



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, November 22, 2016

Day 50

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 29th Legislature**

Second Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker  
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)	Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (ND)
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)	MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)	Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)	Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Government House Leader
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND), Deputy Government House Leader	McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret, Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (ND)
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Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)	McKitrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND)
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Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)	Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (ND)	Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (ND)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W), Official Opposition House Leader	Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
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Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W), Official Opposition Deputy Whip	Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), Premier
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)	Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (W)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)	Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (ND)	Payne, Hon. Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition Whip	Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (ND)
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (ND)	Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (ND)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)	Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W)
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND)	Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W)	Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND)	Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)	Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (ND)	Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (ND)
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (PC)	Schneider, David A., Little Bow (W)
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (ND)	Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (ND)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)	Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (ND)
Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND)	Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (ND)
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader	Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)
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Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND)	Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)	Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND)
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (ND)	Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (W), Leader of the Official Opposition	Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
Kleinstuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)	van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)	Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND), Deputy Government Whip
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)	Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)

**Party standings:**

New Democrat: 55      Wildrose: 22      Progressive Conservative: 8      Alberta Liberal: 1      Alberta Party: 1

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Oneil Carlier	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
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David Eggen	Minister of Education
Richard Feehan	Minister of Indigenous Relations
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Danielle Larivee	Minister of Municipal Affairs
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Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
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Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Human Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
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Kazim	

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon. Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

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

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former member of the Alberta Real Estate Association it is indeed my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 68 members from the Alberta Real Estate Association. The association represents the interests of more than 10,000 realtors from across Alberta. They're here to attend question period and will be hosting an MLA reception later tonight at the Matrix Hotel. Please join me in welcoming the association and let them receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, and welcome. I understand that there may even be a member here from the republic of Medicine Hat.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. The first is a school group. I don't think that they have joined us yet, but there are 38 folks in total with us today. They are visiting from the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. It is the Prairie Christian Academy. They are led by their teacher, Michael Robertson, who is a significant volunteer for the TUXIS youth parliament as well. I'd ask that if they are here, they would rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, are there any other school groups today? The hon. member.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure indeed to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly three classes of students from the marvellous constituency of Edmonton-McClung, joined by teachers Danielle Flook, Bob Shulko, and Paola O'Connor as well as parent helpers Amel El Sayah and Nina Gerhardt. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

**Ms Jabbour:** Mr. Speaker, on your behalf I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly four guests visiting the Legislature today in recognition of the eighth anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act. They are seated in your gallery: Slavka Shulakewych, the provincial co-ordinator of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Alberta Provincial Council; Yarema Shulakewych; Natalia Talanchuk, a survivor of Holodomor; and Orysia Talanchuk, Mrs. Talanchuk's daughter. I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to all those present who attended today's Holodomor ceremony. Our guests have risen, and I'd ask that they all receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this House

members of the board of family and community support services, aka FCSS. FCSS President Arnold Hanson is also a councillor from Beaver county and a cow-calf producer. He's also joined by Vice-president Vicki Van Vliet Vaitkunas, Cathy Needham, Janet Wilkinson, and Executive Director Deb Teed. FCSS programs have been leaders in addressing local needs and working collaboratively to create conditions that foster social well-being in 319 municipalities and Métis settlements across the province. They've recently celebrated their 50th anniversary. I thank these members of the FCSS board for their ongoing contribution to Alberta and Albertans, and I ask them to please rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome. I know it's hard to believe in my young life that I would have had that much experience, but I'm proud to say that it was that program that kept me in Alberta for such a long time. Some would say that wasn't good.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my hon. colleague from St. Albert I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you honoured guests from Concordia University's business and government course: Dr. Alison Yacyshyn, chair of the Concordia school of management, and Mr. Liam Connelly, adjunct professor. Also in attendance are Concordia students Emily Robbins, Brandon Vollweiler, Sami Ayyaz, Breanna Grolway, Melyssa Barakat, Emma Neufeld, Alexander Roihjert, and Theodore Krein. Please join me in welcoming them and let them receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Barnes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you three hard-working people I know very well from Cypress-Medicine Hat and from Medicine Hat. Not only do they help families find homes and build communities, but they spend considerable time making the real estate profession better for all, including the general public. I know this first-hand because I had the pleasure and the privilege of working with all three of them at great length in my last career. First, I'd like to ask Tim Seitz to rise, the president of the Medicine Hat Real Estate Board. Then I'd like to ask Jeff Lanigan to rise, the political action representative for the Medicine Hat Real Estate Board. Then, third, I'd like to ask Randeem Bray to rise, the executive officer of the Medicine Hat Real Estate Board. Please accept the traditional warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

**Ms Goehring:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you Trevor Buttery and Sara Sarbar. Trevor is a practicum student from MacEwan University in the social work program. He's in his first year and has been an outstanding addition to our team. Sara Sarbar is a new part-time constituency assistant in my office. Her sense of humour, inquiring mind, and meaningful service of constituents are invaluable. Thank you so much to both of you for joining our team. I appreciate all of your hard work. I'd ask that you now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-South East.

**Mr. Fraser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to rise and introduce to you and through you Amber Stewart. Amber is the Calgary board of education trustee for wards 12 and 14. She is the dedicated wife of Alan Stewart and the mother of three beautiful children: Isabelle, Kyla, and Kendra. Amber has been an excellent advocate for Calgary-South East families. She is a good friend, and I'm honoured to represent her as her MLA. If I could ask Amber to rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

1:40

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House Andre Tinio. Andre is a fourth-year student at the University of Calgary, and he has a bachelor's degree in arts, majoring in sociology and minoring of music from the University of Alberta already. Andre is presently completing his bachelor of social work degree. He is carrying out his field placement in the Edmonton-Riverview constituency office and will be there until the end of December, or maybe it's the beginning of December, actually. I just want to thank him so much for his energy and enthusiasm. We have appreciated his contributions so greatly. Andre is seated in the members' gallery. I ask him to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

**Mr. Panda:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce Mr. Emery Pritchard, who is my constituent. He is also chief information officer with Drift Production Services Ltd. During times of fire and flood Mr. Pritchard's company stands at the ready with heavy equipment and manpower to assist Albertans at the call of AEMA. Mr. Pritchard is Métis and has assisted me greatly with my annual food bank drive in Calgary-Foothills. With Emery is Curt Gossenberger, emergency operations co-ordinator for R&R Rentals of Red Deer. Both of them are here today attending the Alberta Emergency Management Agency conference in Edmonton. I ask both of them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome from all of my colleagues here.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Greenway.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly one of my best friends, Mr. Sanjit Singh. He is the president of the Appraisal Institute of Canada, Alberta's chapter, and he owns one of the realty appraising firms in Calgary. I'm proud to call him one of my best friends, and I cherish his friendship a lot. I now would like him to rise and receive the traditional welcome of this House.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Cooper:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you a young lady who contacted me just last week by the name of Jorja Fisher. Jorja is a grade 6 student at Senator Patrick Burns school in Calgary. She's doing a project called "taking action." In this project they need to research a concern that they are worried about and then try to help fix that concern. Her concern is the Alberta economy and getting pipelines to tidewater. She is here today to watch question period and see how she can be part of taking action. I invite her to rise. She's joined by her mother and father, Joe and Chelsey Fisher, and her grandfather Gary Frost.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other visitors today?

**Mr. Panda:** Mr. Speaker, I have two more constituents. Mr. Sanjit Singh is also my constituent. I also have Robyn Moser, who is a realtor and long-time member of RECA. She is on the council. I ask her to rise and receive the warm welcome.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Any more visitors? The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by congratulating you on your most excellent new mo.

I want to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly Mr. Brian Reinboldt. He is a realtor with Royal LePage, from the most conservative constituency of Strathmore-Brooks. He is here with his colleagues from the area today. I ask that my colleagues would give him the warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

## Members' Statements

### Harassment and Women in Politics

**Ms Jansen:** "What a traitorous bitch." "You both are a disgrace to Alberta, lying bitches." "Now you have two blonde bimbos in that party that are clueless." "Another useless tit goes NDP." "Dead meat." "Sandra should stay in the kitchen where she belongs." "Fly with the crows [and] get shot." "Dumb broad. A good place for her to be is with the rest of the queers."

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to make a simple request of my colleagues. To all of the honourable colleagues in this House: if you are stunned by the words you have heard in the last few days, if you reject the inherent violence behind them and you know that harassment and abuse, even if it's verbal, even if it's online, and even if it's directed at a political opponent is poison, let us be strong and clear in our resolve that no matter where we sit along political lines, we stand together against this. In our words, in our actions every day from all sides if we don't feed it, we must oppose it. Please oppose it. Don't ignore it. Don't look the other way. Don't excuse it. Our daughters are watching us. They are watching the challenges facing women in politics today. Imagine if we let that poison become normalized or if our daughters forgo the political arena altogether. That scares me.

I am so proud to have joined a pragmatic, centrist government which has a place for moderate women. Together we will fight for women. We will fight against this language of harassment and violence, and I hope everyone in this House fights it, too.

Thank you. [Standing ovation]

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. Member for Airdrie.

### Deaths of Children in Care

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Wildrose called on this Legislature to undertake an emergency debate on children who are dying in care. This debate was prompted by the recent Child and Youth Advocate's report on the case of Serenity, a four-year-old girl who was starved, beaten, sexually assaulted, and suffering from hypothermia when she died from a brain injury in September 2014. This was the opportunity for the government to outline the actions that they have taken to address this problem and

also to detail what their next steps forward will be. Unfortunately, this is not what happened.

I was especially disappointed when the minister of indigenous affairs blamed provincial opposition parties for failing to acquire adequate federal funding on reserves and then insisted this problem could be addressed by throwing more money at a broken system. This is not acceptable, and Alberta's children expect and deserve more.

The people of Alberta are looking for leadership in a system that has failed to make badly needed changes, where kids are dying. We need someone to stop passing the buck and to ensure that children's safety is a priority for this government. Kinship care, foster care, and the child welfare system as a whole need action now.

The advocate's report clearly states that there are systemic problems, which government can no longer ignore. For instance, the home study program relies heavily on self-reporting by the applicants, and there is no requirement to attend training or counselling. Here is just one area the minister can take action on immediately. It is time for this NDP government to stop paying lip service on the recommendations and start taking action.

No one is directly blaming this government for causing harm to children, but we are asking for accountability. There have been 15 deaths and several recommendations which have been accepted by this government. It is time for results. Let's honour past victims, prevent future atrocities because that's what we as MLAs are here to do.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, it's just been brought to my attention that the – I will address this issue at a future time in the agenda.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Official Opposition.

#### Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement

**Mr. Jean:** There used to be a time when the NDP cared about the working men and women across this province, but now they are more worried about winning the approval from a group of elites and bureaucrats in Ottawa. It's been over a year since this Premier announced that 10,000 coal jobs will be destroyed in this province but still has shown no long-term plan for the people who will be losing work. This government promised a report from their \$600,000 man, Terry Boston, on how they'll shut down coal in Alberta. When can Albertans expect to see that report?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe Albertans can expect to see that report on Thursday.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Jean:** Thank you. The NDP has found time to fly to Paris, to Morocco, but they haven't found time to visit communities like Hanna and Parkland county. They haven't taken the time to look in the faces of the people who are now losing hope because this government does not have their backs. I can understand the Premier's hesitation given that whenever the NDP stands in front of rural communities they get booed, but will the Premier commit to personally attending public meetings in towns like Hanna, Grande Cache, and Forestburg to see the damage her policies are having on people's lives? Yes or no?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite knows, our government has appointed a panel to look into the matter of how we can orchestrate a just transition, a fair transition as the province moves off coal at an accelerated level beginning in 2030. That panel has been established. It has begun its work, and it will be travelling to all those communities very early in the new year.

**Mr. Jean:** That must be a no, Mr. Speaker.

Ontario's Energy minister is warning about the dangers of taking coal offline. A shutdown of our coal sector will either mean massive rate increases for consumers or higher tax increases to subsidize industry. The NDP admitted as much today by putting a cap that's twice the size of the current regulated rate. They're trying to control future rate increases after scaring away all the investment from Alberta. It shows no one in this government understands basic economics. Why are we not fighting Ottawa to protect coal jobs that can help keep Albertans' power bills low?

**Ms Notley:** Oh, Mr. Speaker, there is so much failure to understand that is embedded in that question. It's really hard to pick which place to start, but let me say that one of the things that is causing volatility in our market is the fact that under the previous federal government, of which the member opposite was a part, 60 per cent of our coal was going to come offline anyway. Interestingly, when we took over government, we discovered that there was no plan to replace that coal or the generation of it, so there's a great deal of work that has to be done to correct a broken system, and in the course of doing that, we are going to make sure that the fundamental principle is that consumers be . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Premier.  
Second main question.

#### Energy Industry Competitiveness

**Mr. Jean:** Albertans are hurting a lot right now, and the NDP government is not helping at all. Today the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors announced that 2016 has been one of the worst years on record for the industry, and 2017 won't be much better. Wells drilled are actually expected to be 58 per cent lower than in 2014. The industry is saying loud and clear that a carbon tax will make it more difficult for this industry to succeed, especially when the United States, our biggest competitor, won't have one. Why is the Premier then committed to a policy that makes things worse for drillers all across Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I think that it is important to remember that the period of time that the member is comparing to is when the price of oil was twice what it is right now, so I think that might have something to do with the drop, but that being said, it is absolutely critically important that this province and this industry reposition itself as the modern, progressive industry that it is, that can compete on an international basis, understanding that we have accepted and acted on the issues of climate change but can still balance a good, responsible oil and gas development and economy as a result.

**Mr. Jean:** Well, there was some good news for one western province in today's report. It said that Saskatchewan is leading any recovery in the sector. It's the same forecast put out by the Petroleum Services Association of Canada last month, who predicted that Saskatchewan will have more wells drilled than

Alberta. These are jobs that should be going to men and women who are out of work in Alberta right now, but NDP policies, these policies of this government, are pushing them away. How can the Premier excuse Alberta's energy sector falling behind Saskatchewan's?

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is playing fast and loose with little phrases from the reports because, in fact, there is over five times the investment in oil and gas in Alberta relative to Saskatchewan, and there is more investment in oil and gas in Alberta than the rest of the country combined. But – you know what? – the other thing that's really interesting is that in Alberta after the climate levy is imposed, we will still have a \$7.5 billion advantage over our neighbours to the east.

**Mr. Jean:** Here's some advice for this government from the head of CAODC, Mark Scholz. "To achieve a healthy oil and gas industry, governments must . . . consider the cumulative costs of doing business in Canada versus other global jurisdictions." It's good advice, especially when we know our biggest competitor, the United States, won't have a carbon tax. But the NDP continues to ignore this advice. A carbon tax and an antienergy agenda will only hurt Albertans already in need of so much help. Why does the Premier insist on making things so much worse for all Albertans?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that this province and our industry needs to be able to diversify its markets from not just being reliant on our neighbours to the south. They've gone from being our biggest customers to being our biggest competitors. One of the ways to do that is to fix the reputation, which, unfortunately, under the previous government, has not been particularly helpful to energy industry leaders here in Alberta. So we have done that, and we have done that with the support of many leaders in the energy industry, and we will continue to reposition our economy as the modern, progressive economy that we are.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Premier.  
Third main question.

#### Investigations of Deaths of Children in Care

**Mr. Jean:** We now know that almost two years after Serenity died, her autopsy report was finally completed. A Justice spokesman said that the delay was because the case was highly complex. I agree. The death of a four-year-old in care who was physically and sexually abused and suffered severe head trauma is complex, but it also deserves more than a postponed report that may never come to light without media pressure and that won't be released publicly. What assurances can the Premier give that the secrecy surrounding Serenity's death isn't the default of this government?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the question by the member opposite because we're all very, very concerned and troubled by all the facts, and I appreciate the effort that everyone put into debating and discussing this yesterday in the House. The fact of the matter is that the children's advocate typically has the information and publishes most of the information. That's as a result of actions from people on this side of the House. But on top of that, in this particular case we will await the request and the direction of the RCMP with respect to the release of further information because we do not in any way want to compromise the work that they're doing.

**Mr. Jean:** The safety of children in care must be this government's top priority, but that doesn't seem to be how it works. Serenity died

in September 2014. It is obvious that a crime has been committed. An autopsy was performed shortly after, within a year for certain, but somehow it takes two years for the autopsy report to be completed and sent to the police. Has this case been investigated in the last two years? We don't know. Has any progress been made? We don't know. Will the Premier commit to finding out why the horrific death of this little girl wasn't a priority for the various parts of her government?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is correct in that the final report was not completed until much later because of the complexities that he alludes to. But he should also know that the medical examiner was in touch with the RCMP with respect to preliminary findings within days of receiving the information and has been in touch with them throughout. In terms of the progress of the investigation, that is a matter for the police to deal with independently from those of us in this House.

**Mr. Jean:** Serenity's death is obviously not a partisan or political issue. This is about finding justice for Serenity, fixing a broken system, and making sure that what happened to her never happens again. What we need are solutions, and so far we haven't seen any at all. The Human Services minister said last week that he accepted the child advocate's recommendations, but we need more than that. Will the Premier be accountable and commit to making public the detailed changes that have been made to the system because of what it learned from Serenity's tragic death?

2:00

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we absolutely will do that. There are reviews under way internally, and as that information is completed, that would become public as a matter of course. In addition, it's important to understand that work has already begun within the ministry. It began after this horrible, tragic event. It began well before our government was elected to ensure that some of the problems that were identified are improved upon. But it doesn't mean that it's all better. It doesn't mean that there isn't still work to do. It doesn't mean that front-line workers aren't working as hard as they possibly can with these tragic events over and over and over again. It does mean that we all have to come up with ways in which we can support the work that they do.

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party.

#### Electric Power Prices

**Mr. McIver:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. This NDP government's all-out war on Alberta business continues. Today the Premier declared profit a dirty word by limiting the price on electricity. The Premier seems unaware that today's low prices are the result of competition and that an artificial price cap will limit investment and, by extension, limit that competition. Combined with the carbon tax costs, this will surely make Alberta the worst place in Canada to generate power. To the Premier: why are you doing everything in your power to run these companies, many of which are owned by taxpayers, out of business?

**Ms Notley:** Well, I think, first of all, Mr. Speaker, it's clear to me that the member opposite doesn't understand the announcement that we made today. We are not doing anything to interfere with individual businesses, with people that provide these services within the market to consumers. What we are doing as the government, though, is capping the degree to which families have



to pay volatile energy prices because of the folks over there thinking that every family wants to be a spot trader expert. That is not what Alberta families want. They want consistency, predictability, and affordability in their utilities, and that is what our government will deliver.

**Mr. McIver:** Alberta's electricity customers have had reliability and good prices until this government messed it up. The government set a hard cap at 6.8 cents, which is about twice as high as what Albertans are paying now. Thanks for all the help. You know what? They wouldn't have put a cap on if they didn't believe their policies were going to drive prices even higher. Did the government do an impact assessment before making these dangerous moves, how much are prices going to skyrocket, and when will you share the information with Albertans? Or were you just guessing?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, there's so much in there that it's really hard to sort of figure out which part that is incorrect to focus on. In any event, what we are doing is providing certainty for consumers. This in no way impacts what generators or providers would get for the energy that they produce.

Let me just say that it is outrageous that the member opposite would say that their system provided stability in volatility. In 2012 it went up to 15 cents, a \$70-a-month shift in their bill in one month.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Premier.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Premier recently apologized for causing high electricity prices, and our Premier is going down a similar path. Alberta power generation companies are going to be bleeding profits from the carbon tax and the shutdown of coal generation. You're further knee-capping these companies by dictating how much they can charge. Premier, are you attempting to beat these companies into submission so you can reregulate them to conform to NDP ideology, like Ontario has done and then apologized for?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that in Ontario there was an acknowledgement that they kind of lost focus on who the most important player in all this was, which were the citizens and the consumers and the customers. That's exactly where our focus is. Unlike the folks over there, we start by making sure that people have reliable, predictable, affordable utility prices because that's what families in Alberta need.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

#### Foster and Kinship Care Supports

**Mr. Clark:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the wake of the tragic death of Serenity, Albertans are looking for answers. They want to know why she was left in the care of people who starved and assaulted her to the point of death, they want to know who will be held accountable and when, and most of all they want to know that it won't happen again. One of the problems highlighted by the Child and Youth Advocate is the lack of support for foster parents, especially in kinship care. To the Minister of Human Services: without changing the topic and telling us that some other party would do something different, why did your government cut funding for foster care support by \$3.5 million? Your government.

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. First, I would say that we didn't cut funding for Human Services. We increased funding for Human Services, stabilized funding. Secondly, in terms of foster care and kinship care we accepted the recommendations that came out of the specific review. We have accepted every single recommendation. We are tracking progress, which is available on the Human Services website, what actions have been taken.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. More than anything else, Albertans want to know that this is not going to happen again. After cutting the foster care budget, you did make an increase. You increased the intervention budget by \$25 million. Well, no wonder. If support and training isn't there, intervention is going to be needed. To the minister again: why are you short-changing prevention and only funding intervention after the damage is done?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Since 2012 there is a new practice framework. There was the signs of safety program approach. That helped us reduce the caseload; hence, the caseload in foster care and kinship care. Services were diverted more to family reunification and strengthening of families; hence, those adjustments between those budget lines. Overall, the budget for child intervention was increased by \$37 million. So that is wrong, that we cut anything from Human Services.

**Mr. Clark:** It's right there in the budget, Mr. Speaker: \$3.5 million down for foster care supports.

One of the most troubling aspects is the fact that there was little or no oversight from Alberta's child welfare system after Serenity was placed in kinship care. This was in spite of repeated requests from her mother that the government investigate the mistreatment of Serenity and her siblings. Albertans want to know why this happened, who is responsible, and, most of all, that it won't happen again. Again to the minister: has anyone within Human Services been held accountable, and what changes, if any, have been made inside your own department in the 18 months since you've become minister?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. A couple of things. This case has been looked into from two different angles. From a systemic review perspective the Child and Youth Advocate has reviewed it. We have accepted recommendations. These are systemic recommendations. We will act on those recommendations. And as the Premier mentioned, there is still an active investigation. Nobody here is an expert. The experts are dealing with that investigation, and in due course we will share the result of that investigation.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

#### School Nutrition Program

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a teacher and an educational psychologist with many years of experience I know that students who are healthy and happy are better able to learn and

acquire the skills they need to prepare them for their futures. To the Minister of Education: how will the 14 newly announced nutrition pilot programs impact schools this year?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Education.

**Mr. Eggen:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed this is a very important question. Last week I had the pleasure of being a part of this very important announcement. We identified 14 school boards to participate in the pilot project, and they were given a grant to develop their own creative solutions to school nutrition in one or more schools. We know that students cannot focus on learning if they're hungry, so a program like this will help students across the province to reach their full learning potential.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that I understand that schools were given flexibility in the first year of the program, to the same minister: did this approach lead to innovation and partnerships within the pilot programs?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you very much for the question. Schools have adapted the program to best meet the needs of their students. Edmonton public, for example, used their partnership with E4C. [interjections] I think maybe the opposition should listen to us. It's actually very important to deal with this.

Calgary Catholic is using brown bags, kids' Meals on Wheels. Medicine Hat schools are using the greenhouses to teach children a seed-to-table science program – quite a number of different programs based on creativity and making sure that we have the best learning outcomes and nutrition outcomes in our schools.

2:10

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we know that there's a great deal of need for a school nutrition program, to the same minister: will this program grow in the years ahead?

**Mr. Eggen:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. This program has \$3.5 million this year. It's a start. [interjections] Maybe the opposition thinks this is a funny thing, but it's a serious issue. I wish they would not be laughing while I'm doing this. Thank you very much.

We're growing the program next year, and then we'll grow it again within a couple of years. Each of the 87 school boards will have a school nutrition project.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

### Electricity Power Purchase Agreements

**Mr. MacIntyre:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recently received a FOIP document that shows that government incompetence is costing Albertans millions. Enmax surrendered the Battle River PPA to the Balancing Pool, and the pool can keep the PPA and suffer a \$245 million loss or pay \$100 million and be done with it. Seven months have gone by, and most of the Balancing Pool directors have quit. We wonder: did the government interfere in this easy decision to save \$145 million?

**The Speaker:** The Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the important question. I have to agree that the

previous government sold out Albertans over and over again by pretending to take risk and share it among both parties but transferring it all onto individual consumers. Today our government is stepping up, and we're taking real action to protect consumers, both personal and small industrial, because it's important that we get a fair rate for our electricity.

**Mr. MacIntyre:** Given that Albertans should be concerned that 4 out of 5 experts on the Balancing Pool board have abruptly resigned and given that the minister hasn't told us why, Albertans are asking: is it because of reckless, ill-informed, and damaging interference from the minister such as carelessly costing Albertans \$145 million, or is it worse? Is it the systematic destruction of the independence of the Balancing Pool, now to be replaced by ideological decisions from a cabinet that doesn't understand the electricity system at all?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Energy.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, there's been one resignation, the chair of the board, where no reason was given. There was one who chose not to run. In the meantime we have been recruiting for other people, and we will have someone in place before the end of the resignation date, which is November 30.

**Mr. MacIntyre:** We all know the damage the NDP's absurd decision to take Alberta-owned power companies to court is having on Alberta. Given that the mayor of Calgary called claims by the government that they are close to reaching a deal with Enmax completely false and seeing as Enmax has said it's false, too, why are the Premier and her government suggesting in public that they are close to reaching a deal? Are Enmax and Mayor Nenshi lying, or is it this government?

**The Speaker:** The Deputy Premier. Please proceed.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Power companies in Alberta deserve to have a fair opportunity to make good profits, and that's certainly what we want to do, make sure that we've got a fair system moving forward. We've mentioned previously that we're happy to work with the companies that were trying to return these PPAs to develop a fair and reasonable system that will protect Albertans. No matter what, we're going to ensure that we have Albertans' backs. I wish anybody on the other side would attempt to do the same, other than you guys. You guys are my favourite.

**The Speaker:** Calgary-Greenway.

### Energy Policies

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past week saw the gathering of many of Alberta's municipal officials for the meeting of the AAMD and C. The Deputy Premier was told that the carbon tax and the early phase-out of coal would be devastating for the community of Stettler county. When a concerned citizen asked for assistance from the provincial government in paying the ruinous costs of the carbon tax, the Deputy Premier laughed. Shame. To the Deputy Premier: do you find it amusing that your government's policies are threatening the very existence of some of our rural communities?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we have reached out to many of the communities that the hon. member is talking about from Hanna to Grande Cache. They have been reached out to by the minister of economic development, who is, of

course, leading this transition conversation. You know, when we took over, there were 12 plants that were slated for decommissioning under the previous federal government's coal regulations, regulations that, of course, the Leader of the Official Opposition voted for, and we discovered, to our horror, that the previous government had no plan to engage the communities that were affected by those regulations.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
First supplemental.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this government insists that they are listening to our rural communities and given that only 8 out of 18 ministers, less than half, actually bothered to show up to the AAMD and C – let me try it again. To the Deputy Premier again: if you are being honest about your government's commitment to actually listen to the valuable feedback from the communities hit hardest by your policy, why is it that so many ministers refused to actually show up and be accountable?

**The Speaker:** The Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. The time that we have those conferences is periodically throughout the year, twice a year. During that very same time we had the minister of economic development with 80 Alberta-based companies over in Asia trying to sell Alberta businesses and get good access for our products. We also had ministers standing up and leading on climate change, speaking at international environmental conferences. We're going to do work on behalf of all Albertans. I'm proud to be one of the cabinet ministers who was there to answer questions, and I look forward to having more opportunities to engage with rural communities at AAMD and C or otherwise.

**Mr. Gill:** A sorry would have been nice.

Given that our municipal leaders are clearly losing faith in this government's willingness to listen to their concerns, as evidenced by the audible booing that accompanied the Deputy Premier's defending their ill-conceived carbon tax, and given that the province should be trying to maintain a respectful relationship with the municipalities, again to the Deputy Premier: will you try to get this government back to a place where your municipal officials can trust and believe it when you say that you're committed to listening and stop this punitive carbon tax?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

**Mr. Mason:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Noted.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, first of all, I will not be booed, Mr. Speaker, in the exercise of my work.

**The Speaker:** I think the booing phenomenon is not acceptable in this House, and I expect all members to listen to what I'm saying in that respect.

The hon. minister.

**Ms Phillips:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, of course, was constituency week. I was scheduled to be out of the country. I am aware that many rural municipalities have questions about both the coal-fired phase-out and our climate leadership plan. So what I did

is that I reached out to the AAMD and C, and we'll be scheduling a telephone town hall so that I can take those questions and we can have a fulsome discussion about the coal-fired phase-out and the supports that will be coming from this government, about the \$2 billion worth of municipal infrastructure that's . . .

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie.

### Protection of Children in Care

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Child and Youth Advocate's report on the tragic death of four-year-old Serenity he details three systemic issues which have failed our children in care. In the kinship program potential caregivers self-report parenting skills or abilities, which, according to the advocate, does not lend to an objective evaluation of the applicant, obviously, putting children at risk of being in dangerous, unvetted homes. Will this minister immediately change subjective do-it-yourself evaluations to better serve our children in care?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Child death is a tragedy, and the report mentions that we have accepted that, and we will make the changes that are needed.

I just want to share with the House that there are 1,700 kids who are cared for in kinship homes, which are a bit different than other foster homes, more traditional, culturally appropriate homes. It doesn't mean that everything fails. They are providing an important service, and they need to be respected for that.

2:20

**Mrs. Pitt:** Mr. Speaker, given that the second systemic issue raised by the advocate is about conflicting direction about whether kinship care training is mandatory and given that this policy is meant to support caregivers on a wide range of supportive services to address maltreatment, abuse, trauma, grief, and loss, to the minister: during your 18 months in government how have you addressed the issue of mandatory training for those serving our children in care?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Safety of children is paramount, and when we place kids in foster homes or kinship homes, there are checks and balances. The advocate has recommended that kinship training be mandatory – there are two different trainings; one is mandatory – and we've accepted the recommendation. We will work with our kinship and foster parents to make sure that we provide them the supports they need and ensure that kids are safe when they are placed in kinship or foster homes.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Mr. Speaker, cutting the funding didn't help.

Given that in the advocate's report the third systemic issue raised was that there needs to be a prioritization of safety over all else and given that he also raises the concern that other factors such as a connection to family and culture may have been given precedence over safety, to the minister: explain how this policy serves our children in care.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. There is no thing which our department considers paramount over safety. Period. These recommendations are for

systemic improvements, and a precondition to understanding these recommendations is that you read the system as a whole and see how these recommendations make sense. They are for systemic improvements. We've committed to that, we will implement that, and we will make improvements that are needed and necessary.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

#### Fuel Tax and Carbon Levy Revenue Utilization

**Mr. van Dijken:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year the government increased fuel tax and raised almost \$1.5 billion from the users of our highways, an additional \$525 million, yet this government saw fit to cut the highway maintenance budget. Instead of dedicating the fuel tax revenue to highway maintenance, preservation, and rehabilitation, the fuel tax goes into the general revenue fund. To the Minister of Finance: with so much increased revenue collected from users of the highways, why did you cut highway maintenance some 14 per cent?

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much for the question. You know, this government, of course, is committed to making sure that safety of Albertans, whether on highways or off-road vehicles or indeed in kinship care, is paramount moving forward. We have directed a rather large amount of money through our capital investment plan, 15 per cent more than the previous government, to make sure that we are building for the future, we're prepared for the future, and at the same time we've got Albertans back to work. We have their back; they don't.

**Mr. van Dijken:** Mr. Speaker, given that the Environment minister's carbon tax will not be deposited into the general revenue fund and can only be used on climate change initiatives and is not available for highway maintenance and given that the Finance minister will raise the taxes on gasoline another 35 per cent with the implementation of a carbon tax, will the Finance minister commit to not funnel any more of the fuel tax away from much-needed highway maintenance?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much. You know, what I'll commit to is making sure that we have the available funds necessary to address the programs and services Albertans want and need. What I won't commit to is making the cuts that this side wants to make on capital, on infrastructure, and putting people out of work. I won't commit to that. Maybe you will.

**Mr. van Dijken:** Mr. Speaker, given that carbon taxes will be funnelled into a green slush fund and given that publicly funded institutions such as health providers, school boards, and the like will be faced with either reducing services or coming to the province for increased funding from the general revenue fund, does the Finance minister recognize he is creating a higher operating deficit as he funnels general revenue funds into the Environment minister's green slush fund by forcing public-sector institutions to pay carbon taxes?

**Ms Phillips:** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, here's what the Wildrose thinks is a slush fund: millions of dollars in new investments in indigenous communities so that indigenous communities can have energy self-sufficiency and economic development. Here's what they think is a slush fund: \$2.2 billion over the next five years into municipal infrastructure, \$650 million into energy efficiency programs so that homes and businesses can become more

efficient. We can create good jobs while we do it. We know they don't want to take action on climate change, but they can't deny the jobs that are going to come to Albertans from these initiatives.

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

#### Electricity Power Purchase Agreements (continued)

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first step in attracting investment is building relationships on trust and respect, while significant capital only flows when investors are assured that risks do not outweigh rewards. Instead, this government has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars attacking the very companies they seek future investment from and, even more, suing these same companies for having the audacity to invoke the terms of a legal contract. To the Minister of Energy: do you honestly believe that litigation, smear campaigns, and retroactive legislation will build positive working relationships with electricity producers and investors?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, it's another day and another member of the opposition standing up for corporations, against ordinary consumers, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that I am deeply troubled. I understand that these Enron clauses were negotiated in before that member was in government, but surely he knows that something wasn't right with those because Albertans do. Albertans deserve to have stable, affordable electricity, and our government is going to stand up for Albertans when it comes to that. I wish the other parties would actually stop and think about the people that they're refusing to protect because Albertans deserve a government that's got their back, and that's what they've got.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sadly, the proof will be in the pudding.

Given that this government has completely lost any credibility with power producers and given that this government is considering retroactive legislation in order to avoid contractual obligations, contrary to ethical business practices, and given that the president of the Calgary Chamber compared these actions to that of a banana republic, again to the minister: do you really think that business leaders in this province have any confidence in this government with your penchant for such Chiquita-style legislation?

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, just a word of caution. I mean, I've heard a few things said in here today. I heard the phrase "contrary to ethical guidelines." I just want to caution you, if I understood that correctly. Let us all be conscious of the fact where implications are made.

The Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You want to talk about being ethical? How about when the government of the day sold deregulation as a way to transfer risk from the public to the private sector, and today they're asking us in this very House more than once to just take those risks that have been inserted eleventh hour into these negotiations of some sort and pass billions of dollars on to consumers. We're going to stand up for consumers. I know they want to pretend that everything they did was good, but I can tell you that that was not good.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Straight from the Karl Marx playbook.

Given that litigating against Alberta companies for simply following legal contracts flies in the face of accepted business practices and given that introducing heavy-handed retroactive legislation would further erode investor confidence and given that these actions will continue to negatively impact investment with respect to capital infrastructure and power generation, again to the minister: is your government on behalf of taxpayers preparing to finance much-needed capital projects in natural gas and renewable power generation in Alberta with an even deeper sea of red ink?

**Ms Hoffman:** Well, it looks like the banana is in the tailpipe, Mr. Speaker. If there's one thing you can count on from the opposition it's that they'll side with corporations to go up against Albertans any time they get a chance, and that's exactly what we're seeing yet again here today. Our government is going to do everything we can to stand up for consumers to make sure they get fair electricity prices, and that's the job of government.

**The Speaker:** I hadn't heard that one before.  
The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

### 2:30 Consultation with Métis People

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is home to the largest Métis population in any province in the country, and many of our towns and cities, including St. Albert, were originally settled as Métis communities. Last week the Alberta government joined with Métis leaders and community members to celebrate the dynamic culture and traditions of Métis people in our province, but we all know that actions speak louder than words. To the Minister of Indigenous Relations: what action is the Alberta government taking to support the aspirations of Métis people in our province?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Indigenous Relations.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question, who I know is part of the Métis Nation of Alberta himself. You know, this is really an exciting time for Métis people in this province, a province that has the most Métis people across the country, and it's going to be a very good time in the future. In fact, we have been working with the Métis leaders on a program identified as working toward a better future. We're taking action on a number of priorities, including consultation policy for nonsettlement Métis and a new framework agreement for the Métis Nation of Alberta. Alberta has a long working relationship with the Métis people, and it . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
First supplemental.

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this spring the government of Alberta announced a new consultation policy for Métis settlements, to the same minister: how does this government plan to address consultation among nonsettlement Métis?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Our government is committed to ensuring that Métis people have a meaningful voice in the management decisions that impact them. We took a big step with the Métis settlements agreement last spring, and we're taking the same kind of collaborative approach to develop a consultation policy for Métis people who do not live on one of our province's eight Métis settlements. We'll continue to work closely with the Métis Nation

of Alberta and build a policy that makes sense for Métis people across our province.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Horne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what is this government doing to implement the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, specifically for the Métis people?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Our government has been engaged with Métis leaders and communities to find practical ways to implement the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. We've received written submissions from the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council, and I have had multiple meetings with both organizations and many of their constituents to move these initiatives forward. The United Nations declaration is guiding our work in many ways: incorporating Métis perspectives in our curriculum review; appointments to agencies, boards, and commissions; access to libraries for Métis settlements; and many other initiatives.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.

### Carbon Levy and Agriculture Costs

**Mr. Schneider:** Mr. Speaker, since spring we have talked about this government's ill-conceived carbon tax and how it will affect families, school boards, charities, food banks, and on and on. We also need to consider how this carbon tax will harm the second-largest industry in this province, agriculture. To the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. You have an agricultural background. Does this NDP government have any idea about the devastating effects that this carbon tax is going to have on the folks in this province who are charged with feeding the world, or does your government care?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of agriculture.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Absolutely, we understand, you know, the importance of agriculture to the economy of Alberta. It's our second-largest industry. It's the basis of the culture of this province as well. We've taken it into consideration. I've been listening to farmers, producers, processors right across the province to ensure that we have their ideas, that we have their thoughts going forward so that everyone can do their part on climate change.

**Mr. Schneider:** Mr. Speaker, given that any and all increases to agricultural operations are borne solely by farmers and ranchers and given that farmers cannot pass on the increased costs of producing a bushel of grain nor the increased costs of putting extra weight on cattle before market, it is fair to say that farmers in every corner of this province feel betrayed because their government is the one cutting into their bottom line and indeed threatening their livelihood. Farmers want to know: why is this government so determined to tax them right off their farms?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of agriculture.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. As I said, we are listening to the farming community. That's why we've had the opportunity to exempt marked fuel, the purple fuel that they use, their diesel and their gas, right across the

province, something we've heard. We're continuing our conversations with other sectors, including greenhouses, intensive livestock operations, irrigation operators, and all farmers right across the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Schneider:** Mr. Speaker, given that natural gas, propane, and electricity even with the new cap are huge, nondiscretionary costs for grain farmers and ranchers and given that these costs are only going to skyrocket in January because of the carbon tax and given that all costs related to agriculture will increase, including the costs of shipping grain from the bin to port, farmers and ranchers are worried. They're wondering how tough it's going to get to make a living on their own property. Will the minister please explain exactly how this carbon tax, quote, is uniquely tailored, end quote, to meet the needs of Alberta farmers.

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the member for the question. Very recently, a few weeks ago, I was able to announce a \$10 million fund to help farmers find those efficiencies with carbon issues. We've had support from the crop sectors, greenhouse sectors, and intensive livestock operators who see this as a good, positive step.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement** (continued)

**Mr. Fraser:** Yesterday the federal government introduced their own accelerated coal phase-out plan. Instantly what we saw was Nova Scotia negotiate a deal where they don't actually have to reduce their emissions. They were able to introduce a cap and trade system. While this federal plan still hurts Alberta, it seems they're willing to work with the coal industry. Honestly, I never thought I would see the day that a Trudeau government would offer up a better plan to the energy sector than the government of Alberta. Deputy Premier, when are you going to start fighting for Alberta, our coal industry, and our oil and gas industry?

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

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. member for the question. Of course, Alberta already has a coal phase-out plan in place, and that is why the federal government will not be imposing a plan on this province. We will have a made-in-Alberta plan instead. That plan will stabilize prices for consumers, as we saw today, it will not unnecessarily strand capital, and it will ensure that we are making appropriate investments in communities to transition, something that the previous government utterly ignored.

**Mr. Fraser:** Well, that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because when we're already at 15 per cent renewables, we're the first jurisdiction to put a price on carbon. Quite honestly, you should stop with the rhetoric that the Prime Minister is going to bow to you and everybody else will have to take what they put in.

You know, listen. The federal government recognizes that coal is an important part of industry in countries like Japan, Germany, and Denmark. Why do you hate coal producers so much?

**The Speaker:** I caution again. Be aware, hon. members, all members, of the preambles.

The hon. minister.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we have committed to a phase-out of coal already set by the previous federal government and accelerating the post-2030 in such a way that makes sure that we are not having a plan imposed on us by other jurisdictions but we have something that works for our deregulated electricity system and that protects consumers. That is why we are phasing in 70 per cent natural gas and 30 per cent renewables, to take advantage of the natural advantages that Alberta has with cheap and plentiful natural gas and excellent renewable resources.

**Mr. Fraser:** Coal communities, oil and gas communities, from Hinton to Hanna, Castor to Cold Lake, Calgary to Edmonton to Edson: Deputy Premier, you say that you're working in good faith with these communities as you implement your policies, but being booed at a provincial convention last week shows otherwise. I'm sorry that you got booed, but why are you keeping these families and communities who built this province in the dark?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the hon. minister of economic development is leading a consultation with the affected communities to make sure that we are putting workers and communities at the centre of this, which the previous government did not do. That is why we have committed funds within the budget papers that the member will note, and we will continue to do so. You know, the fact of the matter is that we are doing this because the science of the health effects of coal is as settled as the science of climate change.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. members. It's been a robust day today.

2:40

#### **Statement by the Speaker**

##### **Election Anniversaries**

**The Speaker:** I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that precisely 12 years ago today, on November 22, 2004 – it will go down in Alberta history as a significant event – the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, the Member for Edmonton-Calder as well as the Member for Calgary-Lougheed were elected for the first time to this Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Additionally, the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood was re-elected on that day 12 years ago, having been first elected in a by-election in 2000. One can only speculate on what has encouraged them to stay.

##### **Members' Statements**

(continued)

**The Speaker:** The Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

##### **Holodomor Memorial Day**

**Dr. Starke:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise on behalf of my Progressive Conservative colleagues to recognize the Holodomor and pay tribute to its victims. Holodomor, death by starvation, is applied to the genocide perpetrated against the people of Ukraine by Joseph Stalin in 1932 and '33. But Stalin's reign of terror continued for another two decades, with millions more Ukrainians executed or exiled to Siberia.

Now, as I recently shared here in the Assembly, 80 years ago this month my grandfather was taken from his village in Ukraine by the Red Army and was never seen or heard from again. Today the horrors of Holodomor are well documented, but we are still unable

to say exactly how many people perished as a result because for decades the Soviet government actively denied that these atrocities even took place and any mention of this dark period was strictly forbidden. It wasn't until the fall of the Soviet Union that the survivors and their families could finally tell their harrowing stories.

Now, as we recently observed in this Chamber, Alberta's history is steeped in Ukrainian culture. Settlers from Ukraine came in search of a better life as they helped build our province into what it is today. Many MLAs of Ukrainian descent have made outstanding contributions to our province. Premier Ed Stelmach left a lasting mark as he served Albertans with great distinction, and Speaker Gene Zwozdesky's long career was highlighted by his sponsorship of the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act, designating the third Saturday in November to honour the victims and remember the heinous acts committed against them.

Mr. Speaker, mankind must never hide from the dark truths of our past. By commemorating these dark periods in human history, we renew our resolve to never again stand idly by as forces of evil attempt to wipe an entire ethnic or cultural group from the face of the earth.

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

#### National Housing Day

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on National Housing Day to remind everyone that Albertans deserve a safe and affordable place to call home. Seniors deserve to age in community, where they want to be, with their friends and family. Here in Alberta, however, the state of housing is at a tipping point.

After decades of chronic underfunding from previous governments, we now have over 15,000 Alberta families on wait-lists for affordable housing. There's approximately \$1 billion worth of deferred maintenance, where many housing units are in disrepair. Alberta remains one of three provinces without a provincial affordable housing strategy. That's why I'm proud that our government is taking action by moving Alberta forward and modernizing the housing system to ensure it is there for those who need it now and in the future.

As part of the Alberta jobs plan we are investing \$1.2 billion over the next five years in seniors' and affordable housing. We're developing a provincial affordable housing strategy to help guide and direct this significant investment and ensure that our housing system is sustainable. We've signed two agreements with the federal government that give our province more flexibility in administering made-in-Alberta housing programs, allowing us to focus on tenant needs. We are investing more than \$167 million in community-based programming to support Albertans experiencing homelessness and women and children fleeing family violence. But it isn't just about tackling homelessness. It's also about preventing homelessness and helping struggling Albertans by maintaining the Alberta seniors' benefit, introducing the Alberta child benefit, and increasing the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, in my 30 years as a real estate agent and six years on the board of HomeEd, the city of Edmonton nonprofit housing corporation, I can tell you that a home is more than a roof. It represents stability, dignity, and hope. I'm proud that this government is committed to providing that hope to everyone that calls Alberta home.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

#### Navratri

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to represent an inclusive and very culturally diverse riding, which allows me to have the privilege to connect with numerous cultural groups and attend many events and festivals. One example of a wonderful festival that takes place in my riding is Navratri, the festival of music, dance, and colour.

Navratri is an important, major festival for the people from Gujarat, a western state in India. Navratri is celebrated all over India and Nepal and is dedicated to the worship of the Hindu deity Durga. In western India, particularly in the states of Gujarat and Mumbai, the nine nights of Navratri are celebrated, with the famous garba and dandiya raas dances performed on all nine nights. Garba is a dance performed with hand and feet movement. Dandiya is a traditional folk dance from Gujarat, and it's famous not only for the steps of the dance but for the colourful attire and the colourful sticks made of beautifully decorated bamboo, which are struck left and right to the tunes of the music. For the past few years the government of Gujarat has been organizing the Navratri festival celebrations on a regular basis for the nine nights of Navratri. People come from all over Gujarat and even from abroad to participate in the celebration.

Navratri is a very popular, lively, and exciting festival which engages people of all ages from early evening until well after midnight. Youngsters socialize with their friends in the large arena space, then join a line of dancers, then leave again to play. Older people visit with each other on the sidelines, then dance at their own pace when it suits them. Navratri is a spectacular event showcasing interactivity and participation, filled with music, movement, and colour.

Thank you.

#### Parliamentary Debate

**Mr. Hunter:** Last Saturday I had the privilege of attending the funeral service for Thelma Milne. Thelma passed away at the age of 87, leaving a legacy of service and love for all those who knew her. She was the first female mayor of Cardston and a veritable advocate for women's rights. I tell you this not because I had a lot of experience with her but because the experiences that I did have with her were amazing. The first time I chatted with her was when she called me over to her home to get to the bottom of something she had heard about me. You see, Mr. Speaker, she wasn't the type of person that judged a person based upon what others told her. She was a straight shooter right to the very end.

Now, the reason why I bring this up is that recently I read an insightful article from an introspective CBS journalist, called *The Unbearable Smugness of the Press*. In it he says that the liberal elements who have decided to abscond with the name "progressive" have embarked on a shrill shout-down campaign to shut up conservatives. I quote the writer. "If we mock them enough, call them racist enough," and – I will inject a phrase that the NDP use quite often – call them climate change deniers enough, "they'll eventually shut up and get in line." Our perceptions of reality and our ability to understand each other get skewed when people are shouted down into silence. That's when assumptions flourish. I encourage all members of this House to try to actually listen to each other and stick to debating policy rather than spewing vitriolic castigations like calling someone a climate change denier.

Mr. Speaker, our time-tested democratic processes are brutally mocked when healthy debate is shut down and shouted down. The strength of one's argument is always diminished when this tactic is employed. I am quite sure Thelma would be pleased to see us debate

issues in a most ardent manner, but she would most certainly call foul at the number of shrill shout-downs coming down to us from those so-called progressives as of late.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

## 2:50 Notices of Motions

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Infrastructure and of Transportation.

**Mr. Mason:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. As Government House Leader I would like to give oral notice of a bill for tomorrow's Order Paper, the bill being Bill 32, the Credit Union Amendment Act, 2016, which will be sponsored by the hon. Minister of Finance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today with the requisite number of copies of several documents. The first is a copy of a CBC article which details that the federal government is not adequately funding child care on reserves.

The second is a copy of the Human Rights Commission document the Minister of Indigenous Relations referenced yesterday, which should serve as an action item this NDP government should be addressing with several of his federal counterparts.

The third is a copy of the Child and Youth Advocate's investigation on Lily, who drowned in a container with homemade alcohol and drowned while in her mother's care, resulting in criminal charges. Take action for Lily.

The fourth is a copy of the Child and Youth Advocate's investigation on Onessa, who died by suicide when she was 17 years old. She had involvement with child intervention services that ended approximately five months before her death. Take action for Onessa.

The fifth is a copy of the Child and Youth Advocate's investigation on Netasinim, where he and his younger brother were apprehended living in the community garbage dump. The child was returned home at the age of 15 and, while playing in a river without supervision, died as a result of drowning. Take action for Netasinim.

The sixth is a copy of the Child and Youth Advocate's investigation on Marie, also known as Serenity, who died at four years old, beaten, starved, assaulted. Take action for Serenity.

The seventh and final document is a copy of the Child and Youth Advocate's investigation on Sharon, a nine-month-old who died in her parents' care just two months after she was returned to an abusive home. Take action for Sharon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms Phillips:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table 10 copies of the response to Motion for a Return 11.

**The Speaker:** Any others?

**Ms Phillips:** There are nine more, I believe, in a box because there are so many of them. I don't know where that box is, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I'll have to retrieve my tabling, and then I'll present it later in time should the House allow me to.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Hon. members . . .

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I'm sorry. The leader of the third party.

**Mr. McIver:** I apologize for interrupting you, Mr. Speaker. I have a tabling, five copies of an article from the *Toronto Star* where Premier Wynne apologizes for causing high electricity prices with policies similar to what we're experiencing in Alberta.

**Mr. Gottfried:** I'd like to table five copies of an article by Chris Varcoe of the *Calgary Herald* with reference to a banana republic, the PPA battle royal, and the impact on attracting investment for renewables and natural gas.

**The Speaker:** The Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Cooper:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and table five copies of an e-mail that I received from an individual that I introduced earlier in the House, Jorja Fisher. She mentioned in her e-mail that it is a very big concern that many Albertans have right now and it's also a concern that needs to be dealt with soon because Alberta's economy is going down really fast, and this needs to be handled with respect to our economy and the need to get pipelines to tidewater. I think we can all learn a little from young Jorja Fisher.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, pursuant to section 28 of the Ombudsman Act I rise to table five copies of the Ombudsman's '15-16 annual report.

In addition, pursuant to section 33(1) of the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act I am also tabling five copies of the Public Interest Commissioner's 2015-2016 annual report.

## Tablings to the Clerk

**The Clerk:** I wish to advise the Assembly that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Mason, Minister of Infrastructure and Minister of Transportation, return to order of the Assembly motions for returns 3, 17, and 33, all asked for by Mr. Cooper on May 2, 2016: Motion for a Return 3, copies of all ministerial orders issued by the Ministry of Transportation between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2015; Motion for a Return 17, copies of all documents relating to the fall government staff retreat held at the Camp Chief Hector YMCA from September 18 to 20, 2015, including a list of participants, a breakdown of costs, and agendas; Motion for a Return 33, copies of documents and briefings, including Power-Point presentations, outlining the internal government process for the preparation of government legislation.

On behalf of the hon. Minister Miranda, Minister of Culture and Tourism, return to order of the Assembly Motion for a Return 16, asked for by Mr. Cooper on May 2, 2016, copies of all ministerial orders issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism or its predecessors between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2015.

On behalf of the hon. Ms Gray, Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal, pursuant to the Government Organization Act authorized radiation health administrative organization annual reports for the following: Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors, July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, with financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2016; Alberta Dental Association and College, January 1, 2015, to December 31,



2015, with financial statements dated December 31, 2015; Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, November 1, 2014, to October 31, 2015; College of Physicians & Surgeons, January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2015; University of Alberta, April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016; University of Calgary, April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2016.

On behalf of the hon. Mr. Feehan, Minister of Indigenous Relations, return to order of the Assembly Motion for a Return 14, asked for by Mr. Cooper on May 2, 2016, copies of all ministerial orders issued by the Ministry of Indigenous Relations or its predecessor between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2015.

On behalf of the hon. Ms McCuaig-Boyd, Minister of Energy, return to order of the Assembly MR 2, asked for by Mr. Cooper on May 2, 2016, copies of all ministerial orders issued by the Ministry of Energy between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2015.

And finally, on behalf of the hon. Ms McLean, Minister of Service Alberta and Minister of Status of Women, return to order of the Assembly Motion for a Return 4, asked for by Mr. Cooper, and motions for returns 26 and 27, asked for by Mr. Cyr, all on May 2, 2016: Motion for a Return 4, copies of all ministerial orders issued by the Ministry of Service Alberta between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2015; Motion for a Return 26, a copy of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Annual Report 2013-14, prepared by the government of Alberta; Motion for a Return 27, a copy of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Annual Report 2014-15, prepared by the government of Alberta.

3:00

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I believe we're at the time of dealing with some points of order that were referenced earlier in the discussions. I believe the first one is from the Government House Leader.

#### Point of Order Parliamentary Language

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. During question period today the hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake referenced a difference of opinion with respect to certain actions taken around the power purchase agreements, and he referenced a disagreement between the mayor of Calgary and Enmax and the government or a purported difference of opinion. He asked the hon. Deputy Premier the question: is the mayor of Calgary lying, or are you? Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a real question – and you have access to the Blues in case my recollection is not precise – but it seems to me that this is, well, close to unparliamentary language. I'm referencing page 618 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, dealing with unparliamentary language.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the use of "lie" or "lying" or words to that effect has been long understood to be a very, very serious breach, perhaps the most serious case of unparliamentary language that is there, and is never acceptable. Whether the implication of the hon. member crosses the line or not, obviously the hon. member sought to approach that line as closely as possible. I would argue that he crossed it, but I would leave that, of course, to your wisdom and discretion with respect to that matter.

**The Speaker:** The Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Cooper:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, you know, we could spend some significant time determining whether or not this is a matter of debate or whether it was use of unparliamentary language. My hon. colleague clearly didn't call anyone in this House a liar. He simply asked a question. But I will close with this: in the name of trying to improve decorum, some of which we did

not see as positive as it ought to be today, I will withdraw and apologize on behalf of the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. members. Yes, the use of the language in this House does have its impact. It is context, but let us continue to build more of this kind of communication and relationship rather than the stuff that was earlier in the day.

Was there a second point of order?

**Mr. Mason:** Oh, Mr. Speaker, yes. Thank you very much. During question period today members opposite in the Wildrose opposition engaged in booing of a member. You called it at the time, Mr. Speaker. That's why I wasn't necessarily going to present a formal point of order.

**The Speaker:** Yes. I had made a decision in that regard already, and I know – I'm looking at the Government House Leader – that it was noted. Thank you very much.

Do you have an apology to the House?

**Mr. Loewen:** Yeah. I'd like to rise and say that, of course, in this House we see a lot of comments and gestures going back and forth between different sides of the House, some of them in good humour and some of them not so much. Of course, we realize that one of the ministers was booed at the AAMD and C conference here just this past week. Obviously, this is unacceptable in this House, so I unreservedly apologize for the members on this side.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Try not to distract from the intention. I think I ruled earlier that that was inappropriate. Thank you for your comments.

### Orders of the Day

#### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

**The Chair:** Hon. members, I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

#### Bill 21

#### Modernized Municipal Government Act

**The Chair:** The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is truly my honour to rise today to speak on Bill 21, the Modernized Municipal Government Act. Bill 21 seeks to amend the Municipal Government Act to make it a more responsive piece of legislation that gives municipalities and businesses the tools they need to build strong communities and a more resilient and diversified future for Alberta families.

Madam Chair, modernizing the MGA is critical to ensuring our province's future prosperity and to improving the vitality of our communities. With more than 700 sections, the act is our second-largest piece of legislation and touches the lives of every single person in our province. It guides how we pay for our roads, where we build our schools, and how we develop strong communities to raise our families. Because of this, I tabled the Modernized Municipal Government Act last May so hon. members and all Albertans would have time to review the changes, ask questions, and provide their feedback on the proposed amendments.

We are very proud of how robust, transparent, and accessible our consultation has been on the MGA. Over the summer my team and I travelled all across the province to meet with Albertans, hear their

thoughts, and gather their feedback on the bill. More than 2,400 Albertans attended 21 different sessions in communities both large and small. We also received over 2,300 survey responses from Albertans and 122 written submissions from municipalities, businesses, industry, civil society groups, and, of course, members of the public. It has been an honour and a privilege to discuss the future of our municipalities with thousands of Albertans, people who care about their communities, Madam Chair, and serve them in many significant ways. I want to thank everyone who took the time to provide their input.

It's because of their thoughts and feedback that today, finally, I am introducing House amendments to the Modernized Municipal Government Act. These amendments, introduced today, could make the policies proposed in Bill 21 even stronger and more effective.

As it stands, the Modernized Municipal Government Act is a forward-looking, innovative piece of legislation that contains a number of policy shifts. Municipalities will form regional partnerships to better serve Albertans. Municipalities will have new tools to build better, more complete communities. The act will also support small business and increase industry competitiveness, and it will enhance municipal accountability. Madam Chair, by modernizing the MGA, we can turn the page and begin a new era of local government in Alberta.

To further strengthen the Modernized Municipal Government Act, we are introducing key amendments, which I am tabling now so hon. members can see how we are responding to input received from stakeholders on how we can strengthen the amendments to the MGA. Colleagues, as you know, Albertans want real neighbourhoods to call home. Our proposed changes to the MGA could help make this happen by giving municipalities tools to ensure that new communities are built in a way that creates real neighbourhoods for families, neighbourhoods that are kept safe by police and firefighters at nearby stations, and ones where hockey practice is held around the corner and not across the city.

### 3:10

To do this, off-site levies would see an overhaul. These one-time fees, paid by developers, are currently only collected for roads, water, sewer, and storm sewer systems. But Alberta's growth has created a demand for community facilities and services outside of these four infrastructure pillars. The MGA would be amended to allow municipalities to collect off-site levies for community recreation facilities, fire halls, police stations, and libraries.

Colleagues, Bill 21 proposes that levies for these facilities could only be applied if the new development received at least 30 per cent of the benefit of those facilities. During our consultation tour we heard very clearly that municipalities felt that a 30 per cent threshold would disadvantage smaller communities, who would not be able to utilize the policy tool to create complete communities. For that reason, we are introducing an amendment to Bill 21 that removes the 30 per cent minimum threshold.

That means that all municipalities would have the option to work with developers to help pay for the facilities in their new communities at a level that makes sense and reflects a fair share, whether that be 5 per cent or 50 per cent. This approach would make sure that fire halls, swimming pools, and other services Albertans need are there when they move in, and the result would be more complete, inclusive communities for Albertan families, communities where Albertans have access to the infrastructure they need and where growth is funded in a collaborative way. We heard from small and rural municipalities that this would benefit how their communities are developed. This amendment is a direct response to their feedback about how off-site levies could better serve small towns and rural municipalities in Alberta.

Our amendments also clarify some of our other key policy proposals.

**The Chair:** Hon. minister, if I can just interrupt you for a moment. Could you just pause for a moment so we can start handing out the amendments for everyone – otherwise, we won't have the opportunity – and then you can continue.

**Ms Larivee:** Sure.

**The Chair:** This will be amendment A1.

I've had a request, perhaps while we're just waiting for the pages to finish handing that out, to revert to Introduction of Guests. We'd need unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent granted]

### Introduction of Guests (reversion)

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

**Ms Kazim:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm honoured to rise today to introduce to you and through you Cheryl Low, chair of the Calgary Catholic board, and Cathie Williams, who is the trustee in my constituency from the Calgary Catholic board of education. I would like to request them to rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of the House.

### Bill 21 Modernized Municipal Government Act (continued)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, hon. minister.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you so much. Our amendments also clarify some of our other key policy proposals. Colleagues, we know that collaborative approaches are necessary to eliminate the duplication of costly services and to help municipalities deliver more effective, efficient services to their communities.

This is why we are proposing to reform growth management boards in Edmonton and Calgary and why we are proposing to bring in intermunicipal collaboration frameworks, or ICFs, for the rest of the province. Regional collaboration on items like transportation, recreation, and emergency services is a win for everyone involved, municipalities and, especially, the Albertans that they serve. Our amendment clarifies that members of the Edmonton or Calgary growth management boards won't also have to form ICFs with other municipal neighbours on regional issues already dealt with under the growth management board. This simplifies the process while still ensuring smart growth and collaborative approaches to the delivery and equitable funding of services.

We are also proposing an amendment to ensure that inter-municipal development plans are bargained in good faith. Good-faith negotiating already happens in many municipalities across the province, but we would confirm our commitment to that process through this amendment.

We are also proposing a change that would encourage councillors to attend postelection orientation meetings by requiring municipalities to offer training, to be held within 90 days of each councillor taking office. This proposed amendment would help newly elected councillors understand their duties and responsibilities and would ultimately help municipalities to provide well-managed, transparent, and accountable local governments for Albertans.

We are also proposing to amend Bill 21 to encourage fair representation on regional appeal boards. Under the Modernized

Municipal Government Act councillors would not be able to form the majority on local appeal boards. We are proposing an amendment that would also prevent councillors from forming the majority of membership on regional appeal boards even if the councillors are from different municipalities.

During our summer consultation tour concerns were raised that councillors from different municipalities may have similar interests or predispositions, which could create bias if councillors are able to form a majority of the panel. We want to address those concerns and avoid any real or perceived bias on such boards. Councillors are the ones who make the original decisions; therefore, they should not also form the majority on a board that is looking into an appeal of those same decisions.

We are proposing that membership on all appeal panels, local and regional, be restricted to one councillor. This amendment would promote fairness and ensure that these boards are objective and impartial when reviewing cases. In rural areas and small towns, where we heard it can be a challenge for municipalities to recruit people for appeal boards, we are proposing a potential exemption, granted by the minister, for municipalities who request it, to assist with their capacity limitations. We are directly responding to municipal feedback by making this amendment.

Another amendment would ensure that greater accountability measures are in place for municipally controlled corporations that are sold or operated outside of Alberta. This would ensure continued transparency and responsible choice for municipalities and citizens.

We are also proposing to amend Bill 21 to allow all cities and other municipalities with more than 15,000 people to set alternative decision-making timelines for subdivisions and development applications. Such municipal hubs may need more time to gather all the information they need on all the complex applications that cross their desks, and this amendment would support them in their work by allowing them more time. This amendment responds directly to municipal feedback on how the MGA can support them to handle the high volume, complexity, and diversity of development applications in rapidly developing communications.

These are important changes that we are proposing, and I'm very proud of all the work that has gone into reviewing the MGA over the last four years. But, Madam Chair, this work to modernize the MGA will not end with Bill 21, not even with these amendments, because over the summer we didn't just hear feedback on what was already contained in the bill; we also heard a lot of new suggestions for changes to the MGA.

Today I'm pleased to share those ideas with all Albertans through a discussion guide, continuing the conversation. Some of these new policy ideas are big and potentially groundbreaking, including a proposal to enable municipalities to create parental leave policies for elected councillors. This change could make elected work more family friendly or encourage more women to run for public office.

We also want to hear feedback about using the MGA to build bridges and support better working relationships between municipalities and their indigenous neighbours in First Nations or Métis settlements. As a government we are committed to meeting the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and want our legislation to support that work.

We're also determined to support all of our municipal partners in taking action to address climate change. One policy proposal would give municipalities more direct authority to consider the environment in all their decisions about land use and development.

Madam Chair, these proposed policies need careful consideration and thoughtful feedback to ensure that they meet the needs of Albertans. Starting today, Albertans can go online to read the proposals in the discussion guide and then fill out an online

questionnaire to let us know what they think about the potential policy shifts. We will also be meeting with key stakeholder groups to gauge their thoughts, including the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, indigenous leaders, and representatives from business and industry. We need their input on these complex proposals so that together we can strengthen the MGA.

3:20

Madam Chair, hard work and thorough consultation will continue to sharpen and strengthen the Municipal Government Act to make it a modern piece of legislation that supports municipalities in their work to build a stronger, more resilient province for all of us. The last major review of the MGA was completed more than two decades ago and does not reflect new economic realities, changes in technology, or evolving municipal roles and relationships. Municipalities are at the grassroots of creating stronger, more dynamic communities, and we know that they need robust, forward-looking legislation to meet the changing needs of Albertans.

These amendments were developed after conversations with thousands of Albertans about how this bill can serve their communities. Madam Chair, I'm proud today to table these amendments to Bill 21, and I hope for all-party support in the passage of these amendments and of this bill. Thank you.

With that, I would like to ask that the committee now rise and report progress.

**The Chair:** Hon. minister, I've just been advised that you would need to adjourn debate on the amendments and on the bill before we can move to the next stage, so if you could please make that motion.

**Ms Larivee:** Okay. Can I make that motion?

**The Chair:** Yes. All right.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

**The Chair:** Now the motion to rise and report progress.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 21. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the Assembly concur with the report?

**Hon. Members:** Concur.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Opposed? So ordered.

## Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

### Bill 28 Public Health Amendment Act, 2016

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the Legislature today to move third reading of Bill 28, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2016.

The aim of this bill is to protect Albertans against vaccine-preventable diseases by increasing our child immunization rates and improving the delivery of immunization services across Alberta. With this bill public health will be able to connect with parents and guardians of school-age children who are missing immunization information. They can explain the benefits to any guardian who has any doubts or concerns about immunization. Our hope is that by providing parents with evidence-informed information, we can support more parents in immunizing their children and provide their records so that if there is an outbreak, those children who aren't immunized can be protected.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleagues for their support of the bill, particularly the two cosponsors, as well as members from other parties who also spoke in support of this. You've expressed your support for an approach that enables conversations between public health professionals and parents and guardians to support children in having the very best protections for vaccine-preventable diseases.

You've also raised some important points about protecting information of individuals and Albertans' privacy, which I'm happy to address here. This bill enables Alberta Health to collect student enrolment data from Alberta Education and cross-reference it with Alberta Health's existing immunization records. It's a one-way transfer of information that uses existing databases to enable a more efficient information-sharing process between Education and Health.

If the bill passes, Alberta Health would not share immunization information with Alberta Education, school boards, schools, or child care facilities. Alberta Health would share with Alberta Health Services the student enrolment information collected from Alberta Education. Public health professionals employed by Alberta Health Services, not school authorities or daycares, could contact guardians of students with missing immunization information. The information provided by Alberta Education would include contact information for guardians but not contact information for students like a student's cellphone number or e-mail address because it's the actual guardian's information that public health professionals wish to have so that they can speak with the actual guardian.

If Bill 28 passes, my department would work with Education, Alberta Health Services, and school authorities on implementation that would take effect in the next school year. As part of the plan my department would work with key stakeholders, including the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, to make sure we can meet the objectives of the legislation while protecting Albertans' privacy. To make sure we continue to protect Albertans' personal information, my department would work with Education on an information-sharing agreement. Both departments have already begun work on privacy impact assessments to help inform this legislation.

Our goal is to implement the proposed changes at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, as I mentioned. If this goal cannot be achieved, changes would be implemented at the beginning of the '18-19 school year. A communications campaign informing parents and guardians of new requirements to provide immunization information will occur in the upcoming spring, and school registration forms will be updated as required.

Bill 28 also includes amendments that add requirements to immunization service delivery. If passed, my department would work with health professionals on implementing these changes so that Albertans can receive high-quality immunization services in a safe and consistent manner throughout our province.

I think we all agree that we want to keep Albertans healthy and that immunization is one of the most important tools we have in

public health to ensure that Albertans can indeed stay healthy. My goal with this legislation is to make sure we are immunizing as many Albertans as possible, to engage with Albertans to make sure they understand the benefits of immunization, and to provide high-quality immunization services.

Once again I thank my colleagues for their support, and I look forward to the passing and implementation of this legislation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other members wishing to speak to the bill? Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

**Mr. Cyr:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak on Bill 28, the Public Health Amendment Act, 2016. As we close the final stage of debate today, I know that members of this House have spoken at length in the House about vaccinations and immunization. We've spoken about . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. member, I'm sorry to interrupt you. I just want to remind members that we're no longer in committee and that you're required to be in your seat. If you wish to carry on a conversation, please take it outside. Thank you.

Go ahead, hon. member.

**Mr. Cyr:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We've spoken about herd immunity and the rates needed to preserve protection against disease for an entire population. We've spoken about our current rates and strategies to bump them up. But it seems to me that this piece of legislation is as much if not more so a bill about information as it is about vaccination. At the end of the day, the government is not granted any additional power to make immunization mandatory or withhold schooling toward that end. The ability to keep unimmunized children away from school in the event of an outbreak already exists by regulation. The ability of the medical officer of health to request school enrolment records already exists.

In this regard the legislation changes little, and I think the way that we are proceeding with Bill 28 is wise. We are leaving that element of choice over such medical procedures in the hands of parents. Our hope is that parents use information provided by our public health officials to make informed choices in consultation with the primary care professionals who provide for their health care needs. Where this bill makes perhaps the biggest change is in allowing the Ministry of Health to go directly to the Ministry of Education to gather enrolment records and begin to proactively clean up any missing data that is held by the Health minister.

3:30

As I understand it, about 15 to 25 per cent of students' immunization records are incomplete. I think that the last thing we'd want in the middle of a measles outbreak would be to have agents desperately trying to figure out whose records are incomplete or who is at risk of contracting this disease or who has been immunized out of province and just hasn't yet transferred the documentation over. If the intent of the legislation is to get more proactive with the way we handle this information and let parents know that they need to update their personal information ahead of time, I think that we all can agree that this is sensible. It's all about informed choice. All told, the goal is to have better information for public health officials, better information for parents, and better information for the health professionals who provide that family primary care.

It's important to note that the flow of information is from Education to Health. I know that there are a lot of sensitivities and special considerations and a concern about sharing personal health information and for good reason. It's important that we keep this

information safeguarded, especially in this day and age of vastly increased electronic and digital record keeping and with privacy concerns seeming to become so much more heightened in the public's consciousness. With these considerations in mind it is more important now more than ever that the government stay vigilant in protecting Albertans' health information.

This is quite timely. I see that we recently received the 2015-2016 annual report from the office of the Privacy Commissioner. In that report we see that both privacy complaints and self-reported breaches regarding health information are higher for this past year than the previous two years. Now, is this due to an increased awareness? Is this due to people becoming more sensitive about protecting their personal data in this information age? I'm not sure. We do know that despite the protection of law and the best efforts to comply, legitimate privacy breaches do happen. Mistakes do occur. The fact remains that privacy concerns are only becoming more significant. I hope that with this increased authority to pull information from Alberta Education there comes an increased vigilance in our Health department in protecting it, and while health information will not be shared from Alberta Health, the enrolment data that they do gather, including phone numbers and home addresses, is no less sensitive and no less deserving of the strongest protection under the law and internal policy.

To the extent that new measures specifically regarding vaccinations are made in this piece of legislation, we see an increase in the reporting of adverse effects, and again I think that this is a common-sense addition. Every medical procedure and every drug carries a risk however rare or insignificant, and I am encouraged to see reporting of potential effects as they occur. This improves our understanding and allows a more transparent sharing of information to the public. That's nice to see.

Finally, I'd like to be sure that the expanded measures listed in Bill 28 are implemented efficiently, effectively, and in accordance with the intent of this bill. The Minister of Health has been given expanded powers of information and data collection, but this shouldn't be accompanied by an expansion of government bureaucracy to implement the changes. I hope to see the government hit its targets within its means.

All told, there are some positive steps in this bill as well as some concerns that it get implemented correctly. It is certainly shooting towards an admirable goal, but as with many bills, getting from the idea to the implementation is always a challenge. Sharing information, as long as it's done appropriately and carefully, can yield good results.

Public health is a serious matter. If this legislation can legitimately and genuinely improve our response to potential outbreaks, it is worth supporting. I would encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill. I hope that we can use this legislation to help keep parents informed of existing government policy to ensure that appropriate immunization standards are met.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-East.

**Ms Luff:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to rise and very quickly today offer my support for this bill. I'm the parent of two young children, two and four, who have recently been through all of their immunizations. I think that it's really important as a government to take action on ensuring increased immunization rates across the province for all of our children. You know, I taught in school, and I saw how fast outbreaks can move through schools. I understand that in today's society a lot of the time parents are just

busy. I know my kids didn't get immunized on time. It took me a while to get it done.

I do just want to take this opportunity to give a huge shout-out to the East Calgary health centre, which is in my riding. They do an amazing job of keeping parents informed and making sure that they're getting their kids immunized as close to on time as possible. They provide all sorts of other resources, too. They do a great job of explaining why immunization is important and making sure that parents are aware of the risks and the benefits associated. They also weigh children there. They just really provide an excellent resource to the community. I wanted to take the opportunity to thank the East Calgary health centre and all the public health nurses there for all of the amazing work they do on behalf of all of the children in east Calgary every day.

In addition, I think it's important to point out that immunization is important because there are lots of people in our society who for one reason or another can't be immunized. You know, I think of my friend who recently underwent chemotherapy treatments for leukemia and had a reduced immune system for a period of time and wasn't able to get immunized. There are lots of children with various immune diseases who aren't able to get immunized. So having the opportunity to make sure that we can protect those people who don't have the capacity to get immunized by having a high enough immunization rate in the general population to really protect them from diseases I think is really important.

I really appreciate the approach that our government took when developing this legislation, making the effort to have an education component and making people more informed, allowing people to make an informed choice and not taking away anyone's, you know, right to refuse immunization if that's something that they continue to choose to do. I know that that was an area of concern for lots of people in my riding who I spoke to. They were concerned that there might be mandatory vaccinations. So I appreciate the angle that the government took when developing this legislation.

I just wanted to take the opportunity while I had it to offer my voice in support of this bill. I think that increasing immunization among all children and everybody in Alberta helps to contribute to the health of everyone in Alberta, helps to reduce overall health costs, keeps kids in school, and is just generally a good direction to take.

Thank you for listening. I would suggest that everyone continue to support this piece of legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) now comes into effect if anyone has questions or comments for the previous speaker.

Seeing none, are there any other speakers wishing to speak to this bill?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hearing the call for the question, the hon. Minister of Health to close debate.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think this is the second-fastest moving bill we've had in this House, after the Ukrainian bill that we passed at the very beginning of this sitting, especially if you don't count the week that we've been away. It speaks to the fact that we've struck the right balance in making sure that education is the key focus. We are focused on getting our immunization rates up, and we want to do that by alleviating any concerns that parents might have and protecting public health at the same time.

I think this is going to be very good news. I was pleased to have so much support shown in this House as well as by the parties that

were there to support the announcement when we made it at the beginning. Thank you. I think this is going to certainly bring about better health outcomes for Albertans, and I'm very pleased to be able to say that I was the minister when we brought this legislation forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 28 read a third time]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Carlier:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to have unanimous consent of the House to revert to Tabling Returns and Reports.

[Unanimous consent granted]

### 3:40 **Tabling Returns and Reports** (*reversion*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Health.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We're only about a third of the way there. The boxes continue to arrive.

This is a response to Motion for a Return 5, which was requested by the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. I can't help but upon this tabling say thank you to the public service, who went above and beyond in staying late. I will certainly take the volume of this request into consideration when further requests of things that are already made public are made in this House. I think it speaks to the commitment that both the public service and our ministry have to achieving the goals of transparency.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'm also impressed by the hard work of our pages.

## **Government Bills and Orders** **Second Reading**

### **Bill 27** **Renewable Electricity Act**

Mrs. Aheer moved that the motion for second reading of Bill 27, Renewable Electricity Act, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 27, Renewable Electricity Act, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

[Debate adjourned on the amendment November 9: Mr. Loewen speaking]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky, you still have a few minutes left if you wish to continue speaking on this bill.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, I stand to continue the discussion on Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act. I just want to make sure it's clear that Wildrose believes in a realistic renewable energy program driven by private-sector investment and not by government subsidies. Recently I had a chance to go down to southern Alberta, and while I was down there, I saw many windmills operating. Of course, I know that there are a lot more down there than the ones that I saw east of Lethbridge. These ones obviously didn't require any Bill 27 to get them working. I think one of the concerns we have is that this plan to go 30 per cent by

2030 is a plan that's going to require a substantial amount of private investment, in fact, probably over \$10 billion of private investment, but with problems like what we've seen with the PPAs, that's created a lot of investor uncertainty in Alberta. In fact, a lot of the government's bills and plans that they've brought forward have created uncertainty in the investment community.

Now, the ratepayers in this province have been promised a painless accelerated transition to renewables. That's happened in other provinces, too, where they've suggested: "This is going to be great; trust us. You'll love it." But in the end we see government bailouts. We see increased rates. We see failure over and over again. Now, I don't think we need to continue down the same path, using the same plans that other provinces have used, only to have the same failure. I think we can learn from others' mistakes. I think there are other ways to have a renewable energy program. There are other ways to reduce greenhouse gases. It doesn't always take government intervention and taxpayer dollars.

Now, we know that the accelerated phase-out of coal is going to cost billions of dollars. We haven't seen any report from this government on how much it's going to cost. They have somebody hired to do a report on this, but that report isn't done yet, and here we are contemplating a bill that in essence has to do with this report that we have yet to see. Yet we have to make a decision on this and have to debate this without having all of the information that's supposed to be available.

Now, again, the government has picked an arbitrary target of 30 per cent. I don't know why they chose 30 per cent. I don't know why they didn't choose 20 per cent. I don't know where that came from. It's something like the emissions cap of 100 megatonnes. I guess it's just a nice round number. I don't know. Maybe because it's 2030 and 30 per cent just sounds nice. I don't know if that's a way we want to make decisions that are going to cost taxpayers billions of dollars, just picking nice round numbers and catchy phrases.

Now, like I mentioned, there are already renewables being used in Alberta right now, but they won't get any special treatment because they're already operating. But with this legislation there are new companies that could come in and take advantage of this, that existing companies never had the opportunity to.

Now, when it comes to phasing out coal early, we'll have to pay those companies that set up those power generating plants in good faith, understanding that they were going to, you know, have X number of years to recover their investment. We're going to have to pay them for their stranded assets. Then we'll have to pay them again for new gas production to serve as a replacement baseload. I'm not sure about the thought process here. We have some of the cleanest burning coal-fired generators in the world, technology that should be used all over the world. It could make a huge difference in emissions if they used our clean coal-burning technology in other parts of the world where they're still building coal-fired generating plants. That would do something. That would do something.

You know, the federal plan was that after 50 years per plant these coal-fired generators would be shut down. That wouldn't wastefully strand assets. But by accelerating it, we have stranded assets that Albertans are going to pay for. There's only one place that that money could come from, and that's from Albertans. It's either going to come in the form of taxes, or it's going to come in the form of higher electricity bills. But they're going to pay for it.

Again, we haven't received the recommendations from this report that is supposed to be being done on these stranded assets and the timeline for phasing out coal, but we're discussing this here in the Legislature without the benefit of what these reports could say.

There doesn't seem to be a requirement to consider the economics of an electrical project or the demand for an electrical project. I guess that at the minister's whim deals could be signed, plans could be made, but we have no idea of the economics or the demand, whether it's actually there for these projects.

Now, this bill allows the minister a lot of involvement that we haven't seen in our deregulated electricity sector since the electricity sector was deregulated. This is a big change from what's happening now. The 30 per cent by 2030: picking targets like that isn't a good idea. Electricity should be generated in response to market demands. That includes ratepayers voluntarily choosing retailers who offer a proportion of renewable. Like I said, we already have some renewables taking place right now in Alberta that didn't require Bill 27 to happen.

3:50

Now, here's a list of U.S. failed renewables projects that received subsidies and failed: Amonix solar; Solar Trust of America; BrightSource; Solyndra – we heard a lot about Solyndra in the news; it received subsidies, failed – LSP Energy; Energy Conversion Devices; Abound Solar; SunPower; Beacon Power; Ecotality; A123 solar; Uni Solar; Azure Dynamics; Evergreen Solar; Ener1. Here are a bunch of projects in the U.S. that received subsidies, received taxpayers' money, and failed still.

Now, recently Ontario scrapped \$3.8 billion in wind and solar investment. Why? So they could stop the rising electricity rates due to the failure of their feed-in tariff green energy program. Ontario is starting to realize that their idea and their plans have been a failure. The cost of electricity is rising, and it's hurting their economy. Why can't we learn something from these other jurisdictions that have gone down this road? Ontario's 2010 \$9.7 billion deal with Samsung guaranteeing manufacturing in the province in exchange for Ontario buying electricity at favourable rates from the company was a colossal failure. By 2013 it was forced to renegotiate.

How can Albertans be assured that this kind of thing won't happen here, signing huge contracts with companies that Albertans will be on the hook for for who knows how many years, 20-year contracts, and then if things go wrong, what happens? What happens if Albertans decide they don't want that?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Nixon:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. There are a lot of names in that constituency. Try saying it several times in a speech over and over. But they're all great places.

I really appreciated the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky's speech on Bill 27. I think he raised a lot of interesting points that I could tell all sides of the Assembly were listening to with great interest. I do have a couple of things I'm hoping that he can expand on under 29(2)(a), particularly around the fact that there is a report that's been commissioned and that is not done, as far as we're aware, and has not been reviewed by the government or by other members of the public or the opposition and around the concern that some of his constituents might have about the speed that we would be bringing this legislation through the Assembly given that such an important report has not been completed. The work, obviously, that has been commissioned with that report has not been able to be reviewed by people making the decisions around this legislation.

Also, I think he touched on it a little bit, but if he could expand a little bit more on how he sees the importance of making sure the private sector is driving investment and not the government picking winners and losers.

Lastly, I know he's had the opportunity to tour several communities throughout the province of Alberta that are being drastically impacted by the phase-out of coal in our province, something that this government has accelerated significantly faster than the federal government had proposed. If he could just expand a little bit on the devastation that is being caused by the government's decisions or will be caused by the government's decisions in regard to coal, the feeling that is happening in places like Hanna and Stettler county and the impact of that and why that shows that this bill should go to committee.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Grande Prairie-Smoky.

**Mr. Loewen:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the questions. Yes, we've seen this over and over again, where this government seems to be so focused on this agenda that they don't take the time to do the economic studies, the effects that it's going to have on communities. As the member mentioned, there's a report that's supposed to be done on this, but we don't have this report. By sending this to committee, as was mentioned, we can have the time to have this report in our hands.

I've said this before in this House, too. The only way we as legislators can make informed decisions is with information, and that's the only way Albertans can make decisions, too. Albertans will develop an opinion on this, and we've heard some of their opinions already at an AAMDC meeting that just happened last week. The people that were there overwhelmingly did not agree with this government's plans. They said no. They said that this is going to hurt their local communities. I think that, similar to the last federal by-election, there might have been 1 per cent that supported it, but 99 per cent don't support these things, Madam Speaker.

This government has already planned to bring in a carbon tax on January 1. It's passed in the Legislature. It's planned to come in on January 1. That's already causing grave concerns in the communities around Alberta. When you add things like this, it builds and builds, so the concerns that Albertans have grow and grow. There are a lot of unemployed Albertans, over 100,000 unemployed since this government came in, again not including contractors. Albertans are hurting, and this won't help.

Now, when the private sector decides to do something like this, they take the risk. They make their plan, and it's up to the company and the shareholders to make a decision on whether they want to invest or not. But when government gets involved, then it's the government making decisions with taxpayers' money.

Now, there are several communities in Alberta that are deeply concerned about the phase-out of coal and what's going to happen to their community.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other members wishing to speak to the referral amendment on Bill 27? The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Under 29(2)(a)?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) is done. Did you want to speak to the amendment?

With no other members wishing to speak, then I will call the vote on the amendment.

**Mr. Nixon:** No, no. We sent you a speakers list.

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

**Mr. Yao:** This is for the amendment, yes? Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak to a bill that gives me great concern, a bill that pursues ideology over economic realities. That bill is Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act. The way this legislation has been thrown together raises a number of questions, and we have not heard answers from this government.

This bill is technical and complex, and the appetite of the NDP to push through this legislation is not fair to Albertans or the stakeholders that stand to be affected by such a dramatic change in Alberta's electricity market. I have to echo the concerns of my colleagues that have spoken before me and ask that this bill be put to committee for further review. Clearly, we have to examine this issue more in depth and hear from electricity experts on how this will impact the market. We need to hear from Albertans on how this market disruption will affect their livelihoods and how, at a time when there are literally thousands of Alberta families looking for work, increasing the costs of running their households will impact their families.

4:00

Madam Speaker, there is no reason why such a highly complex piece of legislation such as Bill 27 should not be brought to a committee for further study. It's the responsible thing to do. We have the tools at our disposal to conduct a proper and thorough review of this legislation. This side of the aisle is asking for the government to get to work. Albertans expect that you be honest and transparent about the policies that you put before the House and explain to them what your plan will mean for Alberta's families and communities.

The NDP didn't campaign on this platform, but here we are. In only a handful of hours this government sees it as responsible to introduce market-altering legislation with little to no dialogue with the public. This is certainly not what Albertans were voting for when they were promised a government that would do things differently. I want to know – and I want to hear it from the government members – why they insist on putting through legislation without proper consultation and investigation.

We thought you had learned after Bill 6, but you did not. You continue to go, and we're at 27 now. I believe that the governing members won't put this bill to committee because they fear that most Albertans won't agree with the outcomes of Bill 27, just like the rest of their bills. That's exactly why you should put this bill to committee. If you're worried that your bill won't be popular or won't receive support, then we should know that before passing it into law. Maybe, just maybe, you will hear some good arguments from third parties and improve this thing instead of just opposing everything that comes from the opposition. Our advice is brilliant, quite honestly. We're here to help. Just because you won the election, it doesn't mean that you can unilaterally ignore the public's input for the rest of your term. You have to do the right thing. Let's get to work on this together.

Madam Speaker, I have to say that I am almost at a loss for words as to why this government is so resistant to friendly assistance in crafting legislation. Do they not hear the poetry that comes from this side of the House? We are seeing a disturbing trend with this NDP government, and I can guarantee you that it is not going to go unnoticed by Albertans. First we had the Bill 6 debacle, where Wildrose time and time again tried to show this government that more work needed to be done. The thousands of families on the front steps of the Legislature also tried to show this government that their half-baked idea was out of touch with the lifestyle of rural Albertans, but still their cries fell on deaf ears.

This past spring we saw the government ram through what's turned out to be one of the most unpopular pieces of legislation that has ever come out of this Assembly – might I add that it hasn't even

come into effect yet – Bill 20, the carbon tax. Bill 20 is another example of how this government simply will not listen to good ideas regardless of the source. We tried to exempt charities, but no. We tried to exempt schools, but no. We tried to exempt greenhouses, but no. Do you all still think you're right? Do you think your leadership was right to make you vote against charities, schools, and greenhouses? Members over there still seem to think that if it's not from their own bench, then it's not worth listening to. That's not democracy, and that is not good governance. [interjection] Yes, listen.

So instead of repeating the mistakes of the past, why not try something different and deal with Bill 27 properly? [interjections] Madam Speaker, I'm looking across the aisle and I see, you know, a lot of disinterest over there, some sarcastic comments, but we have to recognize that this isn't a joke. Your actions have consequences. Just because you're guaranteed the best job that you're ever going to have for the next two years, that doesn't mean that all Albertans are having the same experience right now. Far from it, actually. So I hope that you all take your jobs seriously. I know that the Wildrose is here to work, and we're ready to put the time in to get the legislation right. It's what Albertans expect from us, and it's what we should be expecting from you.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to ask the member. I know that in the county of St. Paul over the last few months I've had a number of complaints and there have been articles in the newspaper regarding a project or a planned project to install 90 windmills on 75 quarter sections of land east of St. Paul or up in the northeast area. All of the farmers up there are, you know, already up in arms about this. One of the stipulations that they've been told is that if they want to go hunting on their own property, they'll have to get permission from the owners of the wind turbines before they can access their land. [interjections] Seriously, yeah. This is what they're being told.

They've had landmen coming and negotiating with them before this bill is even passed. Much to their frustration they've actually been told: well, all your neighbours have signed up, so you'd better sign up or you're going to miss out. And then when they go and talk to their neighbours, that's an absolute sham. They're being told this by a contractor out of Ontario that is actually paying a landman a day rate to go around and try and get these farmers to presign this stuff. Now, my understanding is that they haven't even done the tests yet, set up a test turbine to see if there's enough wind in the area to even get this project going in the first place. This is just how ridiculous it is. They're getting people all excited over nothing or what could potentially be nothing.

I'm just wondering if the Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo has experienced any of that, has heard anything like that from up in his area. I just wanted to take this opportunity to make sure that the people from the county of St. Paul and the farmers in that area know that their message is being heard, that this is what's actually going on in our province before this bill has even been implemented. If this is the way it's going to be carried out, it's very, very unfair as far as the landowners involved. They're not going to have a whole lot of say in the implementation of this and will lose control of their property rights in the meantime.

Thank you.

**Mr. Yao:** You know what? My good friend points out a very good point. The legislation and the bureaucracy surrounding a lot of these



initiatives is quite awkward and might not be written specific to a lot of these passive implementations of energy resources. As a result, they're applying a lot of rules that are really difficult to overcome, and they don't make sense. They just don't want it.

Certainly, I can't comment on that in particular, what's going on in his constituency, but I can certainly talk about mine. I know that up in – I just had a meeting with ATCO. They're looking at some different power generation. They're looking at all the alternatives, including solar. What they're actually finding is that with a lot of the legislation, a lot of the bureaucracy that's put in place, it's so difficult for them to put even the simplest plants in. They do have a desire to try putting a solar array up in Fort Chipewyan, but the legislation and all the bureaucracy that they have to go through is so heavy and so difficult that it's impairing them as well.

**Mr. Hanson:** And the sun only shines four hours a day.

**Mr. Yao:** During the summer it would certainly get a little bit more light but during the winter not as much.

They're willing to look at these things, but again they're finding that there are legislative hurdles around all of that. That surprises me from this government. They do want to initiate a lot of these different environmental technologies, but what adds to the increased expense of everything is a lot of legislation that surrounds them and impairs them from actually going ahead, if I understand the situation correctly with these companies and what they're trying to provide. I know that they're looking at solar panels on every light post. Again, the amount of bureaucracy that they'll have to go through just to do that sounds like it's enormous because of how the legislation is written regarding energy producing machines or processes.

If our government wants to help, here's another way you can help: take a look at the bureaucracies, what they have to do to put in a lot of these things. They are passive. Definitely, they do not have the impacts of some of the more intrusive energy-mining industries that we have, but they still deal with that same bureaucracy.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks on the amendment.

4:10

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and speak to Bill 27. Bill 27 is a part of the larger climate leadership action plan of the government, the CLAP. It is a part of a series of bills the government has brought forward to deal with emissions, ostensibly, but are a thinly disguised plan to re-engineer the economy. The most dreadful part of the CLAP is the carbon tax, that we've already debated and that the government members have voted to pass. Members of the Official Opposition and current members of the third party all voted unanimously against it, and I was very pleased to see the strong resistance that came from the opposition side of the House. That was the carbon tax.

We're currently also debating the limitation on oil sands emissions, a very poorly thought out piece of legislation that arbitrarily caps emissions coming from the oil sands. Poorly thought out. It arbitrarily picks a number of 100 megatonnes of emissions a year without any scientific basis for why they actually picked that number. Both the carbon tax and the oil sands emissions limitation acts are arbitrary and ideological pieces of legislation.

This part of the CLAP, the 30 per cent requirement of renewable energy, is also ideological and arbitrary. Why did they pick 30 per cent, Madam Speaker? I don't know. The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky, I believe, was the one that pointed out that they are

requiring this by 2030, so 2030 and 30 per cent renewables. I'm not sure if it was designed as a slogan, perhaps so that they could tell their ideologues at conventions or Leap Manifesto confabs what they're doing, that they're going to 30 per cent renewables by 2030. But they haven't yet provided any scientific data as to why they have picked 30 per cent.

Now, perhaps more renewables is a laudable goal, that there is a public interest in moving toward more renewable energy. But what is the basis for picking 30 per cent? It appears so far, because we have not heard any significant elaboration or explanation from the government side, that 30 per cent renewables is an arbitrary number with an arbitrary date. They have so far provided no evidence.

They want to get to 30 per cent, and they're going to do that by fiat. They're going to do it by mere government legislation that they're going to get somewhere. This is the ultimate expression of the big government, government knows best, attitude, that the government can simply legislate outcomes, that the government knows better than market forces, that the government knows better than investors, that the government knows better than what people who have their own money and skin in the game think should happen. They are going to legislate that we are going to get to 30 per cent.

Now, when we engage in command and control economics, there is always a cost. When you have to force the economy to move against natural market forces, you're going to have a cost attached. Sometimes that cost might be worth it. That cost might have a return for it that is desirable, but there will be a cost, and we don't know what that cost is going to be, Madam Speaker. That's one reason we need to send this to a committee for study. We don't know what the cost is going to be. There will be a significant cost whenever you directly intervene to distort market forces. Market forces on their own will not get to 30 per cent.

We already have some renewables in Alberta because there is a market for them, but investors and market forces have made it very clear that there is not yet the incentive to get to 30 per cent, so they're going to have to get to 30 per cent only by command and control economics and direct government intervention into the markets. As I said, interventions can at times be justified. Sometimes an intervention in the market can lead to an outcome that we might want to correct for, but we have to acknowledge that every time we do that, there is a cost attached, and if there is a cost, we should know what it is. But so far the government refuses to say. We haven't heard a peep from them about what the cost of this is actually going to be, which is one reason members on this side of the House believe that we should send it to committee for study.

So what are those costs going to be? There is almost certainly going to be a cost to government of taxpayer dollars that will need to be invested. Every other jurisdiction that has engaged in this kind of direct intervention in the economy and power generation has found a significant cost to taxpayers to be attached. We need to find out what the cost is to government. We need to find out what is going to be the cost to consumers.

We can look at other jurisdictions that have seen power bills go through the roof. Power bills have gone through the roof in other jurisdictions that have done this. If we are going to do the same thing in Alberta, we need to know what the cost to consumers is going to be. Again, we've heard absolutely nothing from the government side of the House about what the cost is going to be to the consumer, to the Alberta ratepayer, to regular families and individuals.

We need to know: what is the economic impact? Now, this government has a real aversion to economic impact statements except for secret ones that get leaked to the media. Those are the only ones that we ever seem to get out of this government. We ask

this government to show us their math, show us their economic impact studies. What is going to be the real impact on the economy of their actions?

Now, they've said that there was no economic impact study for the carbon tax. We found out that that was a little less than true, Madam Speaker, when it ended up in the newspaper. I will be interested to know if the government has an internal economic impact study that they're not sharing with Albertans right now. That would be something that I'd like to know. If there is, I would like to see it. But when they say that there isn't, it's a little difficult to believe them when they've denied that there were internal economic impact studies before and then they get leaked to the *Calgary Herald* or the *Edmonton Journal*.

So if they refuse to give us one here, then we need to send this to a committee to finally do an economic impact study. We've got some great staff working for us in the Legislature, Madam Speaker. Let's put them to work. Let's get an economic impact study.

We should also in committee discuss the feasibility of what they're trying to achieve. Now, they're trying to achieve something that's very ambitious: 30 per cent of electricity generated by renewables by 2030. That's an ambitious target, but I'm interested to know about the feasibility of that. Just because government declares that something shall be so does not make it so, Madam Speaker. Governments legislate that they want things all the time, but that doesn't mean that it will all be so. We ban things. We prohibit certain products all the time, but those products still make it into the black market. Governments can declare things all they like, but it does not always make it so in reality.

So if the government declares that we're going to get to 30 per cent renewables by 2030: okay, fine. Even if we accept everything else, that there's going to be a cost, that there's going to be an impact to the economy, what will be the feasibility? Can they actually get there? What is going to be required to get there? We don't know any of that yet, so it would be irresponsible for us to pass such a huge and impactful piece of legislation without actually knowing the feasibility of it, without knowing the economic impact of it, without knowing the cost to government, and without knowing the cost to the consumer, Madam Speaker.

So far we hear nothing realistic about protecting consumers coming from that side of the House. They have promised to legislate or regulate a cap on electricity prices, but we know that that's baloney, Madam Speaker. You can promise those things all you like, but at the end of the day, it's going to drive costs up, and if you legislate a cap on prices, the consumer is still going to find a way to pay at the end of the day. We have real questions about this legislation.

We can look at what other jurisdictions have done on just this topic. We can look to Germany. We can look to Ontario. Let's use Ontario as the most close and relative example. Power costs in Ontario have gotten completely out of control. It is driving business out of Ontario. It is absolutely crushing the Ontario economy, killing manufacturing jobs, the good, blue-collar jobs of people who need to feed their families and pay taxes. They're losing their jobs because those factories can't stay open with the power costs they're facing. Ontario families are being driven into energy poverty. They're being forced to make real choices on subsistence. That's a difficult one to say, Madam Speaker. They're being forced to make very tough choices about keeping the power on or feeding their families right now.

They might laugh about it, but the Premier of Ontario herself has admitted it: the billions, billions upon billions of wasted tax dollars in Ontario; Auditor General reports into the wastefulness of these programs; political interference from the Ontario Liberals; insider contracts with people who are a part of the Liberal Party, who are

just feasting themselves on government contracts, the kind of thing that used to plague us here in Alberta. We are opening the door to similar kinds of corruption and waste of taxpayers' dollars as we see running rampant in Ontario right now. It has been an absolute disaster.

4:20

Now, just a few days ago Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne herself declared their government's energy policy a mistake. That is a quote from the Premier of Ontario. She said, "People have told me that they've had to choose between paying the electricity bill and buying food or paying rent." She continues: "That is unacceptable to me. It is unacceptable that the people of Ontario are facing that choice. Our government made a mistake. It was my mistake." Words of Ontario Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne. If we needed a prophet of some kind to go to the future and tell us what this government's energy policies are going to look like, then surely they should trust the prophet Kathleen Wynne.

Now, we should not pillory her for admitting a mistake. It is an extremely costly mistake that is bankrupting Ontario, that is driving business out, that is hurting and devastating families. But she has admitted a mistake, and we should accept when people apologize. It'll be interesting to see if the people of Ontario accept her apology in the next election.

Now, when people apologize, though, they should learn from their mistakes, ideally. Sometimes we do, and sometimes we don't. But we should learn from others' mistakes as well. We should look to other jurisdictions to learn from their successes and their failures, and by every measurable outcome possible, Ontario's energy policy is a failure. This is virtually the same policy – this is virtually the same policy – and it is crystal clear that it, too, will be a failure. But instead of learning from the examples of Germany or Ontario, this government is copying them.

Now, you know, when I was a young man, I made several poor life choices. I can remember that in high school I had a friend in particular who made a lot of poor life choices. He was my favourite friend. He was a lot of fun. I remember some of the things he would do, and they looked like a lot of fun. I saw him late at night after partaking in high school activities doing something that looked like a lot of fun. He rode a cart down a hill, and he got hurt. I learned from his mistake, Madam Speaker, and I didn't do that. Right now Ontario is our friend, and Ontario just went down a hill. Ontario is hurting. We should follow the example of others. We should not follow the example of Ontario.

We should send this bill to a committee to understand its effect on other jurisdictions. We would be neglectful if we passed a hugely powerful and intervening piece of legislation like Bill 27 without knowing what effect it will have on Albertans. We should look to what other jurisdictions that have experimented with the same kind of legislation have done, how it worked out.

Even if we grant the rest of this bill, there are real feasibility issues. This government is going to need to attract huge sums of investor capital, potentially in excess of \$10 billion. I'm not sure who would want to do a deal with this government right now. This government is doing everything in its power to erode investor confidence. It is doing everything in its power to destroy the sacredness of contracts signed with businesses in good faith. When businesses sign contracts with the government of Alberta, they expect that the government of Alberta will honour its word, not that they will sign something and then for political and ideological reasons try to tear it up a few years later. They are doing everything in their power, with the power purchase agreements, to erode investor confidence. It is being called an example of a banana republic.

Now, even if they can find some companies to sign on to their deal . . . [Mr. Fildebrandt's speaking time expired]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre on 29(2)(a).

**Mr. Nixon:** Yes, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much. First of all, I appreciate and thank the Member for Strathmore-Brooks for his comments and his well-thought-out presentation. I share his concerns about bringing forward this at such lightning speed without sending it to committee and the consequences that we will possibly see. We know, as he pointed out, that our neighbours to the east in Ontario have already seen significant consequences, that I think at the very least we should examine in comparison to the legislation that's being brought forward by the government. I think that I can speak for everybody and say that we don't want to pass legislation and in the end, years down the road, all we have is a bunch of worn-out wind turbines that our kids are paying for for many, many years. That's a legitimate concern.

One issue that he touched on particularly that I find extremely interesting is the fact that 30 per cent by 2030, that plan, will require \$10 billion in private investment to be able to do. But as you know, Madam Speaker, the PPA mess that we've been watching this government walk head-on into is going to scare away, almost certainly, whatever investors are reasonably thinking about coming to Alberta to invest in that. I think that I'd like to hear a little bit more about his concern about scaring away investment and the fact that the policies that the NDP has already brought forward in our province continue to scare away investment and the impact it'll have on this current plan they have here.

Then last is the situation the coal phase-out is having in communities that, you know, members on this side of the House represent and members on that side of the House represent. It's a terrible situation. If you take a trip to Stettler or the Hanna area right now and talk to people, they're scared. People are really, really scared. They're scared, and they should be scared. We're talking about their livelihoods, we're talking about the future of their communities, and this government's not talking to them.

They're talking to everybody but the people that this impacts, which is why, Madam Speaker, we should take something like this and bring it to a committee so that not only the members of the opposition can participate in the process and speak on behalf of the people that they represent and bring forward the concerns and the things that we know but we can also give an opportunity for the public to participate in the process. I know the Member for Strathmore-Brooks would completely agree with me on that.

The thought of pushing forward this legislation without a proper review and consultation with the communities that it impacts is appalling, in my view, and something that this government, Madam Speaker, as you know, continues to do over and over and over. They're almost two years into their mandate – they're almost two years into their mandate – and we're still seeing this type of behaviour from this government. It is extremely disappointing, and I'm sure the Member for Strathmore-Brooks would like to expand on that.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Indeed, I would, Madam Speaker. I thank the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre for his remarks.

There's an interesting thing that's going on in Germany right now. They are reopening coal-fired power plants that they had already shut down. The wind turbines that they are selling to jurisdictions in North America require vast sums of energy, cheap energy, to produce. So Germany is actually producing wind turbines to sell to us made with coal-fired power plants. I would

know, Madam Speaker. The Germans generally know how to make a good buck in that sense. They know what they're doing because, like Ontario, they've lived and are living through the high cost of power there. For them to remain competitive, they've had to reopen coal-fired power plants. We should learn from the examples of jurisdictions that have gone through this.

The huge damage that has been done to investor confidence in Alberta is going to have a real cost. Even if the government can find people who are willing to sign a contract with them, they're going to pay a risk premium because this is a government that obviously does not respect the sanctity of contracts. Now, interest on a loan is largely variable, based on risk. If you are a not particularly credit-worthy borrower, you're going to pay a higher interest rate. The same is going to go for the risk to who you're signing a contract with. If a business is signing a contract with another business and they believe that that other business might not deliver on their end of the deal, chances are that one of those parties is going to have to pay a higher cost to account for that risk premium. That is exactly what's going to happen here. Consumers and taxpayers are going to have to pay more, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other speakers on the amendment? The hon. Member for Little Bow.

4:30

**Mr. Schneider:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to have the opportunity today to speak to this referral amendment for Bill 27, the Renewable Electricity Act. Just the other day – it's much the same as what my friend from Strathmore-Brooks talked about – I read the article in *Maclean's* about the Premier of Ontario's words at her political party's annual general meeting. I mean, it just bears repeating again, and I will provide this document for the House. I'm quoting directly from it. Wynne said that part of convincing Ontarians that she wants to do what is in their best interests is admitting when she's made a mistake. She was quoted in the article as saying:

People have told me that they've had to choose between paying the electricity bill and buying food or paying rent.

A quote from Ms Wynne again. She said:

That is unacceptable to me. It is unacceptable that people in Ontario are facing that choice. Our government made a mistake. It was my mistake.

Then:

After her speech, Wynne wouldn't point to any specific decision on the electricity file that she deems a mistake, but said her focus was on the big issues [rather than] facing the system and she hasn't always paid enough attention to how costs were accumulating on people's bills.

Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk has said the electricity portion of hydro bills for homes and small businesses [in Ontario] rose 70 per cent between 2006 and 2014.

Seventy per cent.

Well, Madam Speaker, the government of Ontario also decided to phase out coal-powered electricity and pursued hefty contracts for wind and solar power.

**Mr. Yao:** Where are they now?

**Mr. Schneider:** Well, that's a very good point. Where are they now? They have an overabundance of electricity that they sell at cheaper than what they can produce it for. It seems to me that this government may be running down the same rabbit hole. I don't know. It's maybe not running down the same rabbit hole, but the parallels begin to become very noticeable. Not only is this

government pursuing the same path, but it's doing so in a particular hurry, it seems like.

Madam Speaker, 55 per cent of Alberta's power comes from coal, so replacing that capacity will be challenging, to say the least. You know, there's always a question: what will it cost to kill coal completely by 2030? Well, that seems like an important question, what it'll cost in the sense of dollars and cents. It has been said that 30 per cent renewable energy by 2030 is a plan that could very well require over \$10 billion.

The provincial government's carbon tax, when you get to the human side of it, will cost the average Alberta household a thousand dollars annually by 2018 and getting on to twice that amount by 2030. That's according to the climate leadership action plan. Now, what was that called again?

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** The CLAP.

**Mr. Schneider:** Oh, there you go. Commissioned by the Alberta government. That's very clever. I find that very clever of my colleague from Strathmore-Brooks.

An extra thousand dollars a year, of course, will be a burden. There's no question. Although the government does plan to subsidize some of the lower income consumers, this act will legislate the government of Alberta's 30 per cent renewables target by 2030 as measured on an annual basis.

This bill will necessitate the phase-out of coal. Under the bill the minister will be given the power to set interim targets within 30 per cent by the 2030 framework. It's hoped that legislating the target will give investors more confidence.

It states in the act that the Alberta electrical commission must put regard for obtaining the goals of the Renewable Electricity Act, once again, 30 per cent by 2030, above regard for "whether the generating unit is an economic source of electric energy in Alberta or to whether there is a need for the electric energy to be produced by such facility in meeting the requirements for electric energy in Alberta or outside Alberta." This legislation is needed, to be perfectly honest, because renewables can't get to 30 per cent in a free-market situation.

The legislation will inevitably drive up costs to families and businesses. While there is a federal plan that is being phased in – and it's actually a plan to be phasing out coal after 50 years per plant – that particular plan did not wastefully strand assets, which is what is going on in Alberta here, in this particular plan.

Phasing out coal is obviously a costly decision – I think we all determined that – because we will have to pay generators out for stranded assets. That cost hasn't been determined yet. There's been money put aside, but we haven't heard what the actual number may be. We could probably find out that number if we were headed to committee. Then after we have paid out generators for stranded assets, we pay them again for new gas production to serve as a replacement baseload.

We have not seen a plan for coal-dependent communities and how they'll be transitioned towards new industries. We just don't know what that will cost. Getting to committee to have experts come and tell us about the dismantling of a coal-fired plant and potential refitting for natural gas is something that Albertans probably would like to hear the numbers on. They're big numbers, no matter how you add it up. Ten billion? Well, those numbers kind of roll off the end of your tongue. Millions, billions don't seem to matter when we're talking around here in big numbers like that, but they certainly do to Albertans.

Once again, the minister, with this act in place, "may, from time to time or on a periodic basis, direct the ISO to develop a proposal

for a program to promote large-scale renewable electricity generation in Alberta," a level of government involvement that we have not seen in our deregulated sector, energy sector, electricity sector. Whether you like the way that works or not, I believe that will be pretty accurate.

You know, I believe in a realistic renewable energy program driven by private-sector investment and not government subsidies. Ratepayers in other provinces have been promised painless accelerated transition to renewables only to see either government-funded bailouts or increased rates on their power bills. Phasing out coal early, regardless of technological improvements, is potentially the wrong decision and an expensive one, and that is why it would be nice to see this go to an all-party committee for discussion and for experts to come and give testimony.

This government is rushing through legislation without doing, I would say, due diligence. Substantial research and analysis is how we get to the bottom of this kind of stuff. I'm afraid this only increases the chance that they will actually make things worse for Albertans, not better.

**4:40**

This is a terrible time in Alberta's economy. There have been job losses. There are people going to be placed out of work. Certainly, some have already lost their jobs. It kind of makes you wonder what will happen to the folks that have been mining for years, whose family members have been mining for years. This is how they make their living. This is what they've been doing. We don't have a concrete decision on what that'll look like either.

If this government truly believes they're on the right track with their policies, then why – why? – are we scared of engaging in more thorough research and analysis, which is what a committee would provide. We should refer this bill to a multiparty committee and use the services of the hard-working, nonpartisan research staff at the Legislature and other experts and stakeholders that the committee can reach out to.

I would hope the members of government at least think they have the best interest of Albertans in mind when they introduce bills like this. It's just hard to believe that with something this huge – I mean, the dollars and cents that we keep talking about are monstrous. That decisions about that kind of money can be decided without experts, that would be invited to committee to determine the economic impact study – I mean, "economic impact study" seem to be words we use around here quite a bit. We don't seem to ever be able to convince the government that these kinds of things are fairly important.

Madam Speaker, even policies pursued with good intentions can go wrong and have negative, unintended consequences, but then you want to be able to look back and say: look; we made a mistake. Based on careful research and talks with stakeholders and those that we invited to our committee to help us make decisions, we can turn back and say: "Okay. Well, we kind of missed that a little. We can certainly go back and relook at this again." The best course of action may be something other than where we're headed right now, but no one has brought up this aspect that we see at this point.

Unintended consequences of coal being phased out and renewables coming in and the cost, and where we sit with this government at the moment is that places like municipalities have not been exempted from – what was it? – the climate leadership action plan. Municipalities. Goodness gracious. We were just at a meeting last week where representatives from municipalities all over the province came to one place for four days, in Edmonton, and talked about the climate leadership action plan. They talked about the pain that it'll cause their municipalities. They voted, actually. They determined to vote amongst themselves as to

whether or not the carbon tax was something that they could support, and 93 per cent of them voted against that. A gentleman stood up and asked the people that were there. He wasn't even talking to the government, who was sitting there, waiting to speak to them. He didn't even ask a question of the government. He asked a question of the people in the building that represent rural Alberta all across Alberta.

**Mr. Hanson:** He asked them to listen to Albertans.

**Mr. Schneider:** Yeah. He asked them what they thought: show us your hands if you believe that shutting down coal-fired power plants was the right idea. One hand went up. The next question he asked was whether or not this was something that could possibly be the worst decision in Alberta's history, and the rest of the hands in the place went up. The last thing he said before he left his microphone was: "Please. We're just asking you to listen to Albertans. We are telling you that this is not what we..."

**Mr. Hanson:** They were there.

**Mr. Schneider:** Oh, I know they were there.

I asked a question today about the carbon tax and agriculture. There are unintended consequences with agriculture, too.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre under 29(2)(a).

**Mr. Nixon:** Thanks, Madam Speaker, and thanks, of course, to the hon. member for his presentation. He talked about a lot of concerns about this bill in that presentation and, I think, articulated several good reasons why this bill should go to committee. Particularly, I think what resonated with me in this hon. member's presentation were the concerns that he's hearing in the communities that he represents and also at places like AAMD and C, where there are locally elected politicians from all over the province that represent municipalities and counties that are in constituencies, of course, from the opposition caucus and the third-party caucus as well as the government caucus. And the overwhelming frustration that was being expressed by the reeves and the mayors and the town councillors and the county councillors of our province was: this government will not take time to discuss things with us. Overwhelmingly, that is the main thing that you would have heard at AAMD and C.

I don't think – and I think that's what the hon. member was trying to point out, Madam Speaker – that it is unreasonable for our local municipal politicians to expect to be consulted with by the provincial government. They are elected by their communities to represent them on issues important to that community, to their town, to their county, and to towns and counties in my riding, in your riding, and in other members' ridings. That's their job. Overwhelmingly, the number one concern over and over and over is: this government won't talk to us. That's why this is relevant, in the course of this referral motion, to what the hon. member was discussing. That's why this has to go to committee.

We've seen in other jurisdictions that ratepayers were promised painless, accelerated transition into these types of products, only to see either government-funded bailouts, so our kids and our kids' kids paying for the mistakes of the government – we're seeing it right now in Ontario – or really, really expensive power bills and a Premier having to come out in another province and apologize for a mistake that was made.

This government has a chance to look at other jurisdictions where this has taken place in the past and be able to get it right, and if they think that they can convince the opposition and most of the province

of Alberta, most of the people in Alberta, that to bring this through without consulting with the people that it impacts is appropriate or is going to be effective – and to not provide any sort of comfort or confirmation that they've been able to avoid the mistakes of other jurisdictions both in our country and abroad. As the hon. member said in his comments – and he pointed it out very, very well – this government still will not stand up and explain or answer the questions and concerns that are coming from municipalities that they represent as well as that I represent. They're not doing that, Madam Speaker. As the hon. member said, that is at least the first step that should be taking place when we're bringing forward legislation like this.

Instead, we continue to see this pattern. I'd like to hear the hon. member's thoughts on the pattern that we continue to see from this government and the concern that his constituents and the people that he represents have with that pattern of not consulting the very people that the legislation they're bringing forward is going to impact.

Committee is a perfect place to do it, as the hon. member pointed out. I think he did a great job of pointing that out. I don't think that it's unreasonable and most of the constituents that I talk to do not think that it's unreasonable to expect the government of Alberta to consult with the people that they're trying to make laws for. So through you, Madam Speaker – and I want to hear if the opposition member that just spoke agrees with me – I challenge the government to hold a town hall in Hanna, you know, and to go there and ask that community how they feel. If they won't take this to committee and give an opportunity for that community and the other communities that are going to be impacted to be able to speak to how this legislation impacts them and their families and their livelihood, then, at the very least, pack up and drive down to Hanna, to Stettler county, and see how it impacts them.

Go to other communities in the province. Get outside of the bubble of Edmonton – because you won't go to committee, and I wish that you would – and talk to the people that are outside of this area that we have around the dome. Hear their fears and their concerns, and you might find out that the legislation that is being brought forward by the government is going to have a negative impact on those communities. There is nothing wrong with making sure that Albertans are happy with the legislation you're bringing forward and understanding all the consequences of the decision of the legislation. We're talking about whole communities that could be devastated because of these bills.

4:50

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I speak to this motion for referral of the Renewable Electricity Act, Bill 27. You know, we have a very serious job that we do in this Legislature. We have the opportunity in a democracy to represent the wishes of our constituents. We cast forth visions, where we want this province to go, but that vision should always be directed by the will of the people. This motion for referral allows the people to have impact beyond just us as legislators in this institution. It would allow people that are often better versed and have more experience to come before us as legislators and help us better understand the consequences of the laws that we bring forward in this institution. That's an important thing to be able to do, especially when we're dealing with a piece of legislation where I have yet to be able to see how it will propel this province and its people towards a more prosperous future.

I am not against renewable energy, but I insist, if it is going to be used, that it have a productive and a positive impact on the future

of Alberta and Albertans. This government has set forward a target of 30 per cent by 2030 for renewable energy, perhaps a laudable target, but we really don't know because we haven't seen anything – I have yet to read or hear anything – that would explain to me: why 30 per cent? Why not higher? Why not lower? With the impact that this can have on our economy and on the lives of Albertans, I think there needs to be more discussion, so I would prefer this motion for referral so that we can have that discussion, Madam Speaker.

This increase of our energy sources to 30 per cent renewable energy, Madam Speaker, implies a phase-out of coal. We know that this government has been moving towards that. It's been a frustrating experience for me simply because I know that one of those electricity-generating coal plants that will be shut down is in my constituency.

We've heard the government cite some statistics about the number of people that are hurt by the coal industry, and I question those sometimes. When I look at the West Central Airshed Society, that has been studying air quality in my constituency for over 30 years, I know what the facts say. I know what the statistics say. I know that we have better air quality in my constituency today than we had 30 years ago. I know that the air monitoring stations right next to the Genesee coal plant meet or beat every ambient air quality test that the province does. So I question what value, from a health perspective, we're actually bringing to Albertans when we meet the air quality standards or beat them. There's a disconnect here that I think this government needs to pay attention to because when they make these decisions, they are impacting Albertans, and they are impacting my constituents. They are taking them out of jobs that pay well, where they can be taxpaying citizens.

I have been to these generating facilities. I have seen the Westmoreland Coal facility. I have seen the work that they do in regeneration and reclamation. I know that they are a very responsible industry. When we start talking about shutting them down and when we start talking about putting up 30 per cent renewable electrical production at the expense of the coal industry and at the expense of coal-generating stations and shutting them down early and impacting the ability of electricity-generating companies to be able to make a living and to make a profit and to hire people and to keep workers being productive, it's a very big concern.

We are presently, to my understanding, at somewhere around 11 per cent renewables. I spent some time last year in Holland looking at one of those kinds of renewables, biomass, to see if we could bring that over to Alberta and into my constituency and do so in a productive fashion. I was very impressed with some of the facilities that I saw there, how they are taking biomass products, producing methane gases, producing electricity, producing heat that is put back into businesses in that area. But while I was over there, the one question that I had for all of them was: how much are you subsidizing? Would this make sense in a free market economy, or are you subsidizing this? When we came back, then, at the end of the day, when they crunched some numbers, we saw that it wasn't going to be able to be a market-driven solution.

At the end of the day, then, Madam Speaker, that means that it's going to have to come down to the taxpayers and to either some form of grant or subsidies in order to make this thing work. While there may be some areas where you may want to try to do that at some point in time, I suppose, you've got to make the case for it, and I don't believe this government has.

Instead, legislation is being used because we know that the free market cannot do it and go down this path economically. We know that it's going to raise the costs of everything for families. And so many of the people on this side have already pointed out, Madam

Speaker, there are many, many countries and many, many places in the world where we can look to see the price of electricity escalating when we go down this path, creating all sorts of problems for the communities and for the nations that have pursued this path.

When you see the price of electricity double and triple, as it has in Ontario, and when you realize as a business that you have to cover those costs, that is going to make you less competitive in an international market. When companies start abandoning the places where they have been able to receive competitive electrical prices based on coal and they leave because they cannot compete and more people lose their jobs, I don't believe that it is an unreasonable thing to ask ourselves as legislators on both sides of the House: why are we going down this path, and why are we pursuing it?

5:00

We have one of the cleanest, if not the cleanest, coal industry in the world. By phasing out coal early, we leave stranded assets, as we've talked about already in this House. That really speaks to companies that are going to have stranded assets, which means that it's going to affect their profit margins and their bottom line, and it's going to make it more difficult for them to be competitive and to stay in business. At the end of the day, these increased costs do get passed on to the consumers and to the taxpayers of this province. I think that's worth studying, Madam Speaker, before we go down that path. We need to ensure that we have a stable replacement for the energy that we're taking offline. From everything I've heard, renewables are not going to be able to do that.

I don't understand. I think it's a poor idea to pursue this path, and I believe a motion for referral is the appropriate thing to do in this House presently because we know that the Boston report has not yet reported its findings. It's supposed to look at costs and provide a timeline for the phase-out of coal. It's not yet reported. How can we pursue this without first hearing from these individuals and this report? That is responsible, appropriate decision-making which I would hope this government would pursue. We need to pass legislation with appropriate and proper study. We have to have the consultation to determine that this legislation is actually viable, if it is actually going to help the people of Alberta. This government has not made that case, yet it continues to move forward. It makes no sense to me, Madam Speaker.

We have communities that are dependent on the jobs that are being produced through the production of coal-generated electricity. I was out in my area at Genesee, and I went and toured the Westmoreland Coal mine. I stood on the deck of one of those huge cranes and watched it as it scooped up the coal. I drove through the reclamation sites and saw the responsible reclamation of land and the planning that's gone into that. Every one of those families, every one of those men and every one of those women working in that mine was proud of what they were doing. They were proud of the fact that they were taking care of their families. They were proud of the fact – and they produce electricity from the coal that they were mining – that that's being done in the most responsible environmental way that we have anywhere in this world, yet we are shutting it down early. It makes no sense.

I can tell you that I have talked to the people in my constituency that work in these mines, that work in these electrical plants, and they don't understand. When they see their jobs on the line, when they see that they can't pay for their kids' tuition to a school or a hockey team or for music lessons, when they see that they can't take care of their families – this is not an exercise in just wishful thinking or just some ideological university discussion. This is something that is impacting their lives in a very real fashion, and I don't understand how anybody in this House could sit here and ignore those concerns. I don't think any one of us, Madam Speaker, got

elected in a democratic fashion to ignore the wishes of the people of this province. I find it very difficult, therefore, to understand how anyone in this House could support this legislation.

Let's take this to referral. Let's take this to a committee so that it can be studied, and perhaps then we can make an informed decision rather than just one that respects party lines.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills, under 29(2)(a).

**Mr. Hanson:** Under 29(2)(a). Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just briefly, then, I'll ask the Member for Drayton Valley-Devon to expand if he can. On March 17, 2016, the headline read, "Ontarians just signed up for more expensive, unreliable electricity they don't need." It goes on to say that "in 2015, the auditor general found that from 2009 to 2014, Ontario consumers paid generators \$339 million [just] for curtailment" of power. That means: because they don't need their power, they're just going to pay them to idle and coast. We have some wonderful coal-fired generators that would coast for a very, very long time.

Carrying on, on September 27, 2016, the headline now reads, "Ontario cancels plans for more green energy, citing strong supply of electricity." In six months a total flip-flop. Now, it had a lot to do with the plummeting polls of the Premier of the day there, and I think probably politics has got a lot more to do with it than common sense or trying to save the taxpayers any money. So I'm just wondering.

You know, as the Member for Strathmore-Brooks had mentioned before, we can look back at all of these different jurisdictions. We can look at Germany. My wife and I were actually lucky enough to be over in Europe this fall for a week or so, and we talked to people over there. You know, I asked a lot of people what they thought of the wind-powered energy because you see a lot of power lines, a lot of wind turbines up there, and a lot of them said: well, it's kind of a joke. They're so expensive to maintain that a lot of times when they break down, they're not even fixing them. They rob parts off them until there's nothing left to rob, and then they tear them down. They say that some of them are actually not even tied into the grid; they just stand up there and spin for no reason. That's part of the reason why they're going back to coal-fired generation in Germany. We saw a lot of turbines in Germany. We saw a lot in the Netherlands and also in Sweden and Denmark and offshore.

I actually like driving down the highways and looking at the hills and the forests without turbines on them, thank you very much – and all the power lines and infrastructure that will be needed to supply this stuff. So I think that people really need to understand what we're getting ourselves into.

I'd like the member, if he could, to talk a little bit about whether there are any proposed projects for his area of Drayton Valley-Devon. I know that there are a lot of people unemployed there, and they'd probably welcome the work. I'm just wondering. We have all these indications from other jurisdictions that have gone green and they've tried to promote wind power and solar power to the point where the government is using taxpayers' money to subsidize this, but they find that they still can't make this work.

The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky also mentioned a bunch of companies that have been in the business, and I'd like to mention one called SunEdison, one of the biggest solar panel producers, installers, suppliers, maintainers, global market, very heavily subsidized by the Obama government. They couldn't even make it; they went bankrupt this year. So why would we not look at the examples that are being laid out for us? All over the world it's been tried. Why does this government have to keep following? Are we that much smarter that we're going to do it so much better than

Germany or Ontario or Sweden or any of the other countries? What is it that makes this plan so much better than all of those other plans world-wide?

Thank you.

5:10

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the question there. You know, I think the member makes a very good point. Why would we use and follow a plan that has only pushed us down in other jurisdictions and other nations of the world?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Airdrie.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 27. One of the things I did throughout my research here in consultations about this bill is take a look at our Electric System Operator website. It says that Alberta has about 800 windmills connected to the grid here today, and as you can see – well, you can't see, but this morning coal and gas were generating about 95 per cent of the demand, and wind was generating a stunning 41 megawatts of their 1,434-megawatt capacity over a 10,000-megawatt demand. That's about .4 per cent of Alberta's demand.

We know that you're phasing out coal. While it may seem like a good thing, this plan of putting up windmills, let's follow through the NDP thinking. Let's assume the government forces Alberta to build another 7,200 green windmills to 8,000, or 10 times what we currently have. Today 8,000 windmills would only be producing 4 per cent of all of Alberta's power requirements. Four per cent. The cost of 7,200 new windmills would be about \$14 billion, or about \$3,500 for every single man, woman, and child in this province. That's it. Right? Simple.

Now, if we can't rely on wind from day to day – the wind doesn't always blow – other forms of generation will need to be built as well for backup. Now, hydro is out. We don't have Niagara Falls in our backyard. It likely means that we'll use more natural gas power plants, and we need to build them. Now, that can take out our cheap coal. Think billions more. If windmills actually worked, you would think companies would scramble to put them up for free in Alberta. If this made economic sense, we'd have them everywhere. But it doesn't, so this government is going to subsidize them. Of course, these companies will only do it with a guarantee from the Alberta government.

Now, Ontario: if you want to see a real-world example of how green energy has failed, look no further than Ontario. Many of my colleagues have stated the disastrous experiments in Ontario, the Premier herself admitting that it was a mistake. They've spent billions upon billions putting up wind power, and because we really can't rely on it, billions more on other types of generation so their lights will work on calm days. In the last five years Ontario's electrical power has gone up 88 per cent for every residence and business.

**Mr. Yao:** How much?

**Mrs. Pitt:** An 88 per cent increase in Ontario's electrical power. That's not going to do anything to help people.

Now, at the same time Alberta's has gone up just 7.7 per cent. Ontario is facing another mass increase here in January, and they will continue to skyrocket for years. This is out of control. Manufacturing in Ontario is facing these costs, and they will move to lower cost jurisdictions over time. Automakers have already begun to leave Ontario. Alberta may soon be on the same pathway,

billions spent to look green while doing little, if anything, for the environment. Now, the website updates every 30 seconds or so, and I've seen wind as high as 730 megawatts but only for part of the day. I encourage you to keep an eye on that website.

One of the other problems, concerns that I've heard from constituents and people right across Alberta – and it actually gets very little attention – is the high number of birds that are killed by windmills. As you may know, birds and bats especially are an important part of our ecosystem. [interjections] The other side doesn't care about birds, apparently, as they yell across the aisle at me about how false they think the words that I'm saying are, that windmills kill bats. But they do. It's a real thing. Look it up. They actually kill a high number of these birds. If you ever go to visit a wind farm, which I suggest that you do, you will actually see the death on the ground, and I don't think that's funny. [interjections] The other side resents what I say.

You know, it's such a news media story when the birds are killed in our oil sands, which are actually very few and far between now because they have made great strides, but it's less of a tragedy when a windmill kills a bird, especially for this government. But it's extremely important to keep that in mind.

Now, bats are especially important to an ecosystem and probably one of my favourites because they eat mosquitoes. With the threat of the Zika virus floating around, I think we should do whatever we can to protect our precious bats. [interjections] And the government laughs at Zika virus. Absolutely.

We have a wildlife rescue foundation in my constituency which I was fortunate enough to visit, Madam Speaker. It was a really neat trip. They had animals of all kinds. Particularly when I was there, there were birds of prey. Raptors and vultures are especially vulnerable to windmills. In many cases where the windmills are placed also tends to be where they fly most of the time, again creating a threat to the ecosystem.

Without that balance, which has not actually ever been mentioned once, I think, in the dialogue from the government side, this isn't a good piece of legislation. I've never heard this government talk about the birds.

**An Hon. Member:** Why would the PC MLA cross the floor?

**Mrs. Pitt:** I don't know why PC MLAs cross the floor. I'm sorry.

Now, I must say that the Wildrose believes in a realistic renewable energy program driven by private-sector investment, because if there's money in it and it makes sense and it's a good idea, it will garner investment. Government subsidies do not create a sustainable program.

Now, 30 per cent by 2030 is a plan that requires over \$10 billion of added private investment, but the PPA debacle has created investor uncertainty in Alberta's electricity markets. There are actually a lot of debacles that are creating uncertainty in many, many industries and markets. Will there be a change-in-law provision for renewable investments? Put an Enron clause – is that what you're calling it? – in the new subsidy program.

5:20

Now, ratepayers in other provinces have been promised painless accelerated transition to renewables, only to see either government-funded bailouts or increased rates on their power bills. We all know people in Ontario who regularly post their bills on Facebook with outrage, and these are regular human beings who could, you know, perhaps be able to pay for their daycare a little bit better, but instead they're going to try and keep their lights on.

Phasing out coal earlier than the federal timelines regardless of technology improvements is the wrong decision, and it's an

expensive one. We've heard this before. We're just not quite there yet. Why don't you take your slush fund from the carbon tax there and do some research and improve these technologies before we force them on Albertans? Unreal. I mean, the cost to make a solar panel actually puts out more in pollution than it is worth in energy intake.

Now, this bill gives increased power to the Alberta Electric System Operator, AESO, but it also makes them less arm's length, and there is more involvement of the minister.

The ISO may, in accordance with any commercial terms that are part of a renewable electricity program, hold a security or other interest in a generating unit . . . in relation to generator default or insolvency.

Now, it isn't clear what they mean by "hold a security."

There are instances in which the minister is given the power to interfere with the ISO. For example:

Any interest in a generating unit held by the ISO . . . and any ownership interest resulting from the enforcement of a security interest, shall be transferred or assigned in accordance with any direction of the Minister.

Also:

The [Market Surveillance Administrator] is not permitted to investigate complaints against the ISO regarding the development of a proposal for a renewable electricity program.

Now, there are many more problems that exist with this bill. Where did the 30 per cent target come from? Out of nowhere? How did we get there? This is unfair to existing renewables because they won't get this special treatment. Companies here in Alberta who have gone out of their way to try and figure out how to make renewables profitable: they will not be rewarded. The fact that this legislation is needed because renewables cannot get to 30 per cent in a free-market situation is scary.

The federal plan of phasing out coal after 50 years per plant did not wastefully strand assets. Phasing out coal early is a costly decision because we will have to pay generators out for stranded assets and then pay them again for new gas production to serve as a replacement baseload, with, in addition, more gas as a fitting complement to intermittent renewables.

We have not received the recommendations of the Boston report advising the government on the costs and the timeline for phasing out coal. So once again this session we are being asked to pass legislation without hearing back from the panel that this government commissioned to determine the legislation's viability. Is that a smoke-and-mirrors show? It certainly sounds like it.

We have not seen a plan for coal-dependent communities and how they will be transitioned towards new industries. This is the cart before the horse. There isn't a requirement to consider the economics of an electrical project or the demand for an electrical project.

The Minister may, from time to time or on a periodic basis, direct the ISO to develop a proposal for a program to promote large-scale renewable electricity generation in Alberta,

a level of government involvement that we have not seen in our deregulated energy sector. More government can never be good. Now, this government thinks that competitiveness is an issue from program to program and not for the overall process.

In general, directed targets are a terrible idea. Electricity should be generated in response to market demand. There are many examples in other jurisdictions that we can learn from, so please do.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under Standing Order 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the Member for Airdrie for her comments. I think she made a lot of



very pertinent points about Bill 27 and what we're talking about here. I was particularly interested in her comments around the large number of birds and bats that wind-powered mills kill every year. Now, members on that side of the House think it's funny that birds die needlessly. They're not hunted; they're not eaten; they're not used for anything except grist in the windmill. They seem to find that funny.

I know I recall that the Minister of Energy certainly, you know, made a comment in the exchanges here asking us to table evidence that windmills kill large numbers of birds. That might be a fair trade-off, having a large number of our birds and wildlife killed by these wind-powered mills, but even if it's a fair trade-off, it is certainly well known that these windmills are killing a lot of birds, contrary to what the Minister of Energy might think about it. She has asked us to show her the evidence. I think that she could expect some tablings in that regard.

I'm hoping that the Member for Airdrie could perhaps elaborate on her points around what windmills are doing for fowl life in Alberta.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Well, thank you very much for continuing to pursue knowledge. [interjections] Sorry. It's been a long day. [interjections] But perhaps we should talk about the birds instead of personal insults from across the floor from the Member for Calgary-North West and perhaps focus on the issues.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, the hon. Member for Airdrie has the floor, please.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The very real issues that are very rarely given the appropriate amount of time to discuss, the very real issues for the people of Airdrie and for many people across Alberta, who are actually frustrated with the lack of attention to windmills causing deaths of birds in this province, a very, very important part of our ecosystem and something that should be talked about in this House – I hope that I'm not the last in this conversation because it is important, and I would be more than happy to come back with stats on the deaths of birds here in our province, here in Alberta.

Certainly, I'm sure Ontario would be more than happy to share their information with our province, and I hope we can learn much from what's going on over there. I hope we can learn much from other jurisdictions in this world that have gone to a subsidized renewable energy market and have realized that our technology is not quite there yet and that perhaps we need to go back to the drawing board and do something different. It would be kind of neat to see a lot of these projects, but they need to be done the proper way. They need to be economical. They need to be able to run my refrigerator in the nighttime and all of my neighbours' as well because that is a very real problem. At the end of the day, I think we all need to realize that sometimes the wind doesn't blow and sometimes the sun doesn't shine. Those are two very real factors in a renewable energy market. Sometimes facts are tough. I get that. I really do get that.

I should find some . . .

5:30

**An Hon. Member:** Cats kill 200 million birds a year. Should we get rid of cats?

**Mrs. Pitt:** Wow. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Are there any other members wishing to speak to the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion. I wanted to preface it by saying that I don't believe there is anybody in this Legislature who isn't for renewables. I think it's something that we all would like to see in our mix of electricity production. I think that it's something that we'd like to see done properly and in a businesslike fashion. I think therein maybe lie some of the challenges that we're facing right now. As much as we'd like to see it and there's a vision and an opportunity to do something right, we do need to address it in a businesslike fashion.

Just last week I met with a senior vice-president of one of Canada's largest financial institutions, and their specialty was energy-sector financing. What they told me was that most of the projects that we're talking about here stand alone in their own right, are not really currently viable for commercial investor financing, which is a challenge for us, Madam Speaker. We do need financing to achieve this. We need them to be economically viable. The question is always asked: if they were economically viable, we'd already be building them today. We wouldn't need subsidies. We would just need a good fiscal and regulatory and taxation environment, and those investments would be happening. But they're not. There are some reasons behind that. Obviously, there are some risks here associated with it, and there are economics.

One of the other things that was mentioned is the lack of PPAs. It would be great if we could go to all of the renewables and say, "Here's a PPA, and here's another PPA," and they could take that as collateral to the bank to get the business loans that they require to take those innovative ideas forward. But, sadly, I don't think there is a lot of trust, not even from the renewables community but certainly not from the investment community, in a PPA in today's world, sadly, and we all know why that's the case. So really we're down to the large companies that can finance across a large base of assets to finance these jobs. Only large companies have the ability to do that: the TransAltas, the Capital Powers, the Enmaxes, the ATCOs. Strangely, that's the same list of companies that this government is suing, and those are the ones that have the financial wherewithal to move ahead. I fear that they will decline that opportunity.

So where does that leave us, Madam Speaker? Basically, that says that unless government or let's call it the taxpayer is willing to take on the risks of these renewables or to provide huge subsidies and take on risky loan guarantees, many of these projects just are not going to happen. We're not going to get to that 30 per cent target that we're looking at. We're not going to be able to replace the other 25 per cent of coal that we're shutting down. People forget, of course, that we have to build the 30 per cent baseload that goes with the renewables to ensure that we have reliable and, hopefully, affordable energy as well.

Madam Speaker, I met with one of my constituents a couple of weeks ago who has what I thought was a brilliant idea. It's not out in the public realm yet, and he asked me not to give too many details, but he had an amazing idea. It was utilization on unused but flat, three-phase electrically serviced land that is not being used. It's actually some parcels that are contiguous but in between some highly productive agricultural land. He has an amazing plan in place that he could move forward with, and he can't find financing. He's talked to ATB. He's talked to the commercial institutions and the other commercial banks, and they've told him that they can't finance him because he doesn't have that collateral of a PPA, he doesn't have a contract that will ensure that he actually has a revenue stream when he builds this. So he's caught in a conundrum right now because he can't get support. He's talking to ATB. Obviously, we've heard a lot about next year \$1.5 billion of loans out there and some dollars from AIMCo and other organizations,

but he can't find out how he can access those dollars. That's one of my concerns. How are we going to finance this? How are we going to move forward? How are we going to achieve it?

I have another concern, Madam Speaker, which I'll call the apples-to-apples syndrome here. You know what? I think we all love the idea of renewables and wind turbines and solar panels, but I'm going to talk a little bit about a wind turbine. I had another constituent that came to me, an academic. He said: you know, the problem is that everybody talks about solar panels and wind turbines as if they're kind of a magic thing and we snap our fingers and they appear and they generate renewable energy, but they don't. If we're going to approach the renewables in a businesslike and logical and rational manner so that they can be viable, so that they can compete, can produce electricity for Albertans in an economically viable way, can provide investment opportunities so that we can move ahead with it, we need to look at the reality here. We need to actually compare apples to apples, and nobody seems to want to do that.

I've heard that it takes 285 metric tonnes of metallurgical coal to build a wind turbine. That's an interesting fact right there. That is burned, and that creates effluent into the environment, and we don't seem to want to know about that or capture that. That same plant that builds it needs power input. I suspect that those very plants are not driven by wind turbines and solar panels. I would guess that that is not the case, and I'd like to be proven otherwise.

What about the costs for the supports of those manufacturers and the fact that it's unlikely that that's going to be manufactured here in Alberta, Madam Speaker, or probably even anywhere in North America because of economies of scale and divisional labour? It's probably going to be Korea or China or some other industrialized nation with the economies of scale to do that. So we're exporting jobs. We're affecting our balance of trade significantly because all of those products are going to be brought in when we could actually produce energy from our mines here, coal mines, and natural gas drilling as well.

So we finish that wind tower, and then it has to be trucked to a port, burning up some hydrocarbons. Where are we accounting for that? Then it goes onto a ship. Last time I checked, those ships are not running on wind turbines or solar panels either, so we're burning up some more hydrocarbons. Then it gets to the west coast, and we put it on a train or truck to get to Alberta. Then we have to truck it to the site. Then we get a helicopter to hoist it into place.

Then there's another consideration here, Madam Speaker. Gee, we don't have transmission lines to where those wind turbines are. So we get the backhoes out, and we get the earth movers, and we get the equipment and machinery to lay down those transmission lines. Oh, by the way, those transmission lines were produced using hydrocarbons. Nobody's captured that, Madam Speaker.

We've got all that captured, so when is the break-even, Madam Speaker? It's not on day 1, when we go and we admire and we cut a ribbon of that wind turbine or that solar panel. When is that payback? Why are we not willing to address the facts so that we actually go into this with our eyes wide open, so that we compare apples with apples? So when we walk in and turn on that switch or we cut that ribbon, we can say: "Isn't this a wonderful thing? We have now created an opportunity to capture renewable energy resources. By the way, the payback's not going to come until seven years and six months from now, but that's okay because if that turbine will last us 20 years, that means we can get some net back on that after seven years and six months. It'll only be 12 years and six months where we get the payback before that is past its serviceable life and then we have to haul it away and recycle all that."

At least we'd be honest with ourselves, Madam Speaker, that what we're achieving – we are actually willing to talk about the facts so that we can deliver that in a way that is economically justifiable, financially feasible, and actually means something to Albertans.

Some of the other hon. members have talked about some of the other costs, and I think we have to look at that. It's not just the financial costs and the greenhouse gas costs and all those other things. We need to factor in: what about the birds that we're killing? What about the land that we take out of agricultural production? What about the talk of the low vibration waves that are rumoured that are also causing effects to residents and to cattle and to the birds that are out there as well?

5:40

Madam Speaker, I just worry. I'd like to think that everybody in this Legislature is for a good thing, for reducing our footprint, for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. But let's do it responsibly. Let's do it in a way that recognizes that just because we wave a magic wand of renewables, it doesn't mean they don't have a footprint and an impact. And let's know that. Let's know that it's five years and two months or seven years and six months or 12 years and three months that we're going to get a payback. I think that that's a responsible thing to do.

And I think that that's one of the flaws of this move forward, that we actually need to be responsible. We need to be willing to look at the facts. We need to be willing to balance the pros and the cons of everything we do. We need to look at the unintended consequences, and we need to play our own devil's advocate. I would challenge the members across the floor here to be that to themselves, to make sure that they take a look at the unintended consequences, to look at it from another perspective of "Why should we?" and "Why shouldn't we?" and balance those and make sure that we're doing the right thing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any questions or comments for the hon. member under 29(2)(a)?

Any further speakers to the amendment?

I'll call the question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment REF1 lost]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:42 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Fildebrandt	Nixon	Smith
Gotfried	Pitt	Strankman
Hanson	Schneider	Yao
Loewen		

Against the motion:

Anderson, S.	Hinkley	Miranda
Carlier	Hoffman	Payne
Carson	Horne	Phillips
Connolly	Jansen	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Kazim	Schreiner
Cortes-Vargas	Kleinsteuber	Shepherd
Dach	Littlewood	Sigurdson
Dang	Loyola	Sucha
Drever	Luff	Sweet
Engen	Malkinson	Turner

Fitzpatrick  
Ganley  
Goehring

McCuaig-Boyd  
McPherson

Westhead  
Woollard

[Motion on amendment REF1 lost]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 4(2) the House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9.

Totals:

For – 10

Against – 37

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m.]







## Table of Contents

Introduction of Guests .....	1927, 1940
Members' Statements	
Harassment and Women in Politics .....	1928
Deaths of Children in Care .....	1928
Holodomor Memorial Day .....	1936
National Housing Day .....	1937
Navratri .....	1937
Parliamentary Debate .....	1937
Oral Question Period	
Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement .....	1929, 1936
Energy Industry Competitiveness .....	1929
Investigations of Deaths of Children in Care .....	1930
Electric Power Prices .....	1930
Foster and Kinship Care Supports .....	1931
School Nutrition Program .....	1931
Electricity Power Purchase Agreements .....	1932, 1934
Energy Policies .....	1932
Protection of Children in Care .....	1933
Fuel Tax and Carbon Levy Revenue Utilization .....	1934
Consultation with Métis People .....	1935
Carbon Levy and Agriculture Costs .....	1935
Statement by the Speaker	
Election Anniversaries .....	1936
Notices of Motions .....	1938
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	1938, 1944
Tablings to the Clerk .....	1938
Orders of the Day .....	1939
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 27 Renewable Electricity Act .....	1944
Division .....	1956
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 21 Modernized Municipal Government Act .....	1939, 1940
Third Reading	
Bill 28 Public Health Amendment Act, 2016 .....	1941

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