressed the fact that, as the previous member has said: oh, we say in the bill that this doesn't actually violate the Constitution. The constitutional scholars say: you can say that, but then if you actually then go on to violate the Constitution, what you said is irrelevant. That's exactly the answer to the previous speaker as he reads out the sections early on that deny what is actually happening later on in the very same bill. It just tells us how irrelevant their earlier clauses are, where they try to set the tone in order to slide underneath that somewhat deceptive tone the reality that they're actually challenging the rule of law in Canada, that they are actually making the attempt to establish a set of laws in Alberta that will undermine the laws of Canada, that when a law is a duly established law in Canada, it will be neglected or unenforced in the province of Alberta, which is by its definition a denial of the rule of law.

So what we have is a party and a government that is actually working against the fundamentals of the democratic society. They can deny that all they want, but the people who are experts in this area, the constitutional experts, tell us that that is, in fact, what they are doing. You know, I think that that's something that they should take very seriously.

We know that many of the members opposite who are currently ministers of various ministries came out against this originally, before they got their jobs and their jobs were on the line. They said the very things that we're saying now about this bill being bad for the province of Alberta, bad for investment, bad for the economy moving forward. All of them stood up and, in fact, voted in their own little election to not have the leader come in who was going to bring in this bill. I'm assuming they all voted for themselves.

In fact, you know, the ministers of these – Treasury Board and Finance, the Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism, the Minister of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development, the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, the Minister of Municipal Affairs – all have already voted not to have this bill. Now, they have suggested that somehow there are some changes to the bill since it was originally announced and that that makes it acceptable, but they have not – not one has stood up and said: this is the specific change that has allowed me to change my opinion on this particular bill. [interjection] I see that there is a request for an intervention.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, hon. member. Yeah. I mean, my question and, I guess, the most obvious one hanging out there is:

what exactly was in there before that they changed somehow? I would be very concerned because, I mean, what we do see in here – right? – defies the division of democratic decision-making in a parliamentary Westminster system. That's still there. I mean, Lord knows what they took out, right? You know, the very existence of the bill, I would suggest, has a chilling effect on investment and the business community and just the confidence and the reputation of our province. Even the title, Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, seems like it sort of has a built-in excuse right into the title, like, oh, no, it wasn't like the Alberta separation thing that we were thinking about before; it's within the framework of something else. It feels like there's an excuse for this built right into the title of the bill. Then, of course, as you flip along, sure enough, it does subvert the Westminster system.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you very much for that intervention. It is interesting to imagine what was in this bill that was so horrendous that the fact that a bill that has come out that is both unconstitutional and against the rule of law and defying the traditional rules of Westminster democracy – if there was something worse than that in the bill before, then that's quite an amazing statement on the part of all of these ministers who stood up and said publicly to the citizens of the province of Alberta that this was a terrible bill. Somehow they don't think it's terrible now that they're actually challenging the rule of law, challenging Westminster democracy, and challenging the right of citizens to have a voice in the construction of laws in this province.

All of that is here in this bill. We know that because constitutional scholars have looked at this bill, and they say that, yes, we understand that this government has put in statements early in the bill saying, "Don't really listen to the rest of this bill," but it doesn't matter if you do that if, in fact, in the body of the bill you actually do defy the rule of law.

Let me give you one very specific example here, and that is section 2(c). Section 2(c) attempts to make the attempt to say that this does not undermine in any way treaty rights. But I just received a phone call from one of the chiefs, who went to their lawyers and said: does this protect us? And the constitutional lawyer who spoke to this treaty chief said quite clearly: no, it does not. It does not clearly say that this law is secondary to treaty agreements that have existed prior to. It says that one should not assume this law subverts, but again that clause has no standing in terms of limiting the effects of the rest of the bill.

That's exactly what the chiefs are concerned about. You know, the chiefs have repeatedly said – for example, Chief Tony Alexis said: please have this government hold off on passing the sovereignty act at least until the next election. Why? So that there can be a discussion about what is proceeding.

The grand chief of Treaty 8 has said that this law undermines the authority and duty of the sovereign nations that entered into treaty. There are repeated statements. I can tell you that I have had more phone calls and more messages from chiefs across this province who are saying that this is a devastatingly terrible bill, and it is clear that they are concerned that this is really intended to take rights away from Indigenous people.

In speaking to one of the grand chiefs just this morning, the grand chief reminded me about Bill 1 under the previous UCP Premier, which was designed to prevent people from protesting on public lands. He then reminded me that even though this government had brought in that bill, when there was a protest at the Coutts border crossing for many, many days and, in fact, there was significant illegal activity, including the accusation of illegal arms happening at that border crossing, the government did not use that Bill 1 in order to be able to stop the terrible activities happening at the Coutts border crossing, which were destroying the economy.

I need to get to the point on this. He said: we learned at that time that that bill was written only to take rights away from Indigenous people, that it was not being used against non-Indigenous people. The bill was there, but it was not being used at the time. He said: so now we are in this position where the Bill 1 being brought in by this Premier is again saying, "Oh, no; this is about one thing," but in fact it is designed to subvert the treaty rights of Indigenous people in this province. They know that. They say: we have learned that from the experience of this government, and we are not going to allow them to proceed in this way. The things they're concerned about have been spoken about by this government, so they know that they're right.

They know that what this government is concerned about is that the federal government sometimes enacts laws around issues that may affect life here in Alberta. For example, they may enact laws that protect the environment. But this government doesn't like it because they're afraid that if you protect the environment, you might take something away from the oil and gas economy.

What the chiefs are telling me is: "Ah, so what we're hearing, then, is that any time the federal government wants to protect our lands, our air, and our water, this government will say that it doesn't count in Alberta, and our lands and our air and our water will not be protected by this government." [interjection] I see that there is a request for an intervention.

4:00

Member Loyola: Thank you, Member, for that. I just want to make it explicitly clear, and I'm hoping that you can shed some more light on this. Even though Indigenous communities are so focused on protecting our environment – the water, air, the land – as you pointed out, at the same time we can have economic development. Not only that, but at the same time I'm sure that you're hearing from these chiefs that it's essential that Indigenous people be treated with respect as we build that strong, resilient economy for all Albertans and that they must be included in that. Yes, it's true, as you have been pointing out, the insights from the different chiefs that you have described already is that somehow in the past economic activity has actually left Indigenous communities out, not being able to benefit from the resources that they have a right to under treaty.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, just a kind reminder that interventions are also to come through the chair.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the intervention; thank you. I think that helps to highlight what the concerns are. The chiefs have said to me repeatedly: we are in favour of economic development; we just want to be part of it. But when they want to be part of it, they say: we approach it as a complex issue. That is, economic development must also protect the resources and the land on which that economic development is made so that we can pass on not only economic benefits to our children, but we can pass on the very land on which those economic benefits are derived. That is what the chiefs are saying. You need to be able to do both.

So if this government is creating an act that would allow them to say, "No, we're only going to do one of two things; we're only going to do the stuff that helps us to make money, but we're not going to do stuff to help us protect the future of our province and the well-being of the future generations," then the chiefs are not interested in participating. They want to be at the table, but they want to be at the table as full participants. They clearly feel that this government has found a way to undermine their rights in the future, and they're very worried about it.

You can say what you want about me standing up in the House and talking about it, but I defy you to go and talk to the First Nations and tell them that they're wrong. They are very mad about it, all across this province. I have never seen a situation where at the AOTC all of the chiefs stood up and said: we are against this act. This has really united the First Nations in this province in a way that very little else has up until this time. As a result, this government is going to have very serious consequences moving forward. [interjection] I see that there is a request for intervention.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Member. I have much to say on this as well, but I just wanted to take a moment. Not unlike, to a different extent, the initiatives or negotiations that are happening between the provincial government and the federal government and our treaties – of course, we also have other levels of elected officials who are trying to work within this, specifically when we look at the idea of investing and economic stability. I have real concerns, somewhat laid out here in the legislation under resolutions, section 3. We see: “If, on a motion of a member of Executive Council, the Legislative Assembly approves a resolution that” – we see here under (ii) – “causes or is anticipated to cause harm to Albertans.” That’s very concerning when we consider negotiations that often happen, whether we’re talking about LRT investments, whether we’re talking about investments into housing initiatives across the province. This legislation is potentially going to have consequences.

Thank you.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Member. I think that’s an excellent point, and it happens to address exactly one of the other things one of the First Nations individuals I spoke with just this morning was saying, that this government is saying: we’re only going to use this when we feel like our interests are somehow being maligned by the federal government. The particular phrase that this person brought forward to me was the fact that this government is saying that they will be defending public interest. What she said to me was: our experience is that whenever this government says “public interest,” they do not mean First Nation interest; they mean their interest, interest of their particular group. There is no appropriate definition of what is public interest here in this act that allows them to feel comfortable that their concerns and their interests will be protected and supported.

They certainly don’t think that this government has demonstrated in the past that they care about the treaty rights and the land rights of Indigenous people. In fact, at the press conference at the AOTC, the Alberta organization of treaty chiefs, Chief Tony Alexis said that, quote, this bill sets up the province to allow extraction at any rate, completely unprotected. That’s the fear. It’s not my fear; it’s not me that’s making this point. These are the statements of the chiefs. They’re saying that nothing in this bill gives them confidence that their concerns will be protected, certainly that the concerns of a small group of people around the UCP have particular interests that they’re wanting to protect, but nothing in this bill says they’re going to protect the rights of people who are First Nations treaty people in this province.

They cannot trust this government. That is the clear and specific concern that they are bringing forward, and they are saying that they cannot support this bill. They have not been consulted on this bill, they are very upset about this bill, and there has been no attempt since they came out 14 days ago against this bill – there’s been no attempt – to resolve this issue and to withdraw the bill until the rights of treaty people have been protected in this province.

How can they have faith? Their experience with this government from the original Bill 1 under the previous Premier was that the government really isn’t very much interested in the rights of

Indigenous people to protect their rights, to protest, to cause blockades. They know a bill was written that was not used against non-Indigenous people, so obviously it was simply written to be used only against Indigenous people. That’s what they’re telling me. That’s why I am standing up today and trying my best to convey the message given to me by the First Nations chiefs and many other members.

I met with elders this morning – there was a pipe ceremony this morning with elders from across the northern part of Alberta – and they all share the same thing. What they’re asking is exactly what we’re asking here in this reasoned amendment: stop this bill. Move this bill out of this Chamber, do the right work, protect the interest and the rights of treaty members of this province – we’re all treaty members; sorry – the First Nations treaty members in this province, and properly make sure that when you talk about defending the public interest here in Alberta, you actually are talking about First Nations people and not just sort of saying that, well, they’re Albertans too. They find that kind of statement very insulting. There was a specific reference made recently by one of the ministers along that line, and they were very insulted by it.

Don’t be saying: oh, yeah, we’re protecting all Albertans; oh, yeah, they’re Albertans, too. They are First Nations people with First Nations rights. They are distinct and significant in the history of Canada, and they need to be protected in a particular manner moving forward. Their own ...

The Acting Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak to amendment RA1? I see the hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to speak in support of Bill 1, Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act, and against the referral amendment. One of the main reasons that we are bringing forward this bill is that we are compelled, in fact, to protect the economic well-being of Alberta.

4:10

The first recital of the act says that Alberta possesses “a unique culture and shared identity within Canada.” Mr. Speaker, what is the culture and identity of Alberta? Alberta is a land of freedom and prosperity. That is our culture and our identity. Freedom and prosperity is something the NDP will never quite understand, but freedom and prosperity is our inheritance and our heritage. Alberta is the best.

What did the NDP do to contribute to this? Mr. Speaker, they did nothing. In fact, they did damage to Alberta by referring to us as the embarrassing cousin. There are two fundamental issues with referring to Alberta as an embarrassing cousin. One is that our prosperity and freedom should be nothing ever to be ashamed of. It is part of our excellence; it is why individuals and families come from all over the world to Alberta to work, to live their lives, and to raise their families.

The other thing is that the former Premier referred to us as a cousin. That is the problem: the NDP feel that we are a cousin in this partnership when, in fact, we are an equal partner. They do not understand the fundamental relationship that we have in this country. Mr. Speaker, what is currently the greatest threat to our culture and identity, our freedom and prosperity? The morally and fiscally bankrupt socialist NDP Axis government is certainly a strong candidate. The purpose of this bill is to protect our economic well-being. Freedom and prosperity is the priority of this government, but we have to understand and remember that the federal government is inextricably connected to this, our economic well-being. It is naive to pretend otherwise, and the NDP are very naive.

It is an unfortunate necessity to protect Alberta, our freedom and prosperity, which the morally and fiscally bankrupt, hostile, socialist NDP-Trudeau Axis government seeks to undermine and attack. But, Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP against the act? Is it because Trudeau, Canada's first NDP Prime Minister, is their bosom buddy? Their BFF? They are confused. They do not understand Alberta. Socialism is an enemy to self-reliance. Socialism does not create prosperity; it undermines it. Do we honestly think that socialism attracts investment? Is that what they're trying to tell us, that socialism attracts investment? No.

The NDP occupation is proof positive. Under the NDP occupation there were fewer private sector jobs, not more.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order has been called.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bhullar-McCall.

Point of Order

Insulting Language

Mr. Sabir: I rise under 23(j). Referring to a democratically elected government of this province as an occupation: this word has been the subject of a point of order many times before. The Speaker of the House has warned this member multiple times to not use this word, but this member is deliberately using this word to create disorder in this House. I urge you, in light of previous caution provided by the Speaker, to rule this out of order to maintain order in this Chamber.

The Acting Speaker: The deputy House leader.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've been listening attentively to my friend's comments here throughout the course of this debate, and he has continued to stay on topic. His comments are relevant. They are truly a matter of debate. My friend references an alleged caution but cites no source for that. This is a matter of debate, and I would ask that you find that it is not a point of order and that you allow him to continue with his on-point, relevant comments.

The Acting Speaker: Do you have something different to add?

Mr. Stephan: Absolutely. Mr. Speaker, there many different interpretations of the word "occupation." I know that many business owners and hard-working Albertans felt that they were ignored, that their rights and freedoms and prosperity, frankly, were being undermined by this very horrible government that was in power.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, I am prepared to rule. At this time, again, I want to step forward and raise a caution for members of the House. I believe we have had discussions around the phrase "occupation" used in this House prior, and there have been cautions issued. I'd like to once again issue that caution to all members, to choose your words wisely, and let's continue with healthy debate.

The Member for Red Deer-South.

Debate Continued

Mr. Stephan: Sure. Under the NDP dictates there were fewer private-sector jobs. There were. When they came into being in government, over the four-year period the population of Alberta grew, yet at the end of their four years, when Albertans kicked them out, Mr. Speaker, when they were kicked out, there were fewer private-sector jobs. They are the job killers. They are the job killers. When they stand and talk about the economy, they were absolute failures, and the record shows it.

Mr. Speaker, not only that, but they scared away investment. They chased away billions of dollars of investment. Who likes to invest in a socialist country, in a socialist province? They don't want to do that. They chased away investment, and their record shows it.

Now, what I can say is that under our government our private sector is exploding. We are bringing in jobs. We are bringing in billions of dollars in investment. We are leading the nation in economic growth. We have a huge multibillion-dollar surplus.

Under this prior awful – awful – government, socialist government, we had multibillion-dollar deficits. They were a horrible government. They did a horrible job. I went and knocked on the doors of Albertans in my constituency, and I can tell you that I saw oil and gas workers who were out of work because of them, because of their destructive NDP dictates, them making us less competitive.

Mr. Speaker, I was a tax lawyer before I had the privilege to serve in this institution.

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order has been called.

Point of Order

Relevance

Mr. Sabir: This time it's 23(b), "speaks to matters other than the question under discussion." The question under discussion is that this bill will negatively impact investment decisions and it should not proceed in order to protect Alberta's well-being. The member has not said a word about this amendment and has gone on to say all kinds of things that are not relevant to this debate or should not even be said in this Assembly.

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, this is once again clearly not a point of order. I don't know what my learned friend was listening to, but I heard the hon. Member for Red Deer-South speaking about investment, comparing and contrasting the two different governments and the success of the UCP government in attracting private enterprise, private investment to this province and how the members opposite failed horribly in doing so. That is a matter of debate. It is relevant to the topic at hand, and I would submit to you that this is not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. members. You're making my first day in the chair lots of fun. Thank you.

I do want to say that I do not find this to be a point of order. It is a point of debate. However, I know that with regard to Bill 1 we have chatted about phrases like "staying in our own lanes," so I would encourage all members to make sure that they are staying in their lanes and debating the amendment that's at hand.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Debate Continued

Mr. Stephan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I have to say, the truth is hard to take. I don't know if this is hardly a matter of debate. In any event, they talked about chasing away investment. They were horrible. Our government is doing an excellent job.

4:20

Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand that we are succeeding not because of the federal government but in spite of it. You know, they are socialists. They are cousins to the NDP. They are part of the federal NDP socialist axis government. This act is an unfortunate necessity to protect Alberta, our freedom and prosperity, which the morally and fiscally bankrupt, hostile, socialist NDP axis government seeks to undermine and attack.

Business does not trust the NDP. The NDP does not know how to compete and excel in the real world. Socialism is a parasite. It is kryptonite to prosperity. Mr. Speaker, we must keep the NDP far away. I never did meet a business owner that thought the NDP did a good job.

The NDP need to put their straw man away and stop misrepresenting the act and then attacking the worst version of it manufactured of their misrepresentations, only existing in their imaginations. The NDP want to have us live in a universe of perpetual fear, and they want to force all of us to join them.

Why is the Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act necessary? Is it because many of us are concerned we are sleepwalking towards disaster? Yes. Is it because Canada is acting like a hostile, one-trillion-plus fiscal train wreck attacking Alberta, threatening to drag us down with it? Yes. Mr. Speaker, if Alberta was not part of Canada and was invited to join this rigged partnership under the current terms, would we join? No. Are we compelled to be a host in a parasitic relationship? No.

Mr. Speaker, this is a dysfunctional partnership. That is the truth. The purpose of this act is that, by bringing accountability as a fundamental principle, we can take a dysfunctional partnership and make it an effective and competitive partnership. Alberta is the rainmaker partner. A partnership that undermines and attacks its rainmaker partner would never survive in the real world. There are also some partners that game this partnership and take from Alberta families and businesses for political gain. That is a recipe for corruption. The moral foundation of such a partnership is eroding. A partnership where work is displaced by plunder as a ruling principle will never survive. We cannot be slothful. We cannot be neglectful. We cannot sit in a thoughtless stupor, like the members opposite. That is what the NDP would say, not understanding, sticking their heads in the sand.

A fundamental principle of this act is . . .

Mr. Sabir: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: A point of order has been called.

Point of Order Insulting Language

Mr. Sabir: Standing Order 23(j). The member continuously uses abusive language, garbage language, rubbish language that should be beneath this House. I think you provided the member with a caution, but he thinks it's funny to say things that are abusive, that will likely create disorder in this House. That's completely a waste of this House's time, not to listen to your caution. I urge you to rule these kinds of comments out of order so the member refrains from saying this again.

Mr. Amery: Mr. Speaker, once again not a point of order. My friend used some choice words, but let me use the synonyms for those words "thoughtless stupor": near unconsciousness or insensibility. What this means is that if my friend had used the word to call the members opposite insensible, there would be no point of order. If he said that they were near unconscious in their decision-making process, there would be no point of order. Those are the same exact words he used, albeit using different terms to refer to the members opposite. There is absolutely no point of order here. It is simply a matter of debate, and I would encourage my friends on the other side of this House to look at the thesaurus before raising points of order.

The Acting Speaker: Something additional to add?

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that sometimes you're caught in a difficult position having to figure out which way to rule on particular issues. I would draw your attention to a ruling earlier this day by the Speaker during question period when the opposition was comparing the government to the dictator of Russia, Mr. Putin, a man who has arguably been the cause of thousands and thousands of deaths. So I would argue that if we're going to be making rulings about what is a point of order and where it lands, we would consider an earlier ruling of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, I am prepared to rule. This has been a long 15-minute speech, and I don't remember any time in recent history that I've seen us rise on three points of order in one speech. I do want to . . .

Mr. Schmidt: Hey, did you forget about me?

The Acting Speaker: Oh, I forgot about the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. I apologize. I will not let that happen again.

I do choose to rule this as a point of order at this point. I think we are starting to get off the rails. In the future I would encourage the hon. Member for Red Deer-South to maybe refer to his thesaurus in front of him and the hon. Member for Calgary-Cross and choose his words a bit little more wisely. I do find this a point of order, and I will ask the hon. member to continue with decorum.

Thank you.

Debate Continued

Mr. Stephan: Sure. I rise and apologize for using the words "thoughtless stupor."

Mr. Speaker, this act holds the federal government to account for laws and actions that intrude into provincial areas of jurisdiction or attack the interests of Alberta. Doesn't Ottawa seek to do indirectly what constitutionally it is not allowed to do directly such as with Alberta's constitutional authority over its oil and gas resources? Didn't Alberta's Court of Appeal describe Trudeau's carbon tax as a sneaky "constitutional Trojan horse"? Yes. Isn't Trudeau proposing a new carbon tax or cap and trade that singles out and disproportionately punishes Alberta? Yes. Wouldn't that inflict more economic chaos, chasing out additional billions in investment and Alberta jobs with it? Yes.

How have sternly worded letters served us? Isn't the purpose of this act to assert and defend constitutional parameters that Ottawa habitually ignores and attacks? Yes. Ottawa recently released a discussion paper seeking to limit or impose additional carbon taxes on oil and gas development. Mr. Speaker, this is not an isolated incident. This is a pattern of hostile behaviour from Ottawa seeking to attack and take advantage of Alberta, holding us back. Under section 92A of the Constitution Act, Alberta has jurisdiction over its natural resources, not Ottawa. This act should be invoked to tell Ottawa to take their discussion paper and stuff it and leave Alberta and their constitutional jurisdiction alone. The unfortunate truth is that Ottawa has made itself . . .

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members, it is 4:30, and pursuant to Standing Order 4(2) the House stands adjourned until 1:30 on Monday afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 30th Legislature - 4th Session (2022)

Activity to Thursday, December 1, 2022

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 — Alberta Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act (Danielle Smith)

First Reading — 4-5 (*Nov. 29, 2022 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 22-31 (*Nov. 30, 2022 aft.*), 43-52 (*Nov. 30, 2022 eve.*), 65-73 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft., adjourned on amendment*)

Bill 201 — Public Health Care Delivery Standards Act (Notley)

First Reading — 64 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft., passed on division*)

Bill 202 — Alberta Personal Income Tax (Charitable and Other Gifts) Amendment Act, 2022 (Williams)

First Reading — 64 (*Dec. 1, 2022 aft., passed*)

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