



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, May 8, 2017

Day 29

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third 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

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (W)	Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)
Anderson, Hon. 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)
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND), Deputy Government House Leader	McIver, Ric, Calgary-Hays (PC), Leader of the Progressive Conservative Opposition
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)	McKitrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)	McLean, Hon. Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)	McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (ND)
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)
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND), Government Whip	Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W), Official Opposition Whip
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W)	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)
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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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Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (ND)	Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
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)
Kleinsteuber, 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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Kleinsteuber	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, May 8, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us reflect or pray, each in our own way. Hon. members, let us be inspired by the youth of this province, in particular all the youth that are present with us today. Let us work with them to find ways and solutions for a better Alberta. The youth of today will be the decision-makers of tomorrow. Let us also be inspired by those amongst us with special needs and special skills. They are our real heroes.

Thank you, hon. members and ladies and gentlemen. We will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Robert Clark and a very special guest, Mr. Joey Moss. I would invite all to participate in singing our national anthem.

Hon. Members:

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

[Standing ovation]

The Speaker: Please be seated, hon. members.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Horne: Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 30 students from Muriel Martin school. The students are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Rhonda Surmon, along with their chaperones, Mrs. Heather McDonald and Mrs. Susanne Ambrose. This group is attending School at the Legislature this week, and I would like to ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, we'll now get a special introduction to our special guest today. I was hoping that we might get to sing the national anthem seven times.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on your behalf to introduce to all members of the Assembly Mr. Joey Moss and his family. Mr. Moss is the beating heart of the Edmonton Oilers organization, having been the locker room attendant for both the Oilers and the Edmonton Eskimos for more than 30 years. His unwavering positivity and passion for the game inspires players and fans across the country. He has been awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal, the NHL Alumni Association's seventh man award, and is an honoured member of the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame. Mr. Moss is here today with his family: brother Steve Moss; sister Patty Walker and her husband, Stephen; nieces Jordan and Taylor Walker; niece Brittany Walker and her boyfriend, Steve Besenyei;

nephew Adam Walker and his wife, Kim; and the family photographer, Tom Braid. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and I would ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

[Mr. Moss made remarks from the gallery]

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly 84 students representing 64 constituencies who are here today as participants in the Mr. Speaker's MLA for a Day program. Offered annually since 2003, this program strives to further develop the interest in and understanding of our parliamentary system among Alberta youth. These high school students arrived on Sunday and since then have participated in a variety of activities. In the last day they toured the Legislature, explored the grounds, and were able to network with Legislative Assembly Office staff to learn about the work they do supporting the members of this Assembly.

Today they're observing question period, meeting with a panel of former MLAs. Tomorrow they'll debate a resolution in this very Chamber, which will be presided over by yourself, Mr. Speaker. During this debate the students will be given a unique perspective on the work done by the members of this Assembly. Following the debate students will visit MLA offices and attend the Leg. with their MLAs.

I would ask that all of our MLA for a Day participants, who are seated in both the members' and the public galleries, please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome, each and every one of you. I would urge you not to hang around too often with the MLAs. I fear that you will get some bad habits.

The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the board chair of the Alberta Network of Public Housing Agencies, Mrs. Tanni Doblanko. This network is building the capacity of the nonprofit sector in Alberta and is an important advocate for affordable housing. Through connection, education, and advocacy the Alberta Network of Public Housing Agencies is working to create an Alberta where everyone has a safe, affordable, and appropriate place to call home. I would ask that Tanni please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

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

Mr. Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two people who are here to see the introduction of Bill 13 later today. Andrew Kriegler is the president and CEO of the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada, also known as IIROC. That's a fantastic acronym. With him is Lucy Becker, IIROC's vice-president of public affairs and member education services. I'd ask that they both rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for St. Albert.

1:40

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Jeremy Woolward. Jeremy is visiting us from Calgary, and he's been involved in politics since about age 10. He is now a board member for the Member for Calgary-North West. Would like to say a special thank you to the members for Calgary-South East and Vermilion-Lloydminster, but he has crossed the gallery. He has seen the light and has chosen to join a centrist, progressive movement. Please join me in welcoming Jeremy to this House today.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two constituents of mine from the outstanding riding of Calgary-Foothills. They decided to drop in and see the question period today. They are Dorothy Allred and Kenneth Allred. The Allreds are struggling small-business owners, who recently lost a major client to bankruptcy, among other knocks of hard luck. I would ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House. They're in the right gallery.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Drever: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you my roommate and constituent of the Minister of Health and Deputy Premier, who he voted for, Stephen Engstrom. Stephen has his diploma in travel and tourism from Grant MacEwan. He loves to be outdoors fishing and hiking in his free time, and he just wanted to come and watch QP today. I would ask him to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the president and CEO of Alberta Forest Products Association. May 7 to 13 is Alberta Forest Week. Today the Alberta Forest Products Association and its partners have distributed seedlings to each Member of this Legislative Assembly, inviting all of us to be part of the important work of forest stewardship. AFPA is an important partner of our government in keeping our forest industry strong as we continue the work of diversifying our economy and in facing market challenges. I would like to ask Paul Whittaker to now rise and receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other guests today? The Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my distinct honour to introduce an inspirational and intrepid Albertan. Tasha Schindel is a proud but humble wife and mother who embraces an indomitable spirit and a lifetime of volunteerism in children's services, educational institutions, her faith community, and numerous professions to build communities of positive change. She served eight years as provincial director and VP of ASCA, four years on the board of directors for the Calgary Learning Consortium, is the president of the Calgary-Lougheed PC Association, and is the newly minted PCAA regional director for Calgary-South. Tasha spent much of her

childhood in Asia, speaks conversational Mandarin Chinese, and truly believes in a global community. I am absolutely honoured to call Tasha a trusted and dear friend, and I ask her now to stand to receive the warm ovation of this Assembly. Thank you, Tasha. You're awesome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Ministerial Statements

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

National Hockey League Playoffs in Alberta

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much. Before I begin, let me just say that I'm paying off part of a bet to our Premier. She was right. I was wrong. I'm wearing the winning team's colours. She and her colleagues will get some Alberta craft beer from Polar Park Brewing on my tab, not my ministerial tab but my personal tab, and I will read this ode to her and the winning team in public. Mr. Speaker, it begins:

I stand today to pay a debt
As often requested by Strathmore-Brooks
And though not the ones of which he dreams,
What I say here will balance books.
Because in April's early days
When Flames and Oilers fans both grinned
I bet the Premier that the Flames
Would be the ones to last and win.
And so we watched with bated breath
As players passed and took their shots
But when the first round was laid to rest
The Oilers prevailed, but we did not.
Our hopes: they sputtered and went out
As our team lost in four straight games.
Now our golf courses call 911
To report they're overrun with Flames.
And so I stand here to confess
Before the Speaker and the Queen
That Alberta's greatest honours belong
To the Oilers in 2017.
And for sports fans aching for a fix
Of top-notch sport and playing sublime,
The Oilers alone can scratch that itch,
The right team in the right place at the right time.
And to my colleagues in this House
I raise my voice and clearly state
As Minister of Finance and the Treasury Board
That beer is good, but the Oilers are great.

The Speaker: You may want to stick with that speech writer, hon. minister.

And won't it be nice, hon. members, when we get two teams in the playoffs.

The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm glad to see the minister is moving right. A lot of talk about unity here recently in Alberta, and of course all members of this House are united right now, united in a love for the colour orange. I want to make it very clear that, first of all, as you all know, this is the only orange I wear, primarily because it clashes with my hair, as you can tell. No, there hasn't been a sudden defection to the NDP. This orange crush is one we all get behind here in Alberta. It's called the Edmonton Oilers during playoff season. The city of Edmonton and indeed the province have been swept up in the wave of excitement for the team

and are certainly rooting for them as they come into game 7 against the Anaheim Ducks Wednesday night.

I wish I could be there. Whether it's the mutton chops of Zack Kassian, the chorus of Lous for Milan Lucic, the dangles of Leon Draisaitl, or the outstanding aerobics of Cam Talbot in net, this is a team for all Albertans to get behind and to make sure they bring the cup back to Alberta. And let's not forget the outstanding performance of Hart trophy candidate and Oilers captain Connor McDavid, who is certainly worthy of the letter C – Mr. Speaker, you might notice it on my sleeve today – on his jersey at the ripe age of 20, believe it or not. At their last home game of this round the Oilers looked more like the Eskimos than a hockey team, scoring, yes, seven points. Ladies and gentlemen, it's duck-hunting season in Alberta.

We'll be cheering for them all the way regardless, but enough can't be said about the way this team has captured the hearts and minds of all Albertans. Oilers fans are everywhere wearing their favourite player's jersey, as I am today, flying their flags on their cars, and making all Canadians proud indeed of singing the anthems, the Canadian one and the American one. They fight this fight not for Edmonton alone but for all Albertans, Mr. Speaker, to bring the cup back to Alberta, because the spirit of this team is infectious. I know all members of this House and all Albertans will join me in saying a resounding: let's go Oilers; let's go.

Members' Statements

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

Member for Calgary-East's World View

Ms Luff: Thank you. In May 2015 the people of Alberta chose a new government because they were tired of the entitled world view of the PCs in power and recognized that the world view of the Wildrose was neither inclusive nor progressive.

Grade 8 students in Alberta know what a world view is, Mr. Speaker. It's in the curriculum. "[A] worldview is a collection of values and beliefs about life and the universe . . . common to a group of people." The opposition makes a big deal that we're trying to impose our NDP world view on people, so I thought it might be useful to describe exactly what a world view is, what I value, and what I believe.

1:50

I value equality. I believe that every Albertan, regardless of race, religion, gender, gender expression, or socioeconomic status, should have access to equal rights and equal opportunities to succeed. I am proud of legislation that included gender expression in the Human Rights Act.

I value education. I believe in high-quality, publicly delivered education. I believe that education is the future. I am proud of our commitment to fund for enrolment growth and to improve the curriculum for a new generation.

I value the environment. I believe in ensuring that our kids have clean air and water. I know that climate change is real and man-made and that we must act now. I am proud that we protected the Castle and put a cap on oil sands emissions.

I value public services. I believe that there is a necessary role for government in providing important services for our citizens and that health and education must stay public services. Period. I am proud of the 2,000 new long-term care beds that we are building.

I value democracy. I believe that the more people are engaged, the better I can do my job. I believe in identifying barriers to

participation. I believe democracy should work for everyone. I am proud that we have taken big money out of politics.

I value the arts. I believe that they add richness to our society and our lives both as audiences and participants.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, I value people. I believe in humanity and its capacity to succeed if we work in co-operation rather than in competition.

These are the things that I value and believe, Mr. Speaker, and I know that Albertans value and believe these things, too. I also believe that although your world view might not be exactly the same as mine, we can find common values for the future of Alberta.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Alberta Health Services Survey

Mr. Jean: A new survey conducted by Alberta Health Services paints a bleak picture indeed about the state of our health care system in the province. The results of the internal survey show that over half of the respondents don't think their opinions count and 43 per cent say that they are not satisfied with AHS as a place to work. This comes as no surprise to those who know that the AHS system is a bloated bureaucracy with managers managing managers. Will the Premier commit to fully releasing this survey, as is standard practice within the government of Alberta's bureaucracy? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I believe that the survey has been fully released, and that's why the member is quoting it.

You know, each day more than 100,000 AHS staff and physicians work tirelessly to promote and protect the health of Albertans. We respect them, and we celebrate them for the work that they do every day. We know that we can always do better on that, but one thing that I will say, Mr. Speaker, is that cutting hundreds of millions and, in some cases, billions out of health care would not make it easier for them to do their jobs. We have their backs, and we will continue to have their backs.

Mr. Jean: Albertans want to trust that when they get sick, they will get the health care that they need from AHS, but the results of this survey clearly show that even health care employees and physicians don't trust AHS. An astonishing 36 per cent – that's 36 per cent of respondents, including front-line workers and physicians – stated that if they needed health care, they would not feel safe receiving it from AHS. Premier, if over one-third of those directly involved in delivery in the health care system wouldn't feel safe receiving health care from AHS, how on earth would regular, normal, everyday Albertans feel confident in the delivery of it?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we are working every day and our Minister of Health is working every day and the Associate Minister of Health is working every day to improve the quality of care that we deliver to Albertans because we understand that when times are tough, people need to understand and appreciate and know that they have a health care system that is there for them when they and their loved ones need it. So we will continue to do that work. But beating up on public-sector employees, trying to bargain with them in public, rolling back funds, cutting things: that's not the way to stabilize our health care system. [interjections]

Our government is here to protect our health care system, not tear it . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, under this NDP government's watch we have a bloated health care system that physicians and nurses don't trust and that isn't getting results for everyday Albertans. When we propose solutions here on the Wildrose side to fix our health care system like exploring ways to reduce wait times, the NDP laughs, ridicules, and shoots them down. This government seems content with a bloated system that isn't serving Albertans. Will the Premier use the results of this survey as a wake-up call and commit to the Wildrose proposal to study ways to reduce wait times in Alberta? Yes or no?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're actually quite proud that on a lot of different measures our health care system is slowly improving. But one thing that won't make things work better is this continued threat of ideological privatization that the members opposite and their hopeful dance partners have been imposing and threatening Albertans with for years because that is what undercuts the confidence of employees. That's what undercuts the confidence of Albertans. [interjections] We are going to inject stability into our health care system because that's what we know Albertans are looking for.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, I was looking for an answer, not a fairy tale.

Oil Sands Advisory Group Co-chair

Mr. Jean: I don't know if it's stubbornness or unwillingness to stand up for Alberta, but Tzaporah Berman's continued position as co-chair of the oil sands advisory group is bad for our province, bad for Albertans. Albertans are frustrated, and justifiably so, that they are handing over any taxpayer dollars to an individual who has equated our oil sands to Mordor and who is actively trying to kill the Trans Mountain expansion project. With friends like Tzaporah Berman, Albertans have no need whatsoever for any enemies. Why won't the Premier do the right thing and fire Berman from this position immediately?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I have said before is that the oil sands advisory group is working together in order to make serious progress on implementing the emissions cap, an emissions cap which is absolutely fundamental to our successful acquisition of not one but two pipelines. Now, I appreciate that the members opposite would like to tear it all down, undo the whole thing, stick their heads in the ground, pretend there's no problem, and then wonder why we have no pipelines, but that is a failed – failed – strategy. [interjections] We will not go down that road again.

The Speaker: Opposition House Leader, I wonder if you can make sure that your caucus behind you keeps the volume of their comments down today because we have a great day ahead of us.

Mr. Jean: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's the Premier's appointees that are trying to destroy the pipelines going through B.C. The Premier's unwillingness to do the right thing and fire Berman shows her true colours, and Albertans should recognize that. In case she hadn't

noticed, we need to be proud supporters of Alberta oil, not send mixed messages to investors and the world. Oil continues to hover around \$45 a barrel, and our province is in the worst economic situation since the days of the national energy program. The Premier can't claim to support our oil, having antipipeline activists leading an advisory group on oil sands. It doesn't make any sense. So which is it, Premier? Do you support pipelines and Albertans, or do you support . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, our government has been very clear that we support getting tidewater access for our oil and gas, and that is why we have worked on that project since the very beginning, when we were elected. That's why we have succeeded on that project where the members opposite have failed. They took an approach of yelling at people that didn't agree with them. We took an approach of bringing people together, and we are proud that it is getting results.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, her appointee says: no tidewater pipeline.

Since the Premier won't listen to me on this topic, maybe she'll listen to the very valid concerns of an everyday Albertan. David Young wrote to the *Edmonton Journal* and asked this pointed question, that the Premier needs to answer.

These folks can't have it both ways: sitting on OSAG (collecting either salaries or stipends) while trashing one of the key economic engines of our Alberta economy. It's time for the premier to correct this situation. Or has the NDP green plan really been [all along] about killing oil [jobs]?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, our government has done nothing but work on getting a pipeline to tidewater, and thankfully that's exactly what happened. You know what? The members opposite can't even agree with each other on things that they theoretically agree on. Meanwhile, what we've done is we've brought oil executives together with environmentalists to work together on a solution. They can do their thing. We'll do our thing. We'll get a pipeline. Someday they might get shared office space. I'll take our choice.

The Speaker: I think we're at the third main question.

Government Advertising Expenses

Mr. Jean: The NDP have developed a nasty habit of using taxpayer dollars to promote their less popular programs and policies. Albertans know it, and we saw it with the rollout of the carbon tax, that Albertans didn't ask for and couldn't afford, and, again, trying their risky and ideological PPA lawsuit. Ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. The latest example is a rollout of ads related to the energy efficiency program that is paid for through the \$3 billion carbon tax that Albertans pay. How much taxpayer money has this NDP Premier thrown away in her latest energy ad campaign?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, our government is investing in energy efficiency programs to make life more affordable for Albertans by helping them to reduce the costs of their utilities. The funny thing is that it's hard for people to do that if they don't know about it, so what we are doing is that we are investing to ensure Albertans understand the range of

opportunities that they have to engage in energy efficiency strategies and to save money. I will not apologize for that because we are focused on making life better for Albertans.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, this NDP program is going to cost taxpayers more than they will ever save.

That isn't the only new glossy ad campaign that the NDP government is rolling out. Listen to this. A recent CBC report shows that the Public Affairs Bureau is also frantically working on a new video campaign with the company Dynacor that's going to be launched in the coming weeks. It's all part of the propaganda that has seen this NDP government spend over \$10 billion on advertising while in office. [interjections] Ten million. Sorry. I'm used to "b"s with the NDP. Will the Premier disclose why she's hired Dynacor and how on earth she can justify this kind of expenditure?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, the previous government left Alberta as the only jurisdiction in North America without an energy efficiency program. It is outrageous. The members opposite and their hopeful new dance partners want to continue down a path of pretending that energy efficiency isn't the most effective way to reduce emissions and help people save money on their regular utility bills. But, like the rest of the continent, we get that that helps Albertans, and we're going to keep working on it because it's an excellent program.

Mr. Jean: The facts are clear, Mr. Speaker. This NDP government has spent almost three times as much as their predecessors on advertising while in office. Shameful. Albertans are disgusted seeing their hard-earned dollars being used for advertisements of government programs that show up in movie theatres or on TV or radio. It's not acceptable. The NDP government continues to waste taxpayer resources on frivolous ad campaigns at a time when they cannot afford it. When will the Premier realize that Albertans don't want to be bought with their own money and stop these expensive ads?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that over 90,000 Albertans have already started to sign up for these energy efficiency programs. Because we know that they work and they save money and they reduce emissions, if we can get another 90,000 people to sign up, that will mean even more money saved and even more emissions reduced. [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet.

Ms Notley: The more people who are involved, the more we save and the more we reduce emissions, Mr. Speaker. So you know what? We're just going to keep working on that very, very, goal.

The Speaker: The leader of the third party.

Job Creation and Retention

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this government claims Alberta has gained 20,000 jobs under their watch, but Statistics Canada's most recent labour force survey tells a different story. Alberta lost 63,200 jobs since May 2015. Meanwhile every part of the goods-producing sector has lost jobs, totalling 71,000, since this government took power. When will this government's failed plan actually produce even one private-sector job beyond the tens and hundreds of thousands that you have driven out of Alberta?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, with the drop in the price of oil many, many Albertans lost their

jobs. We are concerned about them, and we understand that it was a very, very serious issue for many, many Alberta families, and that's why we've been focused on trying to combat that which happened as a result of the price of oil. You're right. We're not there yet. For nine of the last 10 months we've seen job growth in Alberta, and that's good. In March we saw 20,000 new jobs, and that's even better, but we'll be the first to admit that our job is not done. We continue to be focused on creating jobs for Albertans.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. The Premier never gets tired of being wrong.

Agriculture is among Alberta's most important industries that do not depend directly on global energy prices: 16,700 jobs lost in agriculture, Premier, not because of oil. Twenty-four per cent of the 68,000 jobs gone under your watch. Can the agriculture minister tell us how much of that job loss is due to an actual contraction in agriculture production and exports and how much is due to farmers and ranchers avoiding hiring so they don't have to deal with Bill 6?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I for one and this government can't be more proud of our agriculture sector. The agrifood processing sector in Alberta is now the largest manufacturing sector in the province. Our agriculture continues to be a real bright spot in the province and will continue to be so. I and this government have the best interests of farmers at heart. We will continue to do so. We're making lives better for all farmers. We're making life better for all Albertans.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder neither minister wanted to answer the question about their failed policies: 89,000 jobs from our goods-producing sector lost, including 31,000 in construction, 22,000 in manufacturing, 16,000 in agriculture, thousands more in energy. Given that the jobs in exportable services are also down, including 15,000 in accommodation and food service, they have a lot to be ashamed of. How can this government claim it's diversifying the economy when almost every sector has lost jobs on your watch? They're not all because of oil.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know what I'm not going to apologize for? The fact that the number of rigs drilling in our province is up 100 per cent from last year, the fact that Alberta's exports are up 68 per cent over the same time last year. That's including our nonenergy exports, which have reached the highest levels since 2008. Our wholesale trade has risen for the fifth month in a row and has reached the highest levels since June 2015. Last year we led the country in private-sector capital investment, and we're on track to lead it again.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Energy Industry Update

Mr. Westhead: Mr. Speaker, while we all know that record-low global oil prices triggered a recession in Alberta in 2015, there are positive signs for the province's economy and for Alberta's oil and gas sector. But the opposition wants Albertans to believe it's a bad thing that our home-grown oil companies are doing well and increasing their investments in the oil sands. Albertans aren't impressed that the opposition is cheering for failure. To the Minister

of Energy: what signals are you seeing to suggest improved prospects for industry and Albertans in 2017? [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we know the last couple years have been hard for Albertans and hard on their families. We are seeing a growing sense of optimism. We know that drilling is up, and with drilling come more jobs. Up my way I'm seeing that hotels are fuller, more service rigs are on the roads, and life in general is busier. With two pipeline approvals and our royalty review system, our side of the government is getting results. We need you folks to cheer for us. [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet, please.

First supplemental.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this increased activity coincides with improved resource prices since this time last year, again to the minister: what is it that the government has done to contribute to increased investment and activity in the oil and gas sector? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet, please.

The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, critics said that it was the wrong time to review the royalty system, but it proved to be exactly the right time. Our modernized royalty framework supports producers for innovation and supports lowering costs. The new framework is supporting jobs in both conventional oil and gas and in the oil sands, and the outlook for 2017 is very bright. We expect to be having more than 650 rigs, more than our neighbouring provinces. We're not out of the woods yet, but we know that we are seeing a lot of positive signs.

2:10

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the Minister of Energy: given that it's important to see continued investment in Alberta, what is the government doing to counteract the opposition's dangerous climate change denialism and unduly negative characterization of our province's investment climate? [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, when I stand, please be quiet. Thank you.

The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I talk daily to energy industry stakeholders. They have heard the same cries about uncertainty, but you know what causes uncertainty? It's an opposition who talks down Alberta consistently and talks about getting rid of the carbon leadership plan, the carbon leadership plan that got us two pipeline approvals. So I would urge the opposition to get out from under the dome themselves and go speak to those stakeholders, who are very worried about the uncertainty that they are causing. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, please.

Promotion of Alberta's Energy Industry

Mr. Panda: Today I am proud to put forward Motion 505, which will shift Canada away from buying the oil of oppressive dictatorships. Alberta is among the most socially and environmentally minded jurisdictions in the world for petroleum production, yet members of this NDP government have protested oil development, spreading dangerous misinformation. Albertans still doubt the NDP's 180-degree turnaround from anti-oil to pro-development. Does the Premier agree that Alberta's oil is ethical compared to other sources of crude?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, we've worked very hard to get two pipelines. Those pipeline approvals came because of a climate leadership plan and the hard work on this side of the House. Our opposition keeps saying that if – if – they are ever elected, they will scrap the climate leadership plan. Do they not understand that that's the very plan that got us two pipeline approvals? [interjections]

The Speaker: Please keep it down.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that the NDP want Albertans to celebrate the approval for the repair on line 9 as if it is the same as a new pipeline, spooking Energy East's proponents, and given that Alberta still needs Energy East and given that Energy East is critical for ending Canada's dependence on dictator oil, when will the Premier stand up to her Leap fanatic friends, also known as dance partners, across Canada about the legacy of clean, ethical oil in Alberta and stop stoking the fires against pipeline approvals?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the difference between a dance partner and someone you disagree with is that where you're begging someone to be your dance partner, you're also running around talking about how much you agree on everything even though, apparently, you can't agree on your plan. But what we've been very clear on is that we object to and we reject the position of the Leap Manifesto and everything about it. Quite the opposite. We have gone into places where people are not in favour of pipelines and we have argued for pipelines. We've talked to environmentalists and we've talked to labour unions because you shouldn't yell at your opposition when you don't agree. You should try to bring . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, the NDP pay the salary of antipipeline protester Tzaporah Berman while she spreads misinformation. Given that Berman's rhetoric on pipelines proves that the Premier's social licence plan hasn't convinced the ecoradicals and given that this misinformation undermines the public confidence in pipelines, is Berman on the OSAG panel because she represents the personal views of the Premier, or will the Premier acknowledge the truth right now, that Alberta oil is clean and ethical?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we disagree with Ms Berman's position on pipelines, but she is on the OSAG committee to help us . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members. Please pause the clock. I can't hear. Keep your voices down.

Mr. Cooper: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order noted.

Minister of Energy, please continue.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The OSAG committee is a committee of energy companies, environmental leaders, and community representatives who are helping us work with the 100-megatonne cap. I can tell you that on this side of the House we are taking our orders from Albertans, not from Premiers of other provinces, not from people outside this province. We are listening to Albertans.

Advanced Education Ministry Travel Expenses

Mr. Rodney: Last week I quoted from the government's own numbers in a speech, so it was beyond ironic when a minister stated, "If I were a faculty member, I would give him an F minus." Now, curiously, immediately thereafter the Auditor General released his report on the travel, meal, and hospitality expenses of seven ministries but singled out Advanced Education for insufficient business rationale documentation, no preapproval for out-of-province travel, incorrect quoting on expenses, with an expense not being publicly disclosed. Now, with a failing grade from the Auditor General, when will the Minister of Advanced Education rectify all of these problems?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We want to thank the Auditor General for his guidance on this matter. We're working with the Auditor General and the finance department because we recognize that we have some processes that we can improve. We're working diligently to make sure that those processes are better going forward.

Mr. Rodney: Given that during debate last week the minister suggested that a certain member had not done his homework and given that the Ministry of Advanced Education was the only ministry audited which did not have the proper systems or protocols in place, again to the minister. It would appear that perhaps you have been singled out as not having completed your homework, so will you take this opportunity here and now in this Chamber to explain to all Albertans why your office and your department were the only ones not following the rules?

Mr. Schmidt: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course, we take our responsibility for managing tax dollars prudently very seriously. That's why we're working with the Auditor General and our finance departments to make sure that our processes are improved going forward and that we have the proper documentation and controls in place so that all of our expenses are beyond question.

I want to thank the Auditor General for helping us see the error of our ways, and I want to assure everyone in this House that we're making sure that we do a better job in the future.

Mr. Rodney: Albertans are wondering what he'd be saying if he wasn't caught.

Now, given that the Auditor General also reviewed the internal controls of 16 postsecondary institutions from across Alberta and given that his office identified six of them as needing improvement for financial statements as well as the implementation of outstanding Auditor General recommendations from last year, again to the minister: what oversight are you providing to these institutions, and when can we expect them to be in compliance with the Auditor General's recommendations?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the hon. member for the question. Of course, we are very concerned about some of the issues that the Auditor General raised with respect to the financial reporting that took place at a number of the institutions that he identified in the report. We're working with those institutions to make sure that they have all of the information that the Auditor General needs for future reports. We're working diligently to make sure that everything is going to be in better shape for the next Auditor General report.

2:20

Legal Aid

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, legal aid is a vital component of our legal system, providing representation and other services for eligible Albertans who could not have otherwise afforded legal services. The recent Auditor General report highlights several disturbing facts, including that there have been no performance measures to monitor cost-effectiveness or quality until just recently. Even worse, there's a lack of clarity on what services it should provide. The AG also notes that internal studies have been done, yet there remains no action. What is the minister doing to address this problem?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know that legal aid is a critical component in our justice system. That's why this government has increased funding to Legal Aid by 26 per cent since we took office. We know that there is still more work that needs to be done to ensure that we are delivering the services needed by vulnerable Albertans. We will continue to work on our processes and systems to make sure that we are doing the absolute best job we can to take care of those people, but what certainly won't help is cutting billions of dollars out of operating.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, given that another problem facing Legal Aid Alberta is inconsistent budgeting practices, which have led to three supplemental budget votes in just five years, and given that the Auditor General notes the recent budget will be unable to avoid the need for supplemental funding in 2017-2018 and despite that I already raised this exact issue to the minister during the estimates process, when will the minister stop throwing money at the issues and actually fix the problems?

The Speaker: The hon. Justice minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know that we need to keep moving forward to ensure that Legal Aid is able to deliver the services necessary to vulnerable Albertans. This has been an issue that has evolved over years. We know that the previous government chose to do absolutely nothing about it and put their head in the sand and ignored the problem. That's why we're taking action, that's why we have moved on increasing funding to Legal Aid, and that's why we've moved on increasing funding to other sectors of the justice system. They want to study the problem forever; we want to fix it.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this problem comes down to the oversight and programming responsibilities that rest solely on the shoulders of the Minister of Justice and that, unfortunately, we have really heard radio silence from this minister on the topic of legal aid and given that the Premier in her opposition

days requested this review and chastised the former government's similar inaction as, I quote, a complete abandonment of obligations of the Minister of Justice, unquote, who has abandoned legal aid reform as a priority for this government, the minister or the Premier?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. No one has done more to ensure that Legal Aid is delivering the necessary services than this government has done. Previous government stuck its head in the sand and ignored the problem. We started a review. We've been going out and talking to Albertans, we've been working with the Auditor General on this issue, and we've been investing the necessary funds throughout the justice system.

Prescription Drug Coverage for Eye Disease

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, Frankie Leavitt from my riding suffers from macular degeneration and, as a result, is blind in one eye and going blind in the other. A new drug called Eylea has helped. Her injections, needed every 30 to 60 days, resulted in her one eye improving dramatically. Each treatment costs over \$1,600 and is not covered by AHS. The number of compassionate treatments from the drug company has run out. Frankie only makes \$1,600 a month. To the Minister of Health: why isn't Eylea an approved drug as part of the AHS coverage?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I know that macular degeneration is a condition that impacts many Albertans. We're working with the manufacturer and through the common drug review to make sure that we can get it on label and accessible to Albertans as quickly as possible, within reasonable cost limitations, which, of course, as the member points out, right now are not so. We're working to make sure that we bring this about for the benefit of Albertans and at an effective cost. I look forward to being able to update the House and Albertans about this very soon.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that Frankie is still active in the community and able to do physical activities like mow the lawn and shovel snow and given that Frankie faces the very real possibility of having to choose between keeping her sight, which would allow her to stay at home, or losing her sight and moving into seniors' assisted living, does the minister not understand that the best option for Frankie and for the government is for AHS to pick up the cost of the treatment?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in the last response, we are actively engaged in conversations with drug manufacturers through the common drug review to make sure that we have access to drugs that will improve quality of life. We encourage anyone at this time to continue working with their optometrist or their ophthalmologist to make sure that the treatments that are available today are accessible to them. That's one of the reasons why I was so proud to bring in the rapid drug program just a year and a half ago, which, of course, is bringing about better quality, better choice, and better cost savings to all Albertans.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that the side effects of Eylea are manageable and the drug is FDA approved and given Frankie has

almost completely depleted her life savings trying to fund this life-transforming drug, will the minister be willing to meet with Frankie Leavitt this week to discuss how she can get the right care at the right place by the right people?

Ms Hoffman: I'm always happy to meet with Albertans, as I spend a great deal of my time, unlike the members of the opposition, who seem to be spending a lot of time in the backrooms of the Federal building. I'd be very honoured to take that meeting, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we continue to move forward, to make sure that this individual as well as all Albertans have opportunities to have the very best savings, the very best services, and the very best drugs for the benefit of all Albertans. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

The Member for Calgary-West.

Death Investigation Time Frames

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Performing autopsies for suspected homicides is a crucial responsibility of the office of the Chief Medical Examiner, yet autopsies for murders and suspicious deaths can take more than a year, such as the one for three-month-old Cyrus Nel of Airdrie, whose 2015 death was just recently ruled a homicide, and delays like this can compromise police investigation. To the minister: what are you doing to ensure the ME's office expedites autopsies to allow police to move forward rapidly with criminal investigations?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. You know, we think that the work the office of the Chief Medical Examiner does is absolutely critical. It's critical to police; it's critical to victims and families of victims who are waiting to hear the outcome of a case. That's why we've invested in the office of the Chief Medical Examiner. We've provided them with an additional million dollars that will allow them to hire two new medical examiners to ensure that they are able to complete their work in a timely manner in addition to doing the additional work we've asked them to do.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the minister confirmed in estimates that the purpose of injecting additional money into the medical examiner's office is to decrease turnaround times for death reports and given that this year's \$800,000 to a \$1 million funding increase for the office should come with targets and given that it is the job of the minister to set those expectations, yet there were none in the business plan, Minister, why have you not set any specific timelines for the ME's office to finalize death reports?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, we think it's important for any of our employees to be meeting necessary targets. Autopsies are very complicated things. They depend on a number of factors in the case. There's a lot of back and forth between investigators and the office of the Chief Medical Examiner. That sometimes takes some time, and sometimes different specialists are required. We work with them to ensure that they are meeting their targets, but in order to ensure that they are able to do this work, it was necessary to make those resource investments, and we're very proud of them.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Given that Ontario has a 90-day target for finalizing its death investigations and given that in Alberta the Chief Medical Examiner is talking about meeting a nine-month turnaround for final death reports and given that this NDP government is not providing the medical examiner's office with new measurables despite this injection of money, Minister, are you not just throwing money at a problem without any expectations of accountability?

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member will be aware, it does take awhile to hire these professionals. There are not a lot of pathologists throughout North America, so it does take a while to complete the hiring process and to sometimes work with the immigration folks so that we can bring in the necessary people because we don't have as many as we would like in Canada. We will absolutely be working with the office of the Chief Medical Examiner to ensure that as we go forward, they're able to bring down those timelines in a reasonable and consistent manner.

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

2:30 **Legislature Grounds Usage Policy**

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a downtown resident and a former employee of the city of Edmonton's LRT design and construction branch I am a big believer in public transit. As a representative of Edmonton's downtown I recognize the important vibrancy that the many festivals that we host here bring to our community. We have reached a phase now in the construction of Edmonton's valley line where several downtown festivals are going to have to temporarily move from Churchill Square in order to allow for the construction of the valley line. One such festival is the Taste of Edmonton. Given that the Taste of Edmonton festival has asked to be able to host their festival here at the Legislature Grounds on the federal plaza, to the Minister of Infrastructure: what is being done . . .

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for his question and his advocacy for Edmonton's festival scene. Like many Albertans, I always look forward to the Taste of Edmonton, and I want to inform him that senior officials at Alberta Infrastructure are working with Taste of Edmonton right now to make it possible to host this major festival at the appropriate time. We want to ensure that the Taste of Edmonton continues after 34 successful years.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that public space in the heart of our city is at a premium but is important to community vitality and vibrancy and given that the Legislature and its grounds belong to the people of Alberta and given that the outdated policies about the use of these grounds are restricting their enjoyment by Albertans, to the Minister of Infrastructure: what is being done to bring this policy into the 21st century?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is absolutely correct that the Legislature Grounds belong to the people of Alberta. We are working on a new policy that will welcome more Albertans to their Legislature Grounds while recognizing its historical and cultural importance. One of the policies we're looking at is a no-dancing policy, put in place by the previous government. You know, we're not going to let the killjoys over there stop Albertans from enjoying their Legislature Grounds. [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet, please.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that both myself and many of my constituents are known to enjoy the opportunity to cut a rug and given that I have been approached by other festivals such as the Cariwest festival expressing interest in making use of the Legislature Grounds, to the minister: when can we expect to see this new policy?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the question. We have short summers in Edmonton, and we need to be able to make the most of that time and enjoy the opening up of the Legislature for those kinds of things. We're working to bring forward the policy as soon as possible, and we want to be in a position to welcome new activities to the Legislature precinct. We need to respect the history of this place, but we can open it up to the people, and I think we can have some fun while we're doing it.

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

Seniors' Self-managed Care

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We understand from a former senior executive at AHS and the owner of Community Care Cottages in Red Deer that it is unclear if seniors can use self-managed care funding in a private facility. One couple were told they had six months to move to a public institution or lose their self-managed funds because there supposedly was a duplication of services although the facility does not offer the needed care as part of the rental fee. Can the minister clarify? Can residents of private facilities still access self-managed care for their unmet needs?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I was happy to address this last week and this week and whatever other weeks might be required. It continues to be the case that in this province you have individual assessments, and then care is assigned based on the need of the individual resident. Yes, that care can be done in a variety of settings, including an independent home, a lodge, or another care facility. There continues to be case-by-case assessment. If the member would like to talk to some folks that understand the issue, I'd be happy to arrange so.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the owner of the cottages was told that when an Albertan chooses to leave the public health system and go private, the system washes their hands of that person and given that AHS managers made it clear to her that if anyone anywhere in Alberta living in a private care home is currently receiving SMC funds it is an error that they will correct and they said that they have ways to figure out who the seniors are and where they are living, why are the rules different depending on the type of facility a senior chooses?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, why the member's research department would give him that kind of information, that certainly isn't based on fact, is beyond me, but I'd be very happy to connect the member opposite with people who actually understand the process, understand how it works, and to make sure that he has an opportunity to receive valid information to position future questions on because I certainly want to help him be successful.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we've heard that self-managed funds are being denied even when the assessed unmet needs are on the record and given that families report that they've heard that funding does not exist or is frozen and not to apply because they do not qualify for unmet needs or would not qualify if they chose to live in a private facility, to the minister: what are your instructions to home care co-ordinators about self-managed funds in private facilities, and does the 2017 budget for self-managed care funding apply to private facilities?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, I'll say it again with pride. Individual case-by-case assessments are done based on citizens' needs, how they can best be accommodated, and what types of care options they might want to access to be able to do that. My direction to the member opposite is: please, do sit down with me. I'd be happy to walk you through the program and provide those assurances. I think we touched on it at estimates. I'd be happy to do so again. We are continuing to provide a range of supports, including supports in self-managed care.

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

Trade Mission to China and Japan

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and the minister of economic development recently returned from a trip to Asia. Promoting trade between Alberta and the world is a key component of any foreign mission. However, the government should also be focused on attracting foreign investment to Alberta. A recent *Calgary Herald* article referenced comments by China's ambassador to Canada in which he stated when talking about the oil sands: "I do not believe that Chinese enterprises would still be interested in this." To the Minister of EDT: what progress did you make in addressing the negative perception during your trip to China?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for his question. I can tell you that China is very, very interested in our energy. We know that Alberta is the energy and environmental leader that the world needs for the 21st century. While the Premier and I were in Asia, we had numerous conversations about the approval of Trans Mountain, which, I can tell you, was very welcome news. Asia is hungry for our energy, and Alberta is more than willing to provide the world and Asia with our energy resources.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, given that the Premier recently announced that Alberta and the Chinese province of Guangdong had become sister provinces and given that while such announcements are helpful in strengthening bonds with a particular region, those bonds must be nurtured and supported now and into the future in order to achieve full potential, reflecting on our current relationship with Heilongjiang, again to the minister: what

specifically are you doing to build cultural and commercial bridges between Guangdong and Alberta, and what specifically is your ministry doing to promote trade with the people and businesses of Guangdong?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. The Premier signed a new twinning relationship with the province of Guangdong. I can tell you that this is the first new twinning since the 1980s with Asia, so this was long overdue. Just to put this into perspective, Guangdong is the economic engine, or one of, in China. They are responsible for one-fifth of China's GDP. They are an economic powerhouse. We recently opened an Alberta office, the 12th Alberta office, in the capital of Guangdong. I've been there three times now, and the Premier . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, given that Japan has recently chosen to increase the amount of electricity within their grid from coal-fired generation and given that we have heard that there are Japanese companies ready and willing to buy large amounts of Alberta's low-sulphur thermal coal, with a potential for significant direct investment in Alberta to follow, and given that this government has treated the thermal coal industry as just another climate change outcast, again to the minister: did you discuss thermal coal opportunities while you were in Japan, and if so, what specific supports are you offering this industry in facilitating exports?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I'll thank the member for the question. First of all, when we were in Japan, the topic of coal actually didn't come up that often, but what I can tell you is that Japan is also very interested in energy security and in continuing to work with Canada. I can tell you that the Premier signed an agreement with Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation. JOGMEC is a significant company that already has invested over a billion dollars in Canada, with the majority of it being here in Alberta. We are continuing to work with them.

2:40

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the member opposite and myself are both very interested in the impact that the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade had in their trade mission to China and Japan. I'm really interested in the way that both Chinese and Japanese markets are interested in our agricultural and forestry products, and I was wondering if the Minister of Economic Development and Trade could let us know.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. I'm thrilled to see that there's so much interest in our trade missions, as there should be because these missions are absolutely critical to continuing to open doors for Alberta businesses. I know that the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry has been to China and Japan; the Minister of Energy has as well. I myself have been to Japan twice. There is a significant and growing interest in a lot of our agricultural products, from

honey to barley. There is interest in our products in beef and pork. I'd be happy to expand on that in the next response.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Chinese and Japanese economies are growing and given that the demand for Alberta products is increasing along with them, to the same minister: I'm wondering how this government is helping Alberta businesses to take advantage of the opportunities this growth presents.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll thank the member for the question. Absolutely, we want to support Alberta businesses to diversify their markets. We know that businesses that have a diversity of products and markets build a resilience and are able to weather an economic downturn. This is why last fall in November I was very honoured to lead the largest trade delegation in the history of the province, with over 80 businesses and business associations, including the Alberta Industrial Heartland, which I know is in part of the member's riding. I can tell you that we have a number of programs . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Second supplemental.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have always been pleased, when I've travelled to Asia, to see our product from Alberta on the supermarket shelf or advertised. I was wondering what other activities the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development and Trade undertook to showcase our products and opportunities for businesses.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member. As I was saying, we have a number of supports for Alberta companies that are interested in exporting and getting into new markets. I would encourage them to visit jobsplan.alberta.ca. What's really exciting is that, again, Japan is Alberta's largest market for pork and our third-largest for beef. What's fascinating is that in the last few years Alberta has increased its market share. When you're in Japan, 40 per cent of the pork comes from Canada, and the majority of that is from Alberta. That is very significant. The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and I are going to continue . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Hon. members, in 30 seconds we will proceed with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements (continued)

Provincial Fiscal Deficit

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, if left unchecked, this NDP government's policies will bankrupt this province. Their debt-fuelled budgets, without any plan on a way back to balance, leave me to wonder if they are in denial and do not recognize that they have a problem or if they know they have a problem but are not willing to solve it. In other words, they are either incompetent or immoral: incompetent if they cannot recognize that we have a structural deficit problem; immoral if they recognize that we have

a structural deficit problem but are willing to saddle our children with a massive debt burden.

This government is projecting an operational deficit this year of \$10.3 billion. They are borrowing almost a quarter of what they are spending. Projections indicate a \$71 billion debt by the time the next election is called. The NDP would like Albertans to believe that the problem is the price of oil and that they are not to blame for this massive debt growth. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Ideological decisions implemented by this government are piling on extra debt and leading our industries down a path of increased costs. It started with increases to corporate and personal taxes. Then came increases in the specified gas emitters levy, resulting in returned PPA contracts at a price of over \$4 billion. Next there was the early shutdown of coal electricity generation, \$1.4 billion, and the list goes on. How about a \$4 billion carbon tax to top it all off?

Mr. Speaker, Albertans know it is the hard-working, ordinary people of Alberta that will pay the price for this NDP government's mismanagement. They will pay for it with increased taxation, reduced job opportunities, and their children's future. Governments running out of money and reaching a point where they are unable to borrow more money is not a fantasy. This government is failing to deal with their structural deficit problem. This government has implemented policies that have increased our debt far more than it ever needed to be, and if left unchecked, this NDP government will bankrupt this province.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I've received a request for unanimous consent for an introduction.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests (continued)

The Speaker: The Minister of Indigenous Relations

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to make this introduction to you and through you to the whole House. I'd like to introduce Lennea Oseen, who is my next-door neighbour and also works for the department of agriculture here in the province. She is accompanied today by her father, Chester Oseen, who's a farmer in southern Alberta, and his wife, Hilda Oseen, both of whom now live in Lethbridge-East. If they could please rise and receive the traditional welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements (continued)

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

Ombudsman's Office 50th Anniversary

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1970 Alberta Supreme Court Justice Milvain had this to say regarding the Alberta Ombudsman.

He can bring the lamp of scrutiny to otherwise dark places, even over the resistance of those who would draw the blinds. If his scrutiny and observations are well-founded, corrective measures can be taken in due democratic process, if not, no harm can be done in looking at that which is good.

On September 1, 1967, the province of Alberta became the first jurisdiction in North America to open itself up to this "lamp of scrutiny." On that day, almost 50 years ago, the office of the Alberta Ombudsman opened its doors and George McClellan, the

province's first Ombudsman, arrived at work to find 30 complaints already waiting on his desk.

In the years that followed, Mr. Speaker, the work has never ceased. Individuals in the role of the Alberta Ombudsman have gone on to assist in the development of offices in other jurisdictions and played an instrumental role in the creation of the International Ombudsman Institute in 1978. Our office of the Ombudsman continues to act as a consultant to investigators from around the world.

The Ombudsman's jurisdiction has expanded over time and will soon grow again as the office begins to provide oversight to Alberta's municipalities. But throughout its growth and evolution one thing about the office of the Ombudsman has held firm, that being its steadfast commitment to support Albertans by promoting administrative fairness in an increasingly complex environment.

As chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices it is a pleasure to acknowledge the contributions that the office of the Alberta Ombudsman has made and will continue to make to our province and to congratulate everyone involved on the upcoming 50th anniversary of that good work.

Thank you.

The Speaker: My apologies. I missed the Member for Calgary-West.

Calgary Southwest Ring Road Construction Concerns

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This NDP government continues to display a lack of interest in the consequences of its actions. A case in point is the much-anticipated construction of the southwest Calgary ring road.

Let's be clear. Calgarians in neighbourhoods bordering the ring road support it. They also anticipated some inconvenience during the construction. But they did not expect gravel crushing and asphalt operations virtually in their backyards, that will run continuously, and they certainly did not expect a road dam that leaves them susceptible to flooding. Furthermore, they do not appreciate being ignored.

2:50

They are naturally worried about breathing in carcinogens from the gravel and asphalt operations that will put their health at risk. Additionally, they fear that this road dam will intensify another 2013 flood and will put communities at risk. These are all valid concerns. The people of West Springs, Bridlewood, Discovery Ridge, The Slopes, Lakeview, and Tsuut'ina, among others, are simply asking for a face-to-face meeting with the Transportation minister, but they are repeatedly snubbed.

So PC MLAs are intervening. My colleagues and I are actively working on their behalf. Last month I sent a respectful letter to the Minister of Transportation seeking a meeting. It has been five weeks, and I am still waiting. We are frustrated with the NDP government's attitude of: please stop bothering us because we know best. Today we are putting them on notice. We will not stop bothering you until you address the concerns directly with these residents and work with them to find common-sense solutions. Move the gravel crushing and the asphalt operations. This is not rocket science. People simply want to use their backyards without running the risk of contracting silicosis.

Minister, respectfully, will you please meet with these people?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Wind Power and Technology Changes

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me take everyone to New York in the early 1900s. Transportation was by horse: individual riders and horses pulling coaches, carts, and wagons. Imagine all of the workers involved at the stables driving ice carts and milk carts, feeding and caring for horses, cleaning the manure, and building carts, saddles, harnesses, whips, and so on. The economy was built around the horse.

Then along came Henry Ford and his Model T. Not only did this change transportation; it also transformed the economy with the creation of new wealth and new jobs. New York did not disappear because the horse was no longer the main form of transportation; it survived and became an American economic powerhouse.

Today in Alberta another transformation is taking place. The transformation is in our electricity sector, away from coal toward more renewable energy. There are many types of renewable energy, but the one that I want to focus on is wind power.

Canada's first commercial wind farm was installed on Cowley Ridge in southern Alberta in 1993, and in the 24 years since then Alberta's wind energy has grown to rank third in Canada. Alberta now has 38 wind installations and 901 wind turbines producing enough electricity each year to power more than 600,000 homes. Rural municipalities such as Vulcan county, Paintearth county, and the MD of Pincher Creek receive millions of dollars in tax revenue from wind power, and it brings new income and jobs to rural communities. Wind is also a source of significant greenhouse gas reductions, sustainably generating electricity without emitting air pollutants or toxic waste. It is one of the most affordable forms of electricity available today.

While some of the opposition will blow hard about transitioning toward renewable energy, the past has shown that transformation can bring prosperity. Henry Ford drove into the future . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Health Care in Central Alberta

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People in central Alberta are desperate for this government to make their health care a priority. Facilities like the Red Deer regional hospital are the primary point for acute-care delivery to the over half a million Albertans living in AHS's central zone, so you can imagine how devastated people were, not only in Red Deer but in the entire region, when year over year AHS's list of top 20 infrastructure priorities went from featuring only two central zone projects in 2015 to a whopping zero projects in 2016.

The per capita funding is also grossly behind every other part of the province, and the imbalance is having serious effects on Albertans' health. This kind of inequity has led to the central zone having the longest emergency room wait times in the province, outraging not only residents but also front-line workers. It's nearing a crisis situation, and it's evidenced by the brave doctors and nurses who are being forced to organize rallies and speak out against a system that is leaving them and their patients behind.

Last summer the Minister of Health told Albertans, quote: always know the buck stops with this minister. But, Mr. Speaker, the problem is with the minister. The NDP talk about the importance of local leadership and empowering communities to prioritize their own needs, but at every step the Minister of Health has centralized power under her control, and this is the result. This is a power-hungry government that does not trust Albertans to get it right, and

it shows in the management and deliverables of our health system. Minister, listen to the residents of central Alberta and start making their health care a priority.

Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 13 Securities Amendment Act, 2017

Mr. Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 13, the Securities Amendment Act, 2017.

The securities regulatory landscape has become more complex, sophisticated, global, and driven by technology than ever before. The government of Alberta is working to make life better for Albertans with practical changes that help make sure that their investments are safe. The proposed amendments are intended to enhance protection of Alberta investors and prompt a fair and effective Alberta capital market. With these amendments we're ensuring that Alberta's securities regulatory system reflects the realities of today's market and evolves with international standards and global regulatory reform initiatives. We are also making changes to Alberta's securities laws to harmonize our system with other jurisdictions in Canada which will help to ensure that our capital markets remain vibrant and efficient.

Thank you to IIROC and to CARP for standing with me earlier today and announcing these at a press conference.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table, on day 15 of excellent Public Affairs Bureau tablings, a letter I wrote to the hon. Government House Leader on 9 March 2017, where he was referring in 2003 to then Premier Stelmach and said:

When the opposition stands up and asks legitimate questions about an increase in communications staff . . . he can actually turn it around into the opposition wanting to take services away from the blind.

That sounds very familiar.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I believe we're at points of order. The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll withdraw the point of order.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Orders of the Day

Motions for Returns

FOIP Request Processing

M1. Mr. Cooper moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents relating to Alberta Justice's role in processing requests made to other government

ministries under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, excluding documents that contain legal advice.

[Debate adjourned May 1: Mr. Cyr speaking]

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

Mr. Cooper: I think I've already spoken. I could close debate if you want.

The Speaker: Any other members wish to speak to this motion?
The hon. member.

3:00

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak, for the benefit of the House, who may not recall where we were last week, on the amended Motion for Return 1 with respect to copies of all documents relating to Alberta Justice's role in processing requests to other government ministries under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and, of course, the amendment, "excluding documents that contain legal advice."

I'd just like to very briefly remind the minister that it's my hope that she doesn't utilize "excluding documents that contain legal advice" too broadly or widely to ensure that the ministry doesn't need to comply with our request. This is important information that should be available to the public. I will support and encourage my colleagues to support the amended motion for a return although reluctantly. Some information is better than no information.

I am assuming that later on this afternoon I will have the opportunity to speak at some length about the government refusing to provide information to the Assembly, which is not just rightfully the Assembly's but also Albertans'.

[Motion for a Return 1 as amended carried]

Mr. Smith: The hon. Member for Drayton-Valley Devon.

Trinity Christian School Association

M2. Mr. Smith moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all correspondence between the government and Trinity Christian School Association sent or received between September 1, 2014, and March 1, 2017.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's clear that the Minister of Education and his senior administration mishandled the Trinity Christian and Wisdom schooling file. Instead of working with the administrations of these institutions to deal with the financial concerns and perhaps even appointing a trustee, the minister instead chose to shut down the program, and he left 3,500 students and their families scrambling for some sort of an alternative.

The minister clearly stated that the issues revolved around financial accounting practices and the following of certain regulations. This was not, to be clear, an issue of the quality of the education program but of its financial administration. The minister knew these situations and that in situations like this they'd been handled by appointing a trustee to help school boards come into compliance with all of the pertinent rules and pertinent regulations. It appeared to many Albertans that the actions of this minister in shutting down the programs and leaving 3,500 students in complete educational disarray were disproportionate to the problems that were observed in the administration of the schools and their programs. It's important for Albertans to begin to understand why the minister came to the conclusions that he did, especially in light of the fact that when this issue went to the courts, the courts appeared to believe that the minister indeed did not handle this issue in a proportional fashion.

Wildrose has asked for the correspondence between the minister, Trinity Christian School Association, and the government between September 1, 2014, and March 1, 2017. We'd like to know: just how did the minister get this so wrong? What led him to conclude that his actions to shut down these programs and to deny home educators their choice of program was a reasonable course of action?

That is why I've asked for the correspondence between the ministry and Trinity Christian school. This minister must be held accountable for his uncalled for closing of the Wisdom home-school. I have used the dates from September 2014 because that will give us the correspondence for almost a full school year prior to this government's election to see what previous correspondence was taken into consideration when making this heavy-handed decision.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for his motion for a return and for his comments. At this point I would like to move that Motion for a Return 2 be amended by striking out "correspondence between the government and Trinity Christian School Association sent or received" and substituting "official signed correspondence from the Minister or Deputy Minister of Alberta Education pertaining to Trinity Christian School Association sent."

Mr. Speaker, the amended motion for a return would read as follows:

That an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all official signed correspondence from the Minister or Deputy Minister of Alberta Education pertaining to Trinity Christian School Association sent between September 1, 2014, and March 1, 2017.

I have the signed copies of that from the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Is there anyone wishing to speak to the amendment? The Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against this amendment. Motion for a Return 2 was all about bringing the actions of the government into the light of day. We've seen that something went terribly wrong here when you see 3,500 students placed into a situation where they do not have access to their school of choice, and we've seen that the courts have intervened on this.

This amendment, I believe, is meant to intervene or to obscure actions that would allow us to move the actions of the government into the light of day. We need to take them out of darkness and into the light of day so that we can begin to see if the actions of this government were reasonable or not. Now, this amendment would keep the correspondence that we seek surrounding these events to only those pieces of officially signed correspondence or documents signed by the minister or his senior officials.

Democracy depends on the opposition being able to hold the government accountable for the decisions that they make, for the actions that they take, and in this case the opposition can only do its job properly if it understands the background and the correspondence, the full background and the full correspondence, that has occurred in this situation. You know, the opposition and the courts have already concluded that this government did not act in a reasonable fashion when it closed down the Wisdom Home Schooling program, so therefore it's actually very crucial and important that all of the correspondence, including e-mails, be made available to the opposition and therefore through us to the people of

Alberta so that we can understand how the government could have gotten this just so wrong.

Now, when a government begins making poor decisions that hurt Albertans, in this case hurting 3,500 students and their families, and when a government by its actions exhibits a lack of transparency and when it begins to by its actions hide or impede access to the information that would help us to explain its actions, then I believe that the opposition and the citizens of Alberta through the opposition rightfully should start to become concerned. It's only by opposing this amendment, Mr. Speaker, that the members of this Assembly will begin the process of understanding. When you begin to understand what was going on, then we can begin to rebuild, perhaps, the trust that has been broken between the actions of this government and the people of Alberta.

3:10

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that a full disclosure is important when it comes to the correspondence because it's then that you will see the healing and the trust that is necessary to begin to move forward. The people of Alberta believe that the government needs to be working on their behalf, and when they see that, when they can see that a government is actually working on their behalf, then that trust gets to be reborn and rebuilt. That's only going to happen in this case if the correspondence is forthcoming from this government, if the opposition is able to ensure that this government in this case had the interests of the students at heart, that they were working for these kids.

Now, the court obviously came to a decision that they weren't by their actions actually working in favour of and best interests of these families and these children, but the correspondence could give us some insight as to whether or not that was an accident or whether that was by design.

So I ask all the members of this Assembly to vote down this amendment, to support the original motion for a return so that Albertans will have a clear, open, and transparent understanding of why the government got this decision so badly wrong. It's only when the opposition and thereby Albertans receive this correspondence will the trust in this minister and in this government have a chance of being rebuilt. That is why I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we need to vote this amendment down.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. member, you're speaking to amendment A1, as moved by the Government House Leader on behalf of the Minister of Education?

Mr. Cooper: Correct. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to the amendment, which, really, in many respects is outrageous, and perhaps a case could be made that it goes against the original intention of the motion for a return. The challenge is that it fundamentally changes what the member has asked. The member, my colleague, asked for all correspondence.

Mr. Speaker, growing up in the household of the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, his father used to say: "all" means all, and that's all "all" means. That is exactly the challenge that we face today. The member has asked for all correspondence or, in this case, all of the facts, and what the minister and the Government House Leader are proposing is something significantly different.

[Mr. Dach in the chair]

Mr. Speaker, you will know that very regularly governments correspond via e-mail and other methods by department heads, by other individuals inside the department about a specific issue prior to any official correspondence being signed by the minister or the

deputy minister and that much of the content is left out from the official correspondence. So the question that everyone in this Chamber should be asking is: what exactly is the minister and the department trying to hide? The information that they would like to release is only the official information or correspondence that these public bodies received. As you can well imagine, much of that correspondence is already available in the public domain, and what is being kept secret by the minister and his department is the very important facts and content around what actually transpired to arrive at the decision. It's very, very troubling.

We've seen this government put together a significant track record. In fact, we have already asked through freedom of information for this very important information to be revealed, but as you can imagine, the government is trying to keep these secret. They have a horrible track record on releasing information and not engaging politically in information that would be potentially damaging to the government, so they have done that in this case as well.

As you'll know, Mr. Speaker, better than anyone, this Assembly has very unique and special abilities to call for documents to be produced. All it takes is the will of the Assembly to say yes. All it takes is members of the NDP backbench to not support cabinet, keeping in mind that we are in private members' business, doing the work of private members, not doing government business. I get that they need to support the government, but this is about supporting private members' ability to get access to information, and the NDP, in all of their wisdom, is choosing to keep things secret and only providing the absolute bare minimum so it looks like they're doing something.

I know that the Government House Leader, when he was in opposition, used to stand just a few feet from me here to the left – now, he was way to the left of me, but it was just a few feet to the left – and almost say these exact same words about the government hiding things. Now, much to the chagrin of Albertans and members on this side of the Assembly and people in the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills – they're disappointed to see this minister now trying to keep secrets from Albertans.

I encourage all members to vote against this amendment and ensure that private members have access to information that's important for us all to do our work.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I would like to request unanimous consent of the House to go to one-minute bells for motions for returns only.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Acting Speaker: Are there other hon. members wishing to speak to the amendment?

[The voice vote indicated that the motion on amendment A1 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:18 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[Mr. Dach in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, S.	Horne	McPherson
Babcock	Jansen	Miller
Carlier	Kazim	Nielsen
Carson	Kleinstauber	Piquette
Connolly	Larivee	Renaud
Coolahan	Littlewood	Rosendahl

Cortes-Vargas	Luff	Schreiner
Dang	Malkinson	Shepherd
Drever	Mason	Turner
Eggen	McKittrick	Woollard
Hinkley		

3:20

Against the motion:

Cooper	Loewen	Schneider
Cyr	MacIntyre	Smith
Fildebrandt	Pitt	van Dijken
Gill	Rodney	Yao

Totals:	For – 31	Against – 12
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[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

The Acting Speaker: Any further speakers on Motion for a Return 2 as amended? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This motion for a return that's been brought forward is to bring clarity to the communications between the Trinity Christian School Association and the Education minister here. I think that the fact that when you look at some of the circumstances around Trinity school, which resides in my local constituency, it would be nice to hear exactly what the minister, the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister, and all of those that were involved in this process were thinking at the time.

[The Speaker in the chair]

I guess when we start to look at exactly what it is that the government was working towards, it would be better to have an understanding of what it is exactly they were trying to accomplish with this. I know that for myself I ended up with a call from the minister's office, which I'm very appreciative of, on the day that they had shut this school down in my constituency. During that specific call I had asked the minister: was it necessary to shut this school down? The minister said that this was obviously the last resort, shutting it down. Obviously, you know, being in shock from having one of my local schools shut down, I myself was hoping for a little bit more information on it, but I did understand that the minister felt very, very sure that this was the right decision at the time.

Now, for myself I would have loved to have a little bit more information on this because this was a huge step. This was shutting down a school in my constituency during the school year. We're talking about 3,500 people, 3,500 kids across Alberta that were going to be affected by this decision, which is why having the communications with the ministry is something that we needed, to show what the thought process was for such a traumatic move by this government.

Now, I do have to say that in the end, in January we saw a minister that said: maybe we need to take a step back, review exactly how we came to this decision, and then we need to maybe apply an administrator. That is something that I had asked the minister to do when they had first shut this school down in October. So it would be nice to see exactly how the decision that the minister, the ADM, the DM, and anybody that was involved in this situation came up with and how they came to justify this very – I don't like using this word, but I can't come up with a better one – radical move. What we're looking to do here is to see what basis the minister has come up with, what justification.

To see that the minister had accepted this motion but that it needed to be amended does show that the minister is trying to move

forward some clarity. I have to give him some credit for trying to give some clarity on this. But, in the end, I believe that when we start looking at official, signed correspondence from the ministry or deputy minister, what we're looking at is a fact that a lot of this was very formal at that time. What I'm hoping for wasn't just formal letters between the ministry and the school; what I'm hoping for is the thought process behind it. What's important is: how did they get there? What process did they use to go from full-on active school to closed school? What justification is there? I don't believe that the signed letters by the minister address that.

While I'm thankful that the minister is allowing us to be going forward and not rejecting it outright, I am questioning why it is that he needed to amend this. Why couldn't we have more thorough transparency and accountability from this ministry, especially when it comes to so many home-schoolers? This is across Alberta. We had home-schoolers at the front door saying: please support our home-schooling system. This school, this one school, makes up a third of home-schoolers across our constituency. That says that there is a large number of parents, a large number of students that were involved in this.

So I am a little upset that the minister amended it because I do believe that the intent with the way it was is what we needed to see.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this motion, and I will be wanting to see more clarity coming from the minister. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon. members, is there anyone else who wishes to speak to Motion for a Return 2 as amended?

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon to close debate.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just pass.

[Motion for a Return 2 as amended carried]

3:30 Indigenous Relations Review

M3. Mr. Cooper moved on behalf of Mr. Hanson that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents prepared by the government relating to the review mandated by hon. Ms. Notley, Premier, to determine what changes may be needed for the government to better align its policies and initiatives with the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, as referenced on page 11 of the Ministry of Indigenous Relations annual report 2015-16.

The Speaker: Is there anyone who wishes to speak to the motion? The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples is something that this government has strongly supported, and it guides our objectives as we move forward. With regard to the request there's a document that fits the description of what has been requested, but it was prepared for cabinet and, as such, is not for public distribution. But in the interests of improved disclosure and public transparency, something this government is deeply committed to, we will provide any document that has been distributed to indigenous communities. Obviously, however, precedent and the very principles of responsible government prohibit us from distributing documents of Executive Council.

As such, I'll move that Motion for a Return 3 be amended by adding "excluding confidential cabinet documents" after "annual report 2015-16."

The Speaker: Is there anyone wishing to speak to the amendment? No one?

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

The Speaker: Is there anyone wishing to speak to the amended motion?

[Motion for a Return 3 as amended carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Automated Traffic Enforcement Technology

M4. Mr. Cyr moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all data collected by the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General pursuant to section 7 of the September 2014 automated traffic enforcement technology guidelines in each fiscal year from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we're looking to see is exactly what data is actually collected when it comes to our traffic enforcement. The fact is that when we start to see that our government is actually collecting this data, it would be nice if we actually had some transparency and accountability to be able to see what exactly is being done within the province. I would like to hear from the minister if she would be willing to release this information, and if so, then I would thank her for it.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General I'm pleased to respond. Unfortunately, we're recommending that this motion for a return should be rejected. It's not because of anything that we're trying to keep from the opposition, but the request would generate an unmanageably large amount of paper. There would be approximately 81,000 pages per copy that would have to be provided. The minister indicates that she has no concerns about the data itself. It's a question of the volume that is being requested.

Automated traffic enforcement technology guidelines are designed to ensure fairness and consistency in the use of automated traffic enforcement technology across Alberta. Municipalities collect that information, and that is electronically populated in a template that is submitted to Justice and Solicitor General. The data report, reviewed by Justice and Solicitor General staff, is used in determining whether municipalities are following the established guidelines and assisting in audits conducted every two years.

With regret, Mr. Speaker, it's not that we do not wish but that we are unable for practical purposes to supply the information requested in this motion.

The Speaker: Are there any other individuals that would like to speak to the motion?

Seeing and hearing none, I'll let the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake close debate.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very disappointed to hear that this information won't be made public. I do understand the concern and the reluctance that the minister has regarding the size of this. It would be nice to see some sort of maybe open-source document, then, being brought forward so that we can search this information. I would like to see that. While this government has moved towards open data, it is important that when we look at government moving forward and saying that they're open and transparent, some of these larger pieces of data – and I'm trying to remember without the Blues what the minister said – are sent to the

ministry in spreadsheets. Therefore, this should be something easily posted onto the website for us to be able to search. Maybe if the minister has got some concerns regarding the fact that this is too large to be given out in a motion for a return, it would have been nice to hear that maybe a compromise would have been struck, making this available through, again, like I said, open-source data.

While I'm very disappointed and I really wanted to see 81,000 pages, I am looking forward to hearing that the government is moving in this direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion for a Return 4 lost]

Ministerial Orders

M15. Mr. Cooper moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all ministerial orders issued by each ministry between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2016.

The Speaker: Anyone wish to speak to the motion as proposed by the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills? The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to indicate that we very much appreciate and agree with the opposition's desire for more transparency with regard to ministerial orders. Similar requests were made and granted last year. However, it did come to our attention that a small number of orders contained commercially sensitive information that would be excluded under the freedom of information act. For that reason, I will move that Motion for a Return 15 be amended by adding "excluding those items that fall within the exceptions to disclosure provisions in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act" and that that would be inserted after "December 31, 2016." That amendment would allow any commercially sensitive information to be excluded while, I think, still keeping with the spirit of the request.

Mr. Speaker, again, the government is trying to provide the information requested by the opposition wherever that's possible. However, as the opposition knows or should know, I think that when we enter into commercial agreements with third parties, there is some requirement that we protect their commercial information. If we didn't have this, we wouldn't really be able to negotiate and conduct business with other outside parties, whether it's another agency of another order of government, a municipality. It might be a private company. It might be any other number of entities, not-for-profits, and so on.

3:40

Of course, it's really important that the government is able at any time to have negotiations and to enter into agreements with third parties which may have commercially sensitive information or other information that would protect individuals' right to privacy, for example, or protect legal opinions that would be provided in confidence. All of those things are important so that we are seen as a good partner and as an entity that people can have confidence in, that they can enter into negotiations with to conduct various business or other arrangements of a contractual nature and that we're not going to be releasing, either purposefully or inadvertently, information that may compromise their position as an organization or a company. I think that's a very important thing.

That's why we've moved this motion, because it does preserve as much as possible the information that has been requested by the Official Opposition while protecting our reputation as a good partner and someone that people can have some confidence in that their particular information is going to be protected. That's why we

have made this motion, I think, to the degree possible. Notwithstanding the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks' tabling of his wonderful letters, his missives that he is penning to me on a regular basis and tabling here in this House, I have maintained my commitment to openness in government.

We want to make sure and I personally want to make sure that, wherever possible, this government can provide information to the opposition, to the public, to the media in a spirit of openness. Nothing that I have done here, I think, contradicts that basic principle, but obviously from the point of view now of being in government as opposed to being in opposition, one has a slightly different perspective and has to accept the responsibility that comes with being a member of government, something that the opposition doesn't really have to deal with. You know, they can stand up and demand whatever from the government, and it's good posturing. I totally respect the role that the opposition plays, but it's a very different role here, when we are in government. We are responsible and accountable for outcomes as opposed to just simply standing up and saying, "Wouldn't this be nice?" or "Wouldn't that be nice?" and so on.

You know, I appreciate very much Strathmore-Brooks' attention to the comments that I made while I was in opposition. It seems to be that I've set the gold standard for opposition, and I appreciate very much that the Official Opposition is trying to live up to that record. So far I would say, with the greatest respect, that they've fallen a bit short, but I do appreciate their reminders of the work that I did do and that I know the Premier and several other members, now of the government, did in opposition, the stellar work that we did do in opposition, which obviously was appreciated by the public very much, because clearly they decided that they would promote us from the opposition to the government. I think that despite the fondest hopes of members on the opposite side the public is probably going to renew our contract in two years.

As we've seen, coming through a difficult recession and then on our first anniversary in government, we had to deal with the fire in Fort McMurray, which had a very calamitous effect, a calamitous impact. We need to work hard, I think, to win Albertans' trust and to turn the economy around. We knew that eventually oil prices would shift, and they have done so, not nearly as much as we would have liked. Hopefully, they'll continue a gradual upward trend, which will help our economy, because, of course, the economy is still extremely dependent – I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker is not ruling me out of order, but he's sending me facial expressions to indicate that I should really come back to the amendment, which is, as I mentioned, to preserve as much as possible the transparency and the openness and the availability of information collected by the government on behalf of the citizens of Alberta for the citizens of Alberta. I would certainly, really on that basis encourage all members to support this amendment. Then if this amendment is passed, we will vote on the motion as amended, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, and I think we should vote for that as well.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to reluctantly take my seat.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I may have dozed off, but I'm not sure I missed anything.

Are there any members who would wish to speak to the amendment as proposed by the Government House Leader?

[Motion on amendment A1 carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills to close debate.

Mr. Rodney: Oh. Before you do, sir, earlier today we've had other things unanimously pass. This is a simple request. It's happened on many occasions. As it's warmed up outside, it's warmed up inside. The deliberations of the House are unaffected if folks in a situation like this and on an afternoon like this were to simply take off their jackets. It does require a motion. I would move that for the duration, until 6 o'clock, members would be allowed to remove their jackets if that would pass.

Brian, you're used to this, right?

The Speaker: I believe this motion would require unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent denied]

The Speaker: We are now dealing . . . [interjections] Hon. members, I'm standing again. Remember that rule?

Is there anyone else to speak?

[Motion for a Return 15 as amended carried]

NDP Election Platform Documents

M16. Mr. Cooper moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all documents prepared by the government between April 1, 2015, and March 1, 2017, relating to the New Democratic Party election platform during the 2015 provincial general election campaign.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on Motion for a Return 16. We all know that around election time the government prepares for what could be a number of different outcomes around an election. In this particular case there was a change in government, and what is curious to know is exactly what was happening in the bureaucracy at the time. It's important information for Albertans to have to understand how we transition power in a smooth and reasonable manner.

3:50

It's also important that we on this side of the House can do our job with respect to what exactly is transpiring. That was the genesis of this particular motion for a return, to have a real sense of what was happening at the time, how we transition from one government to another as well as what work the bureaucracy is currently undertaking with respect to the New Democratic Party election platform promises. I hope that the government will be forthcoming with that information.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the Official Opposition House Leader for his motion and for his comments with respect to that matter. You know, it is true – and I think I agree with the hon. member – that there was a change of government in the last election. It's also interesting to note that our party, that won that election, did have a platform and that we have in fact been working very hard to implement the promises that we made during that election campaign.

You know, we've provided greater protection for the consumers. We've put forward a plan to combat climate change. We've made sure that wealthy individuals and corporations that are earning profits pay a little bit more. We did stop the implementation of the proposed health care premium, the reintroduction of the health care premium. That was another thing we did. We took big money out of politics, Mr. Speaker. That was another commitment that we made in that election, and that, in fact, has been done. We've put forward programs to create new jobs in this province, to diversify

our economy because, in fact, the diversification of the economy was a major platform commitment, something that was really strongly supported by the public in the last election. Those are just a few of the more than 20 to 30 campaign commitments that we have met.

It is, in fact, clear that the platform was designed to make life better for Alberta families, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's clear that we're doing that. We make decisions every day in this government – every day – that can be traced back to that platform because that was our commitment to the public. That was what we told the public that we would do if we were elected, and in fact we are doing it.

Now, I want to just point out that the platform itself is public information. It's public information, and everyone has it. Our throne speeches are public as well, so everybody has a chance to see them. They're posted online, on your website, Mr. Speaker. As well, our budgets are public information, and the bills that we introduce in this House and that the House passes in its wisdom are all public information. All of that is out there. It's all transparent. What we ran on and what we're doing: they're both there, and people can check and see that for themselves.

I know that after the election we were encouraged by some of our members opposite to break our promises. "You know, you can't possibly do that. It would be terrible to have people who are making a little bit more money pay a little bit more taxes. It would be completely wrong to get rid of the flat tax," they said. "There are just a lot of things – I know you got elected on all of this stuff, and we didn't get elected, but we think you should keep doing exactly the same thing that we were doing and that we promised to do." It was an odd request, Mr. Speaker. It was a strange situation that the members who had been part of the former government really thought that we should do what they had been doing.

I know why. It was because then we would have been out, too, and they could have replaced us by doing the same things, and nothing ever would have changed. Mr. Speaker, people voted for change in the last election. They voted on a platform that was quite different.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I believe that you're dealing with the substance rather than the process.

Mr. Mason: Oh. I'm very sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yeah. I know. I thought it my responsibility to remind you.

Mr. Mason: I will deal with it. You know, I was responding to what I thought the reasons were for the motion as it related to the New Democratic Party election platform during the 2015 provincial election. I was merely trying to make the point, Mr. Speaker, that we should defeat this particular motion because all of the things that are relevant to this question are already a matter of public record, whether it's our platform, which was there, or the actions of the government. As I mentioned, budgets and throne speeches, all of these things that this motion would probably ask for are already public, so there's really no need, I think, to pass this particular motion. We're going to continue to be open and transparent, and our budgets and our bills and our throne speeches are all going to remain public. Obviously, that's pretty clear.

I don't think we need to pass this motion, and I would urge all hon. members in the House to defeat this motion. Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to Motion for a Return 16 as moved by the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills?

[Motion for a Return 16 lost]

Carbon Levy and Climate Leadership Plan Correspondence

M19. Mrs. Pitt moved on behalf of Mr. MacIntyre that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return showing copies of all correspondence, including e-mails and submissions from stakeholders, related to the carbon levy or the climate leadership plan between May 24, 2015, and March 1, 2017.

The Speaker: All those members wishing to speak to Motion for a Return 19? The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, as we stated earlier in relation to the requests laid out in motions for returns 8, 10, 11, 12, and 19, much of the requested information has already been made public through various releases under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and through the full climate leadership panel process, that's been thoroughly documented and posted on our website for public consumption.

Our government does recognize and appreciate the need for open and transparent government, and we will gladly work to accommodate reasonable requests for information on behalf of the Official Opposition or others in the House. However, requests which, taken together, ask for all correspondence related to Alberta's climate leadership plan constitute hundreds of hours of staff time and tens of thousands of dollars' worth of work, the fruits of which would produce thousands of pages of correspondence with no clear informational objective. All of this time and effort would divert valuable resources from our government's work to save Albertans money and to create new jobs.

These unreasonable requests, I think, demonstrate that the opposition needs to sharpen its focus a little bit when it makes requests for information because these giant nets, where they hope to snag something, are going to not only bog us down, but I can't imagine the work that they'd create for their research staff in going through thousands and thousands of documents looking for some smoking gun that doesn't even exist, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's pretty clear that with a little more focus, we can cooperate to make sure that the opposition gets the information that it needs. But these kinds of – I guess I would call it a fishing trip, but really it's more than that. It's trying to essentially drain the whole ocean with one big net, and I don't think that it will assist the opposition, but I do know that it will take us an inordinate amount of effort and money to fulfill.

4:00

So with the greatest of regret, Mr. Speaker, I have to encourage all members to vote against this request and to encourage the opposition generally, you know, to sharpen its focus when it's asking for information. If we can accommodate their requests without just a massive diversion of resources and time, then we're happy to do so because we are an open and transparent government and we are as committed to those principles as we were in opposition.

The Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to Motion for a Return 19, as moved by the Member for Airdrie on behalf of the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake?

Member for Airdrie, would you like to close debate?

Mrs. Pitt: No.

[Motion for a Return 19 lost]

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 204 Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2017

[Debate adjourned April 3: Mr. Hinkley speaking]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How much time do I have remaining?

The Speaker: I think you have five.

Mr. Hinkley: Five minutes? All right.

Well, I guess just quickly to summarize what I had mentioned last time, our party has stood up for landowners in Alberta and will continue to do so. We believe in property rights, including due process, proper notification, and fair compensation. We are working to ensure that the public has access to appropriate protections and avenues for resolution.

There are some concerns, though, that we do have, and there are lots of questions and clarity that we are looking for. For instance, how would we find that the balance between individual property owners' rights and protecting Alberta's public goods such as water and Crown lands be handled in this particular bill?

One of the amendments in Bill 204 proposes to repeal section 74 of the Land Titles Act, including wording that would ensure that "no right or title in or to land registered under this Act may be acquired . . . by adverse possession." Now, we'd like to thank the member for bringing this issue to the House because I do believe it is an issue that requires further investigation and action. I have no doubt that members of this Legislature have been contacted by their constituents urging them to address the doctrine of adverse possession. Issues that will have a positive impact on Albertans are something that this House must consider seriously, but as I read through the bill as currently written, I was left with wanting just a little bit more.

Again, I'd like to stress that this is a good first attempt by the Member for Livingstone-Macleod, but it is incomplete. For example, if it is passed, this may not solve the issue the member is seeking to address. I would urge the member to take a more holistic approach given that the bill does not address all the necessary policy considerations. For example, it is unclear how ongoing issues that arise in boundary and occupancy disputes will be addressed and resolved if we eliminate adverse possession. Currently section 69 of the Law of Property Act provides the mechanisms needed to resolve disputes where improvements have been made on the wrong piece of land. However, Bill 204 does not outline whether it plans to keep section 69. If the member does intend through Bill 204 on keeping this section, it does not solve the issue of boundary disputes, and this is just the tip of the iceberg on this issue.

I have no doubt that the Member for Livingstone-Macleod is aware that establishing if something is or isn't a lasting improvement is a difficult process. If it is established, section 69 may not cover situations where the occupier has long-time use but does not actually build a long-lasting improvement, something like a driveway, so I would urge the member to consider that including a method for disputes where lasting improvements are not present is still required.

I would like to shift focus now to the principles of the Limitations Act. As members know, the Limitations Act sets out that claims should be acted on within a 10-year period for an owner to claim return of possession of real property from an adverse possession. But reading through Bill 204, it does not set out a framework that would address existing disputes. As I mentioned earlier, I don't believe that Bill 204 addresses adverse possession in a holistic manner and am interested to hear from other members on these issues.

I've already mentioned section 69 of the Law of Property Act and the Limitations Act and the Land Titles Act, but revisions may be needed to the Municipal Government Act, the Irrigation Districts Act, Public Lands Act, and perhaps others. This is just becoming too much like an omnibus bill, and there's just too much in it, actually. Adverse possession cannot and should not be addressed through a single lens because the elimination of adverse possession is not a straightforward process. It is complex and may open gaps and create unintended consequences for Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank the member. As I have said, we respect the intent of this bill; however, property rights and industry responsibility are key concerns for Albertans and for this government. For example, our government is looking at how we can better . . . [Mr. Hinkley's speaking time expired]

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill 204, the Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2017. I speak in favour of this bill.

Property rights: they're always very tremendously important. If you come into my constituency and you start talking about the property rights of the farmers and the individuals that have acreages, you will find out very, very quickly that property rights are a very important part of the life in my constituency of Drayton Valley-Devon. Property rights refer to the rights of the landowners, among others, and are a key foundation of the financial security and the prosperity of this province that we call Alberta. When we start talking about financial security and prosperity, obviously it becomes a very important issue that we're addressing.

Landowners, Mr. Speaker, need to know that their investments, that their property, sometimes even their livelihoods that depend on those investments and those properties are not going to be unprotected, that they're protected from the actions of others and from the actions of government, that they can't be simply devalued by the actions of others, including government, without having access to some sort of just compensation. Indeed, many people will argue that the property rights in our society are the foundation of individual liberty. I think of somebody like Calvin Coolidge, that we would have talked about when I was in my social studies class, who said, "Ultimately, property rights and personal rights are the same thing." What he's trying to get at there, for my kids, is the understanding that when you have property, whether it's intellectual or whether it's in the boundaries of physical ownership, the ownership of something as the author or as the owner of land really does come down to your personal right of ownership and therefore your capacity to be able to provide for yourself. So they're absolutely critical.

4:10

Now, we've actually taken in an oblique way the capacity to enshrine these property rights even in our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter in section 8 protects individuals

from unreasonable search and seizure of their property. In section 15 we see that we're guaranteed equality before the law, and this can be used, for example, to challenge land-use regulations that may discriminate against someone based on their religion or their mental disability or other protected categories of the Charter. Section 26 affirms the existence of pre-Charter common law and other rights that existed in Canada, especially with regard to ownership of property. And, of course, section 25 of the Charter is crucial for our First Nations for it protects aboriginal rights, including their land rights, against state interference. So when we start talking about this issue of land rights, it's a very important issue.

Now, previous governments have brought forward legislation that severely curtailed the property rights of Albertans. We've been aware – in my constituency I've had many citizens come and talk to me about the problems that were created by bills 19 and 24 and 36 and 50. They looked and they saw that the government and the bureaucracy that works for this government saw property rights as a hindrance, a hindrance to their capacity to be able to plan and to set policy goals, so they saw a deterioration of their property rights, which they have not been happy with.

For instance, Bill 2, in 2012, the Responsible Energy Development Act, lacked the capacity to provide for my constituents adequate notification of hearings and appeals, their ability to appeal for their rights as landowners. It failed to abolish the law of adverse possession, known as squatters' rights.

Bill 36, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, removed the landowner's right to compensation and to access to the courts for anything short of expropriation when a land-use plan harms their livelihood. There were many people in my constituency that were very concerned about this lack of access to the courts. It gave the cabinet complete decision-making authority over existing rights, including grazing rights, development rights, natural resource rights, et cetera. I live in a rural district. I live in a rural constituency. Every one of those is important to my constituents. Section 17(4) maintains that Bill 36 will trump all other acts. Huge concerns for my constituents.

Bill 50, the Electric Statutes Amendment Act, 2009, took authority to approve new electrical transmissions away from the public Alberta Utilities Commission and gave it to the cabinet. Again, after the lines were built, the bill was repealed, but we're still going to be paying for those lines for a long time. The concept of taking it away from a public utilities commission, where people could have access to that commission: huge problems when you're just talking about giving all of that power to the cabinet.

Bill 19 gave cabinet the power to freeze a person's land without compensation. Now, again, it was repealed.

Bill 24, Carbon Capture and Storage Statutes Amendment Act, 2010, took away the pore spaces. I have heard a lot about that in my constituency, as landowners have had to look at: what were the ramifications of a government that could take away the pore spaces in the land that they owned?

While many of these bills have been repealed over the years, Bill 204 would continue this process. It would continue to rectify some of the still outstanding issues that are of concern for my constituents.

I want to thank the hon. member for bringing forward Bill 210 previously, the Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2016. It would have re-established landowners' rights to access to the courts, to a right to fair compensation, to timely information. Now, that bill died on the Order Paper. So I want to thank the hon. member again for bringing forward Bill 204. This bill will continue that move forward, to move that bar in a direction that will allow Albertans to see that their property rights are continuing to be protected.

When we take a look at Bill 36, for instance, Bill 204 will amend Bill 36. It will repeal sections which give cabinet the extraordinary power to make any law or regulation within the authority of the Legislature. It will amend in section 11 the rights of holders of statutory consents, people that are involved in forestry permits, intensive livestock operations, oil and gas leases, grazing leases. They will be allowed to recover their financial losses through the courts if they're negatively impacted by, for instance, regional planning.

As we look at this bill, we can see that it's providing landowners and Albertans with increased capacity to defend their property rights. Every Albertan should have the capacity to go before a court. Every Albertan should have the capacity to be able to fairly place before the courts their concerns rather than simply having cabinet make the decisions for them. Every Albertan should have the capacity to receive fair compensation when their livelihoods are directly and negatively impacted by regional planning, and I believe that this bill will move us forward in that direction, and that's a good thing for Albertans.

We will be amending section 31 of the Responsible Energy Development Act. We're going to incorporate the rights from section 26 of the previous Energy Resources Conservation Act so that the owners of private land will be properly notified of access requests. They will learn and be able to challenge the facts supporting an energy resource application, and they'll be fully involved with the hearings that surround that.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see how allowing Albertans the capacity to learn and to challenge facts is anything but a positive move.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and speak to Bill 204, the Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2017. I'm proud to be part of a government and a caucus that has always stood up for landowners in Alberta, and we'll continue to do so. We believe in protecting property rights. It's something that I know as a member of the Resource Stewardship Committee we have discussed numerous times. I've had numerous discussions in my office regarding this topic, and I'm proud of the work that we're doing. It's important to Albertans, and it's important to us, which is why we've made the commitment to address these issues. It's why our government has already begun working with stakeholders to make positive changes to protect Albertans, their property, and their property rights.

The issues raised in Bill 204 are important issues, issues that have been raised by a great many Albertans in my riding, in your riding, and to MLAs on both sides of this House. After my review of the bill, however, I have serious concerns around the specifics of what the member is proposing. Again, many of the issues raised in this bill are important topics worthy of debate in this Legislature, but I believe we need to address issues in a way that does not substitute one set of problems for another or create unintended consequences for the very people I believe we should be trying to help.

Protecting landowners is important to our government, as it should be. It has long been an issue championed by members of our caucus, some of whom, in debates in this House, identified the challenges associated with the legislation Bill 204 would seek to amend. Mr. Speaker, there are other important considerations as well. For far too long previous governments failed to manage the environmental and social outcomes of development on a cumulative-effects basis. We need to do better going forward, and regional planning needs to be a cornerstone of that important work.

4:20

However, one of the key changes that Bill 204 proposes is to provide additional rights to compensation for any statutory consent, like a water licence, that might be affected by a regional plan. In fact, Bill 204 would add a clause to the Alberta Land Stewardship Act that states:

Notwithstanding section 13, if a regional plan affects, amends or rescinds a statutory consent or the terms or conditions of a statutory consent, the holder of the statutory consent may bring a claim against the Crown for any losses the holder may suffer as a result of any effect on or amendment . . . of the statutory consent under a regional plan.

Again, I understand the intent of the member in putting this amendment forward, but I worry that this bill looks at the issue from only the perspective of compensation for consent holders, missing other important perspectives like environmental protection and orderly development. Looking at an issue from all sides is what we do in this government and what we should do in this House.

As drafted, Bill 204 would create private compensation rights for public goods such as water and public lands, and I think we can all agree that property rights are complex. We need to strike the right balance among matters of public good, individual property owners' rights, environmental protection, and responsible development.

Mr. Speaker, there are currently over 86,000 active Crown mineral agreements in Alberta, and many of these may be potentially impacted by regional plans and regulation. If Bill 204 becomes law, regional planning could leave the government, and more importantly Albertans could potentially be liable for compensation for these plus thousands of other statutory consents affecting public lands, water, and any other resources.

Mr. Speaker, regional plans are designed to reflect the unique attributes and public interests of Alberta's different regions. For example, our government has recently begun work on the North Saskatchewan regional plan. The focus of that plan will be on balancing the pressures of a growing population, serving as a significant centre for energy refining and distribution, and acting as a gateway to the north. The lower Athabasca regional plan came into effect in 2012. The focus of that plan was to manage the challenges of a growing population in an area with high bitumen production.

Regional plans such as these are crucial to ensuring that all of the interests in a community are considered when planning for the long-term economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and community well-being in different regions of our province. They were developed after wide-ranging engagement with community stakeholders. Regional planning is an important tool for ensuring Albertans have an ability to shape their communities, and it needs to be preserved.

I'm concerned that Bill 204 could bring in significant financial and legal risk for those regional planning efforts. The bill currently proposes to eliminate section 9(2)(c) and (d) and 14(2) of the Alberta Land Stewardship, which allows the government to make regulations under regional plans. Mr. Speaker, regulations are what allow government to give legal force and meaning to the plans developed in consultation with the people of a region. Without that power regional plans would amount to statements of intent and little more. What the member has proposed could undermine the work of communities and stakeholders across Alberta and potentially gut land-use planning in our province.

Bill 204 also appears to propose a change under section 19 of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act to create additional rights to compensation, not to protect existing rights but to create new ones. The amendment would redefine the term "compensable taking," which refers to situations where a regional plan may take away a

property right and the owner is then compensated under law. The proposed change would potentially overlap and confuse compensation rights under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act that already exist elsewhere in Alberta law. This would broaden the scope of those who would be entitled to compensation even if they would not have been entitled to compensation under common law or any other existing legislation.

Let's think about that. We don't know what the bill would make us liable for because the provision for compensation is potentially so broad that it could require compensation for any loss, including for damages or other financial relief, and the proposed amendments could cause uncertainty. They could harm the ability of government to properly plan for growth and development and to regulate industry. Mr. Speaker, this government is focused on attracting investment at a time when Alberta needs that investment. The uncertainty that this bill could create would have the opposite effect.

To name one example, Bill 204 would reinstate mandatory hearings at the Alberta Energy Regulator, where its decisions may directly and adversely affect the rights of a person and would change other notification requirements by amending the Responsible Energy Development Act. The proposed requirement for mandatory hearings would impose additional costs on industry at a difficult time for our energy sector. Moreover, I'm not certain that formal hearings, where players with deeper pockets and greater capacity may have an advantage, are really the best way to level the playing field, as I believe the member intends.

I also understand that there may be options under the existing Responsible Energy Development Act for changing these processes. Wouldn't this be a simpler way than changing the law? It's also worth noting that this change could also create inconsistencies between regulation of energy resource activities and nonenergy resource activities that would not be subject to the same requirements for mandatory hearings. Again, this strikes me as the wrong time to increase industry uncertainty, particularly when there may be better ways of achieving the same objective.

I'm proud to be part of a government and a caucus who have always stood up for landowners in Alberta. We need a legislative regime that balances the needs of industry for predictable regulation and the needs of all stakeholders, including private property owners. I have serious concerns about how these proposed changes would impact investment in our province. Any changes need to strike an appropriate balance between individual property owner rights, industry's need for process certainty, and protecting Alberta's resources such as water and public lands. As drafted, I'm worried that the choices made in Bill 204 do not meet that test.

One of the amendments that Bill 204 proposes is to repeal section 74 of the Land Titles Act. It includes wording that would ensure that no right or title may be acquired by adverse possession.

If passed, the bill would also delete sections of the Limitations Act. This would remove the limitation period on a registered landowner's right to enforce ownership over his or her land, including the right to possession.

I'd like to thank the member for bringing this issue to the House because it is an issue that requires further investigation and action, and I have no doubt that members of this Legislature have been contacted by their constituents, as I have, urging them to address the doctrine of adverse possession.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to urge that this House vote in favour of Bill 204. My colleague from Livingstone-

Macleod has brought a very good piece of legislation forward. He's looking to address some of the past concerns brought forward by our laws that were, I guess, in an effort to avoid following rules, if you will, or going to the courts and actually allowing people their day in court. Our bureaucrats saw that property rights were a hindrance, and I don't think we should ever see property rights as a hindrance. We should be looking at it as a foundational piece that we should all be trying to bring forward as the one thing that we can depend on.

I know that this adverse possession is something that is a deep concern for rural Alberta. I did find an article that really struck a chord with me, when I thought, you know, it's important that we look at exactly what it is that we're trying to achieve with this bill, at least a part of it anyway.

The article that I'm specifically looking at is from the *Western Producer*. When Squatters Strike is the title of the article. It was done on January 22, 2015. Now, I'd like to read out some of this because it is actually very, very interesting to see the perspective of somebody that is caught within this terrible process that's currently allowed in Alberta. Just to make sure that people understand what squatters' rights are, squatters' rights laws allow people to be legal owners of land if they have been in open possession of it for 10 years or more.

4:30

There's a gentleman named Bob Woodward, who can see the 10-acre parcel of ranchland from his kitchen window.

It is land west of Cardston, Alta., that he bought in 1999, for which he had legal title and on which he paid taxes every year since it was purchased.

So Woodward was flabbergasted when a judge ruled in December that the land belonged to his neighbour.

The decision was based on Alberta law involving adverse possession, more commonly known as squatter's rights.

It allows people to be recognized as legal owners of land if they have been in open possession of it for 10 or more years.

This is something that we need to review. Is this something that we want in Alberta, where you can actually hold the title and somebody can take that title away from you?

Now, it's my understanding here that when we look at these squatters' rights, if you will, we're actually looking at examples where people are becoming very creative on how to take other people's land for free. It is very disappointing that this government appears to be looking in this direction and saying: "This isn't something we're looking at dealing with. This is something that we don't think is important."

I'll go further on here.

Alberta is the only province to retain the legislation, which is based on British common law but has been struck from the books in other provinces.

What's interesting here is that we've got an actual quote from Mr. Woodward, and I think this actually sums it up very, very nicely.

"I think that the rural people need to be made aware that this old act is still in the works and that if you have unscrupulous people looking for an opportunity like that, they can take advantage of that old law . . .

"Even though you've bought a piece of property and paid for it and paid the taxes on it and everything, if they squat on it, even if you know that they're there and more or less acknowledge, or in other words put up with them, if you let them do it for 10 years, they can turn around and claim your property."

You know, in this case it sounded like this gentleman was doing a neighbour a favour. Without knowing all of the facts, I can only speculate at this point. But I can tell you that a lot of this is well intentioned. What happens is that you may have somebody in need,

and you say: “Gee, you know what? I want to help that individual.” So squatters’ rights are something that is a very big concern.

Now, when I was doing some accounting training courses, I remember this topic actually coming up. The one concern that had been brought up was that we’re seeing people even becoming more creative with this. We’re hearing that children living in their parents’ home, down in the basement, could possibly be able to claim squatters’ rights and prevent the sale of that home. Now, I understand about children that are dependent on their parents, but we also need to make sure that we strike a balance. Property rights: it is the most imperative thing that we’ve got, the foundation that we actually formed government on, going forward, for centuries. What we need to be looking at is what, actually, property rights are. That means holding title. That means keeping title.

Now, I do understand that the NDP have brought up a few concerns, some concerns that they feel justify making sure this bill probably isn’t going to be moving forward. But I will remind you that a committee was formed. The committee reviewed that squatters’ rights were probably not in the best interest, and they unanimously passed that something needed to be done. Well, it’s being done with Bill 204. How can you vote against this? Instead of voting against this, why not bring amendments forward that correct your concerns? Why are we looking at a move by the government that will continue to allow this clear, clear injustice when it comes to our property rights?

We need to make sure that when we look at our neighbours and we’re out there to help people, they are not allowed to take advantage of that generosity, that generosity that makes every Albertan that much better, helping their neighbour through hard times. This is the one thing that I can say, that in my constituency of Bonnyville-Cold Lake, while we are going through this low oil time, there are a lot of people in need. The food banks are so heavily depended on in my constituency right now. The fact that we have such high vacancy rates in my riding is another thing.

I am hoping that, in the end, what we start looking at is that we start to review what has happened in the past when it comes to property rights, that we see that it didn’t work, and then we correct those errors. That is what my colleague from Livingstone-Macleod is doing. He is going forward. He is bringing his constituents’ needs forward. He is saying: “What was done in the past should never have been done. Let’s correct that. Let’s work together.” I went to the committee. We saw it in the committee. We saw that our two caucuses were able to work together and say that something needs to be done specifically around squatters’ rights, yet when the Wildrose puts a bill forward, how is it that this is not being put forward in good faith so that the government will move that forward?

Now, I will say that it is unfair of me to say that they have categorically not wanted to work with the Wildrose because Bill 202 is a good example of our caucuses working together. We did it on that bill. Why can we not move Bill 204 forward? This bill is a strong bill that will strengthen property rights. And you know what? I can’t see any caucus within this House that doesn’t agree that property rights are important to Albertans. I believe that this is something that we can work together to solve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a great privilege to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to Bill 204. It’s actually really gratifying to be part of the Legislature doing its intended job, which is, of course, you know, seriously considering legislation brought

forward by other members. I’d like to commend the spirit that the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod brought this forward in.

[Ms Woollard in the chair]

I also do understand that this is something where, of course, you know, our government and, previous to that, our party have been very clear on making sure that questions of fundamental justice are respected when it comes to surface rights. But I also do understand that members of the opposition might have gone further in this at certain times and also that the very genesis of their party, in some sense, comes from a dispute over that.

Of course, I speak of this in representing a big part of Sturgeon county, where Bill 50, of course, had quite an impact on residents and farmers and where a lot of the concern came from. Now, that being said, of course, Bill 50 has been repealed, so at least we’re not facing that type of very negative approach to property rights.

4:40

I have the utmost sympathy for the perspective that hon. members are taking, but just because we might agree on some outlines of a problem doesn’t necessarily mean that we agree on what the best solution for that problem might be or that it might be always completely clear what that solution is. That’s because, of course, this is a very complex issue. It is not simple, as my other colleagues have brought forward. I mean, it’s not simple even on a basic level.

You know, the hon. members in the opposition have been discussing rights and what property rights are. What does a right consist of? I mean, what does it mean to have a right to something? Who bestows it, and how is it maintained? Now, when it comes to rights in Alberta, my – I don’t know – great-great-great-grandparents had settled in the St. Albert area before Alberta became a province in 1905, and as such for many decades they retained the subsurface rights or the mineral rights to their property.

Unfortunately, they sold the land. We never did discover any resources under there, and right now that land is under the Costco when you’re going north out of St. Albert. I’m not sure that anyone will be drilling there any time soon either although, with the kind of advances in technology with directional drilling, perhaps.

Now, since 1905, however, all land in the province, whether that was through the homestead act or whether that was purchased through the CPR or whether that was in purchasing school land set aside, the mineral rights have not gone with the property. We have a situation where we do have competing values and competing interests, where you have on the one side, of course, the individual land or property owner that wants to be able to enjoy unencumbered his or her property, but on the other side you have the collective need for the people of Alberta as a whole to develop their own resources in a way that can, you know, bring our province forward. In fact, a lot of the wonderful things we’ve been able to develop in this province over the decades have been through this wise development of our resources.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Now, that being said, that development has not always been wise either. I mean, there have been excesses. There have been issues with previous administrations where they maybe didn’t get the balance right. Sometimes, you know, the environmental and even economic outcomes have not been properly balanced. There has been sort of a cumulative impact of that, and I think that speaks to maybe a lessening of trust by some property owners in the existing system. Definitely, I think it’s agreed that we do need to do better for individual landowners but also in the public’s interest for the common good. I know that that is a priority of myself and that of our government.

How do we go about this? Well, I mean, a lot of the problems that we've found ourselves in over the years have been maybe a bit of overexuberance and a lack of planning. Regional planning: it's hard to imagine how you can have an orderly development that's going to benefit everybody, including us as individuals, without any sort of plan.

One issue that I have with Bill 204 is that, you know, as my hon. colleagues alluded to earlier, it could have a real impact on some of the existing planning efforts; for example, the North Saskatchewan regional plan and the lower Athabasca regional plan. These plans themselves are critical as they speak to people's other rights.

Now, of course, you can't look at rights in a vacuum. You can't look at property rights in a vacuum. As some members may be aware, I used to actually have the great, well, fun – that would be a good word for it – of teaching ethics for beginning teachers at the U of A. That is something that we go into in great detail, that no right can be unconditional because unconditional rights negate other rights. Maybe a simple way of putting that is that the right for me to swing my arm kind of ends at where your face is. There are kind of limits to what rights are, so there's always a balance built into them.

Now, that balance under our system needs to be in accordance with – now, it's a vague term, but it seems to be the one in Canadian jurisprudence that's becoming more popular because of being in the Charter – the principles of fundamental justice. From that fundamental justice is a concept of basic fairness. That's how these need to be mediated. If we're looking at things for regional planning or things that are serving the collective interest or other rights that we have as individuals – a right to clean water, a right to a rich environment – these types of things might be impacted if we go too far the other way. That's where it might become so prohibitive for the government to make positive changes, because it's unclear just how much of a compensational right Bill 204 would create. It might even be in ways that are unintended.

I guess going on with another hat, speaking as a former insurance agent, having a situation where you can't actually determine the limits of your liability, that isn't a position that I'd like to see our province in. Of course, you know, one of those limits, as my other colleagues had referred to: we have 86,000 Crown mineral agreements enforced at the present time that might be impacted by this.

Like I said, obviously – and I don't want this to be interpreted in any other way – property rights are critically important. They cannot be set aside. However, there's always going to be a balance. If you have a situation where we leave the government liable for potentially – well, who knows how much? That's something that I think anyone, including members of the opposition, are going to have some concerns about.

Now turning to the issue of adverse possession, I think it was the Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake that mentioned that this is something that had come out of . . . [Mr. Piquette's speaking time expired] Oh, I was just getting warmed up.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to take a moment here today just to talk about Bill 204, that my colleague from Livingstone-Macleod has put forward. He's put a lot of thought into this bill and has made some very, very good suggestions that this bill will bring forward to the Legislature. It's been interesting to hear the comments so far, especially from the NDP caucus.

I do want to just read a few quotes here, and this is out of a document produced by Alberta's NDP opposition. It's titled *Your Land, Your Rights*. It says:

Alberta's NDP stands for:

- No expropriation except in cases of urgent public need;
- Due process with respect to rights of landowners;
- No "freezing" of land for future projects.

Those are just a couple things there right off the top.

It says down here in another spot that "the NDP Opposition has a petition to repeal Bills 19, 36, and 50." Now, this Bill 204 relates mostly to Bill 36. At one time the NDP opposition fought to totally repeal Bill 36. Now here we are just talking about some amendments just to help soften the blow that Bill 36 has created on landowners' property rights in Alberta, and all we hear now are things like – well, the Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose at the beginning of his speech talked about how it doesn't go far enough. That may be. There's probably a lot more we could do with Bill 36 to improve it. But near the end of his speech he talked about how this is way too much; it's like an omnibus bill. Is it too much or too little? I don't understand.

4:50

When I go further into the NDP Official Opposition land property rights brochure, it talks about that Bill 36, Alberta Land Stewardship Act,

- Creates seven regional plans that will trump all other legislation and local municipal by-laws, regulations, or plans, have power to make law on any matter within the authority of the Legislature, and be under the exclusive power of cabinet, which can amend or repeal them at any time.

Now, it sounds like they're somewhat distraught by this idea that cabinet would be making all these decisions. Of course, unless it's your cabinet; then I guess it's all okay. It's all fine. It's all fine.

It goes on to say:

- Allows regional plans to extinguish any type of consent requirement under other authorities.

So here we are. We have cabinet taking away opportunity for other authorities to make decisions.

Here's a quote from the Government House Leader.

This is yet another example of the government's own trend toward centralizing power in the political leadership of the province. Specifically I'm talking about the cabinet. There are so many decisions that have previously been made by other organizations in the province that are now being made at the cabinet level.

This government has been in power for two years now. This was one of their campaign brochures. What have they done to change Bill 36, that was so abhorrent back then? Nothing. And what do we do here? The Wildrose Official Opposition MLA for Livingstone-Macleod brings forward Bill 204, and what happens? "We can't talk about this. This, you know, sounds good, but no, no, we just can't look at this."

I think it was the Member for Stony Plain who talked about it taking away government decisions on stuff. Well, in here they're talking about how the problem is that all the decisions are going to be made in cabinet. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we have a situation here where in opposition it was great to oppose, it was great to make all these claims, but once the power was in their hands, things have changed. That's just not right. This is a well-thought-out bill that should be supported by everyone in this House.

I keep hearing discussion on adverse possession. Obviously, that's something that needed to disappear a long time ago. It has across Canada. Different jurisdictions have gotten rid of it or are

getting rid of this adverse possession law. I think it was one of the NDP MLAs who was talking about: “Well, you know, what do we do? How do we tell what’s happening under adverse possession?” Well, I think there’s a thing called a land title that landowners have. There are also people called surveyors that go out and survey land. I think it would be pretty easy to find out who the legal owner is of any property in Alberta based on those two things: a title to the land – who legally owns it? – and if there’s any discussion as far as what property this is and what property that is, then a surveyor could sort that out.

I don’t understand why the government is balking on this other than the fact that maybe they want to make sure that this power is kept in cabinet while they’re in power. Of course, two years from now when they’re gone, we’ll probably see them fighting: “Oh no. Now we’ve got to get rid of this.” They have the opportunity right now, Mr. Speaker, to do the right thing: support Bill 204; take care of some of the most egregious things in Bill 36; protect landowners’ rights, as they have claimed they wanted to do in the past; and take care of adverse possession at the same time. Pretty simple. It’s not complicated. It’s the right thing. All they have to do is support it here, and it’s done.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m very pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 204, Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2017, which was brought forward by the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod. For 30 years I staunchly defended property rights as a member of the Canadian Real Estate Association. Part of the preamble of the code of ethics of the Canadian Real Estate Association speaks to this. I will be tabling this at first opportunity.

Under all is the land. Upon its wise utilization and widely allocated ownership depend the survival and growth of free institutions and of our civilization. Through the realtor, the land resource of the nation reaches its highest [and best] use and private land ownership its widest distribution. The realtor is instrumental in moulding the form of his or her community and the living and working conditions of its people.

Such functions impose grave social responsibilities which realtors can meet only by diligent preparation, and considering it a civic duty to dedicate themselves to the fulfillment of a realtor’s obligations to society.

Mr. Speaker, I dedicated myself to that code of ethics for 30 years, and that dedication didn’t die when I got elected on May 5, 2015. The rest of my caucus is equally committed to that profound dedication to the protection of property rights, and we’ll continue to do so in legislation that we bring forward. Right now, this piece of legislation doesn’t necessarily afford the protections that the opposition is claiming it will.

We’ve always stood up for landowners in Alberta, and we’ll continue to do so. One of the fundamental premises of the code of ethics, “under all is the land,” is that arbitrating competing interests is something that must be carefully done by any piece of legislation that is brought forward. What most real estate law does, in fact a lot of laws, is arbitrate competing interests. However, the legislation before us today really doesn’t reflect that commitment as we would like to see it done. Bill 204 aims to address important concerns, but in fact as it’s currently drafted, the bill creates more questions than it answers.

Our government has already begun working with stakeholders to make positive changes on these important issues, and we’re working to make Albertans’ lives better by ensuring that the public has access to appropriate protections and avenues for resolution

where issues arise, including private property, to make sure that when we are arbitrating competing interests in land, it is done fairly with adequate attention to all the unintended consequences that a piece of legislation might contemplate.

Now, I’m pleased to speak to Bill 204. I’m proud to be part of a government and a caucus that has always stood up for landowners in Alberta and will continue to do so. For anyone to suggest that this government is not interested in the protection of property rights is disingenuous. I think if you look at the histories of the members of the Legislature on our government’s side of the House, there’s a long list of individuals who have been involved in the real estate industry, insurance industry, and other parts of the business community and in their past professional capacity have stood up and been staunch defenders of property rights. That is reflected in our caucus’ attitude towards legislation that will affect property rights and the arbitration of competing interests in land as we move forward in our mandate.

Now, it’s important to Albertans and important to our government, and that’s why we made a commitment to address these issues. Protecting landowners is important to our government, as it should be.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt, but the time limit for consideration of this item of business has concluded.

5:00 Motions Other than Government Motions

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

Oil Security of Supply

505. Mr. Panda moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the federal government to develop strategies to facilitate the building of pipelines within Canada to ensure security of supply to the Canadian market, thereby shifting Canada away from buying oil from countries with oppressive dictatorships.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to introduce Motion 505. Our province produces the best oil and gas in the world, and Albertans are tired of the hypocrisy of accepting millions of barrels of foreign dictators’ oil from overseas while putting up barriers for ethically produced Alberta oil. I moved to Canada and especially to Alberta precisely because of the natural resources to be exploited – the economy, the jobs, the opportunity, the lower taxes, the Alberta advantage, the technological innovation, the fairness for workers, the environmental regulatory oversight – so it’s a little baffling to me that Canadian refineries buy 245,000 barrels of oil per day from outside of Canada from countries where basic personal freedoms and democracy are in doubt or absent. This is absurd.

We sit on over 50 per cent of the free oil in the world, yet we are helping finance some of the most oppressive regimes in the world. Alberta has 1.8 billion barrels of proven conventional reserves remaining, but the oil sands contain 166 billion barrels of proven reserves. We are third in the world for reserves, behind Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. The vast majority of the world’s oil is controlled by state-owned enterprises whereas in Canada it’s free oil. We don’t need any military efforts to extract that oil, Mr. Speaker.

This amazing resource provides wealth not only for Albertans in the energy sector but supports industries both here and across the country. Our wealth also funds the rest of the country because of federal taxes and other programs. The most recent average was \$24

billion per year, that goes from Alberta taxpayers to programs like equalization and employment insurance.

In the Trump era, where everything is America first, where stability is going to be very much in question, our oil reserves will provide stability for Canada's economy. We have the ability to achieve something that is only dreamed of in other countries, energy independence. With United States President Donald Trump calling for American energy independence and with Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall going to Washington, DC, last month calling for North American energy independence and with Conservative leadership candidates calling for country of origin labelling at the gas pump, the obvious choice for Alberta is to start promoting Canadian oil for Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Panda: That's right.

That's why it's so important for TransCanada's Energy East project to be built, that 4,500-kilometre pipeline that will transport about 1.1 million barrels per day safely from Alberta and Saskatchewan to the refineries of eastern Canada and a marine terminal in New Brunswick.

In a survey done for the Montreal Economic Institute by Leger in February 2016, 41 per cent of Quebecers consider pipelines to be the safest means to transport oil, and the overwhelming majority of Quebecers, 59 per cent, prefer that the oil imported from outside Quebec come from western Canada.

Valero's refinery at Lévis, south of Quebec City, has already sworn off foreign imports in favour of domestic, North America only crude sources. New Brunswick is welcoming the Energy East pipeline with open arms. Desperate for jobs, there is much hope that Irving Oil will invest in modifying its existing 300,000-barrels-per-day refinery to process Alberta heavy oil.

Getting our oil to the east coast, of course, means that we have all kinds of options because we are at tidewater. India is closer to Saint John, New Brunswick, than Vancouver, British Columbia. My dream is to see the bitumen from Suncor's Firebag or Fort Hills mine operations exported from Saint John, New Brunswick, and sent to the Reliance group's refinery in Jamnagar, India, connecting projects I helped to build in Canada to projects I helped to build in India, too. Mr. Speaker, that's my dream. The infrastructure is all there for energy independence and exports. We just need a pipeline to connect it all. There is a ridiculous tanker ban on the northwest coast of British Columbia, so we have to go to the east, where tankers from tinpot dictators come in every day, Mr. Speaker.

I'm talking about Saudi Arabia and Algeria. Human Rights Watch has this to say about Saudi Arabia:

Saudi authorities in 2017 continued to arbitrarily arrest, try, and convict peaceful dissidents. Dozens of human rights defenders and activists are serving long prison sentences for criticizing authorities or advocating political and [democratic] rights reforms. Authorities systematically discriminate against women and religious minorities. In 2016, Saudi Arabia carried out 154 executions, 23 for non-violent drug crimes.

Women trying to escape forced marriages have their passports seized by authorities and have religion imposed on them. Women are not allowed to drive. How about we go down to the public square and watch someone have their head cut off for committing a crime? It's brutal. It's cruel. Why are we buying oil from these people? Why are we Canadians continuing to patronize this? In Alberta trade unions play a critical role in the development of our oil, and workers' rights here are protected. In Algeria trade union organizers go to jail.

Finally, Alberta's oil is produced with some of the strictest environmental standards in the world. Trust me, Mr. Speaker. I

have seen some of the things that happen in other countries, personally experienced them. Not only are we a country worth supporting for our legal protection of rights but for our environmental regulatory oversight, which has a very personal meaning for me. Upon coming to Canada, a respiratory ailment of mine healed miraculously. Precisely because of Canada's clean air and water I no longer need medication for my sinuses. Have I made my point clear?

I have worked internationally as an engineer in the petroleum sector for 28 years. I came to Canada to see all of these wonderful things, with natural resource development happening, yet six years from first whisper we still do not have a pipeline from Alberta to Saint John, New Brunswick. Six years, Mr. Speaker. In India I worked on a refinery project, and we built a 1.4-million-barrels-per-day refinery in just three years. That's the single largest refinery in the world. Meanwhile we are sending money to foreign countries to buy foreign oil that supports the most heinous of crimes, that would never be tolerated in Canada. It has to stop.

If passed and acted upon, Motion 505 would send a strong message to the rest of Canada that it is time to start truly moving our country in the direction of energy independence and away from our reliance on foreign oil. I challenge all the members in this House to stand up and support our industry, demand those pipelines be built, and promote Canadian oil for Canadians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

5:10

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

Mr. Coolahan: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to speak to Motion 505, and I want to thank the Member for Calgary-Foothills for bringing forward the motion. You know, it's a good motion. It's redundant, but it's a good motion. It's a good motion because it shows that the opposition has been paying attention. In fact, it reads like a motion that could have been written by a government caucus member, but of course we wouldn't have to because we're already working with the industry to modernize the oil and gas sector and achieve what's desired in this motion. Pipelines to tidewater on both Canadian coasts will factor into the success of the industry, so of course we will use our motions for other purposes.

Of course, it makes no sense that Canada still imports oil from countries that don't share a respect for human rights and the environment. My personal position as well as that of many others for many years has been that we should be pursuing energy security in this country, and this, of course, works to eliminate "buying oil from countries with oppressive dictatorships," to quote from Motion 505. But a strong modern oil and gas industry, including pipelines, with a focus on energy security also, somewhat ironically, will help us focus on getting a greater percentage of renewables on the grid.

Mr. Speaker, I know that motions are written to urge governments to take a course of action, but really this motion reads more like a fan letter. I read it as a show of support, telling this government: keep doing what you're doing. As such, I can support this motion in principle because it's really just a show of support for what the government is already doing.

I know the member isn't used to seeing a government take action because the previous government ran the province like it was on autopilot for 30 years, so maybe he missed the fact that his motion is redundant. But I guess it can be said that I'm glad that it is this government receiving this motion and working towards the objectives of this motion because, rest assured, Mr. Speaker, there's

no chance that the opposition has the understanding to navigate the 21st-century relationship between government and industry, not only in this country but around the world. Maybe that's why they're putting forth this motion, because they know that we have an understanding of how the modern world is looking at the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Rodney: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order. What's your point of order?

Mr. Rodney: You're allowed to sit, sir, through the chair.

Mr. Coolahan: Can I sit?

Mr. Rodney: Yes.

Mr. Coolahan: I don't take orders from you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, please.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Rodney: I am simply asking for a little bit of respect. Our third party is not involved in this conversation whatsoever, but I simply don't understand why it is . . .

An Hon. Member: Citation?

Mr. Rodney: The citation is: language that is likely to offend. By continuously insulting the intelligence of the Official Opposition, that's exactly what that's going to do. I'm happy to hear all the arguments; I think we all are. But – let's face it – a little bit of mutual respect would be much appreciated, especially when it comes to a private member's motion that it looks like he might even be supporting.

The Speaker: The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand, you know, the rules of the House, where people can stand up on points of order, and I think this one certainly is not. We have the opportunity to criticize and be able to make counterarguments. It's all part of the tradition, and that's all the member has been doing. There has been no – I've been listening very carefully to what he has been saying, as I do for everybody in this House, and I don't see in any shape or form that he was being disrespectful, making his points forcefully. I hope he will have the ability to continue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on the point of order, and I support my colleague from Calgary-Lougheed in his assertion about language that's likely to create disorder. While I can appreciate that the Deputy Government House Leader quite rightly pointed out that the member hasn't used language that is unparliamentary, that doesn't mean that he hasn't utilized a course of argument that is likely to create disorder, particularly when he makes statements about what the opposition would and wouldn't do, how redundant it is, how they don't know what's going on.

These sorts of statements are likely to create disorder, just like they have for my colleague from Calgary-Lougheed, and I would encourage you to encourage the member to choose the words he uses much more wisely.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I agree. I don't know that there's actually a point of order in this situation. It's one of opinion. But particularly at this late hour and with the weeks that we have to move forward, try and be more considerate of all of the members of the House and adjust your comments accordingly.

In this instance, to the hon. Member for Calgary-Lougheed, I don't believe there was an actual point of order.

Please be cautious. Thank you.

Debate Continued

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue. It's just very difficult to adhere to what they're trying to say here, to be honest. But, anyway, I'm going to continue here.

I'm going to say that it's unfortunate and unhelpful to Albertans and the economy, Mr. Speaker, that all I see from the opposition are positions that impede any success of what the opposition is proposing in its own motion. As I said, I support this motion in principle, but I'd almost like to see this motion come with a caveat or a promise from the opposition, something that says that the opposition will not support ideologies and positions that are detrimental to the success of getting pipelines approved and built.

Mr. Speaker, while this government is implementing a made-in-Alberta climate leadership plan that saw the province get two pipelines approved, the opposition rails against the climate leadership plan, preferring that a climate plan be imposed on us. They're completely out of touch with where the modern industry is heading.

On this side of the House we believe that a strong economy and a clean environment go hand in hand, and that is exactly how we secured two new pipelines, pipelines that support Albertan jobs and investment, pipelines that support a strong, diversified economy. The opposition sees this as an either/or proposition, that you can't be environmentally responsible and have a strong oil and gas sector.

While this government continues to work with the federal government and continues to push for more pipelines such as Energy East so that more Albertan oil can be used across the country and around the world, the opposition would rather let their ideology dominate and continue to push for failure. The opposition needs to explain to Albertans why they think it's a good idea to scrap the climate plan that resulted in the approval of two new pipelines.

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. Collaborating with the federal government is vital to ensuring that pipelines are built. I don't think the opposition understands that, nor have they demonstrated that they have the diplomatic skills to work collaboratively with the federal government or any world government. They need to stop scaring capital away to score political points at the expense of Alberta families and businesses.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying thank you to the member for the motion. I will be supporting the motion because it supports the work that's already being done by this government. But I would urge the opposition that should a yes vote come from this side, they recognize what is working in getting pipelines approved and built, which includes a strong climate plan and a modern, incentivized royalty structure, and that they be strong proponents of Alberta's oil and gas sector and recognize what the leaders of the sector are saying. This is part of what it is going to take for success of any kind on what's being proposed in this motion, support for what is working in getting pipeline approval. They need to be strong advocates, like we are on this side, of this oil and gas sector.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I continue to be amazed. Even on issues that you agree upon, there seem to be reasons to disagree with each other.

The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my thanks to my hon. colleague from Calgary-Foothills for bringing forth this excellent motion. This motion is about market access and about choice, which is why I'm proud today to rise in support of it.

Mr. Speaker, the motion reads:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the federal government to develop strategies to facilitate the building of pipelines within Canada to ensure security of supply to the Canadian market, thereby shifting Canada away from buying oil from countries with oppressive dictatorships.

From what I just heard, it sounds like both sides of the House can agree that that's a worthy goal.

5:20

As an Albertan and as a conservative this means two things to me. Firstly, Alberta is still facing unfair trade barriers when it comes to transporting our energy products to other provinces. Secondly, eastern Canadians are being robbed of the option of purchasing ethical, clean, Canadian oil.

Mr. Speaker, Canada ranks third in the world for proven reserves, with more than 95 per cent of these reserves being located in the Alberta oil sands and with Alberta having 39 per cent of Canada's remaining conventional oil reserves, more than any other province. Together, this means that Alberta contains nearly all of Canada's oil sands and much of its conventional oil reserves. Of course, we've been happy to be a leader, a leader in growing our economy and a leader in sharing our resources and our wealth with the entire rest of Canada. While Alberta is blessed in its geology, its landlocked geography has always been a bigger challenge.

In our current political climate, where parties are so eager to spread misinformation regarding the care with which Alberta's oil and gas resources are developed, market access is Alberta's pre-eminent challenge. Alberta needs Energy East, and Canada needs Energy East, not only for the construction jobs and the operation jobs but for access to the resource and the self-sustainability. Perhaps more significantly, by participating in Confederation, under the Constitution Act Alberta is entitled to Energy East. Confederation was intended to be a trade partnership, but today many members of Confederation act to prevent the free movement of our energy products.

Mr. Speaker, right now we can see examples of this with the B.C. NDP and with Alberta NDP appointee Tzeporah Berman. The NDP across Canada and in Alberta, truthfully, and even at the municipal level with mayors like Denis Coderre from Montreal are examples of blocking the free movement of our energy products. Their clear portfolio desire to stop the transportation of our energy products is in clear violation of the spirit of Confederation – 150 years – and section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

Intercolonial free trade was an important motivation for Confederation, yet many players within our Confederation have ignored their obligation to section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867. Mr. Speaker, section 121 is clear in its intent to provide for the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers, stating: "All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces."

It is so interesting to me that political operatives across Canada would be so unkind to their neighbours in Alberta and our communities and people when we're a neighbour that shares our prosperity so willingly, a neighbour that keeps the coffers of other

provinces full through equalization and other transfers. It is interesting because in blocking or protesting oil from Alberta, we're de facto welcoming oil from other countries that do not share their wealth with Canada or our expectations on how ethically our products are developed.

Mr. Speaker, one compliment that I will give to the last government is that it seemed like in almost every throne speech they highlighted the fact that interprovincial trade barriers had to come down and had to be improved upon.

When I talk to Albertans, the ones that I smile about maybe the most are the ones that come up to me and show a map of the United States and all of the miles and miles of pipelines that have been put in to make that country self-sustaining in oil and a lead producer in LNG. At the same time Canadian Confederation is not working like it could and should and was promised in 1867.

Many of the countries that provide oil to Canadian refineries have environmental standards as high as Alberta, and they care deeply for human rights. Mr. Speaker, Norway, for example, contributed 41 MBD to Canada in 2016, and our southern neighbours contributed 411 MBD. This trade is important for controlling costs domestically and ensuring that Canadian consumers and producers are getting the fairest prices.

What is great about this motion is that it does not advocate for trade blocks. No. Where trade makes sense it should occur. Alberta does not need a protectionist national energy program that tries to manage supply, harming Canadians in the process with prices that are higher than the world price. Healthy and free international trade will keep that in check. Furthermore, it should never be the government's place to tell Canadian refineries where they must import their oil from. They should be able to consider all their options.

However, Mr. Speaker, there is again huge hypocrisy at play. Domestically we have mayors like Denis Coderre and other NDP-financed ecoradicals like Tzeporah Berman and Karen Mahon that try to stop the trade of Alberta oil through the building of these needed new pipelines, appointed by our very own Alberta Premier. In working to stop this trade, these so-called advocates are forcing good Canadian refineries to import their raw product from jurisdictions with questionable ethical records. How does this make any sense?

In Alberta we respect workers' rights, we pay high wages, we impose world-class standards, we treat men and women equally in the workforce, and the list goes on. I am not sure that the same can be said for many of the countries we import oil from like Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Nigeria, Angola, or Iraq. I believe that Canadian refineries should be given a fair choice between the oil from Alberta and Saskatchewan and the oil from dictatorships, but without pipelines connecting our country, that choice of supplier is not a meaningful choice. I trust that if refineries in eastern Canada had access to Canadian raw crude, they would choose to use it. If they didn't, well, the country would still be better off because at least Alberta oil would have access to tidewater.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I'm supporting this motion before the House today and why I'm imploring all of my colleagues to do the same, especially critical at a time when we saw last week, unfortunately, another 300 Calgarians receive a pink slip from ConocoPhillips.

You know, I talked to an investment adviser in Medicine Hat this weekend who said to me: "If you look at the multiples of Canadian oil and gas companies compared to the American ones, they're way lower. We're in huge trouble. The confidence is not there."

Mr. Speaker, this is the time – this is the time – that we have to rely on our federal government and our national partners to once

again make the Alberta oil and gas industry strong and restore the Alberta advantage. That is why I'm supporting this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise and speak to Motion 505, and I want to thank the Member for Calgary-Foothills for bringing this motion to the House. I will start off by saying that I support the principle of his motion. The fact that Canada still imports oil from countries that don't share a respect for human rights and the environment does not make sense. I agree with him on that point. It also makes no sense that as Canadians we can't sell our oil to our eastern neighbours.

That is why this government has already engaged and continues to work with the federal government to develop strategies to ensure that we get more pipelines out of Alberta, either east or west or any other direction where we can get it to a market. That is why we continue pushing for more pipelines such as Energy East, so that more Albertan oil can be used across the country and around the world. Collaborating with the federal government is vital to ensuring that pipelines are built in Alberta. Let me say that again: collaborating with other provinces. Where the opposition has been asking us to pick fights with other provinces or mayors, their approach would only serve to galvanize opposition to our pipelines and to our interests in this province. I don't subscribe to that strategy, Mr. Speaker.

5:30

On this side of the House we also believe that a strong economy and a clean environment go hand in hand, and that is exactly how we secured two new pipelines, pipelines that support Albertan jobs and investment, pipelines that support a strong, diversified economy, pipelines that – our government is focused and remains committed to making life better for Albertans with new pipelines, good jobs, and a better return on every barrel of oil so this government can continue making investments in things that Albertans care about, things such as strengthening our health care system and investing in Alberta's infrastructure deficit, that has for too long gone unaddressed, and investing in its central public services, that were ignored by the previous government for too long.

The approval of both pipelines simply would not have happened without the made-in-Alberta plan to address climate change. The Member for Strathmore-Brooks – he's heckling me right now – is always very happy about our two pipelines that we got approved, due to our climate leadership, I may add. Our climate leadership plan and new royalty framework both support and incentivize innovation, technical improvements, and emissions reductions in the oil sector and throughout our whole economy.

So while I support the Member for Calgary-Foothills' motion, I do want the opposition to rethink their position on our climate leadership plan. I am proud of our government's policies, policies that have led to strong economic growth in this province. Now, I know the opposition would disagree with me on this point, believing in the disproven theories of austerity, believing in its climate change denying colleagues, and believing that all that is orange is wrong. Ideological indeed, Mr. Speaker.

But the facts show otherwise. Not only are we leading the country in growth, but housing starts are up; that's jobs. Exports are up; that's jobs for Albertans. Manufacturing is up, and drilling activity in this province is up, and that's jobs for Albertans. Each one of those stats is jobs. While the opposition debates climate change, we are focused on jobs. While the member focuses his time on what combination of parties or parties' names will best hide their out-of-

touch, '50s ideals in a quest for power, we have been focusing on the things that make life better for everyday Albertans, those hard-working Albertans on the shop floor, in our hospitals, or out working on our highways or in any other part of the economy, Mr. Speaker, making life better for Albertans.

It has been made clear by stakeholders that the opposition's reckless and extreme approach is opposed by the leaders of the oil and gas industry because it would kill new pipeline . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, you are going to stay on the subject matter that we're dealing with?

Mr. Malkinson: Of course, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy to talk about the pipelines and the fact that we need to be able to get our products to market. That is the substance of the motion.

As a part of that, I just was mentioning how it was ironic that what the member opposite was saying is that we need to support pipelines to sell our oil to the rest of Canada. His colleagues and he himself are trying to scare capital away. In fact, they always are talking down the recent investment in the oil industry, in CNRL, in Cenovus. That required a big inflow of capital and finance, billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, in investments. That's jobs here. We should cheer successful Canadian businesses. In fact, those companies are headquartered in Calgary. My riding is in the shadow of those towers that bear the names of those companies. So I cheer that investment, that investment in Canada, and I hope the opposition does as well.

Let me reiterate that scrapping our climate change plan means scrapping the pipelines that the motion speaks to, Mr. Speaker, and I don't agree with that. So as I support this motion, I want to assure the opposition that it is not too late for them to change their minds and support our made-in-Alberta plan to reduce carbon pollution while creating jobs and diversifying our economy and our markets. It's not too late for their Energy critic, Cypress-Medicine Hat, to stop denying climate change and support our pipelines.

The fact is that new pipelines mean a brighter future for our oil and gas industry, with jobs and opportunities for thousands of working families and billions in new investments. [interjections]

The Speaker: Calm it down, folks.

Mr. Malkinson: Our government is committed to improving this province's pipeline capacity because, as the Member for Calgary-Foothills' motion stated, it will "ensure security of supply to the Canadian [energy] market, thereby shifting Canada away from buying oil from [other countries or] countries with oppressive dictatorships."

We all agree that Alberta's oil and gas are the best in the world. We also know that we need to reach more markets beyond Canada and the United States in order to get the best price for our resources. That is why our government continues to push for more pipelines such as Energy East. More oil capacity means that we can sell more of our product to markets right across the country and around the world.

We know that there is much work to do, and we will keep fighting until we get shovels in the ground and oil flowing, employing Albertans around Alberta and getting our men and women to work. We will achieve this because we understand that a strong economy and a clean environment go hand in hand. Again I say to the opposition that this government's made-in-Alberta plan to address climate change secured two new pipelines, Mr. Speaker.

While I support this motion, I want to assure the opposition that it's not too late to change their minds. It's not too late to admit that their old way of doing things wasn't working and that our way of doing things was getting results. I hope the hon. members agree,

and I hope that the hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills agrees with me as well.

I'll be voting in support of this motion. Mr. Speaker, I'll leave my comments there. Thank you.

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

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Member for Calgary-Currie for his remarks. I always enjoy the back and forth in this House, and he makes for a very entertaining debate opponent. But I want to really thank the Member for Calgary-Foothills for bringing this excellent motion forward in support of Canadian and Albertan clean, ethical oil. This is a common-sense motion that I'm glad to see, at least so far, all members of this Assembly supporting, at least in theory.

It is completely impractical and unreasonable that Canada is still importing large quantities of oil from regimes that can't hold a light to Alberta's human rights record and our environmental record. We are importing oil from places like Venezuela, Nigeria, and much of the Middle East, where human rights are an afterthought, in fact, not just an afterthought but where purchasing oil from these regimes actively props up those states and keeps in place regimes that are both against Canada's commitment to human rights but also our national security interests. Many of the regimes that we are supporting here with oil revenues are either actively hostile to Canadian interests or are allied with interests that are opposed to Canada.

We've got a significant political class, largely to the east and some to the west of Alberta, who would rather see Canada importing oil and other petroleum products from regimes that we should not want to be close to just because of the symbolism of Alberta's oil sands to them. It is cutting off their nose to spite their face.

I am unapologetically proud of Alberta oil. It is ethical. I don't think anyone could say anything negative about the human rights records of Alberta or Canada. [interjections] Somehow they must find some gross human rights violations currently taking place in Alberta. I look forward to their explanation on it.

Alberta oil is clean. It is environmentally responsible. Our carbon emissions per barrel are very reasonable and cleaner in many cases than other North American oil like California heavy. Our emissions are reasonable. It is produced with world-class standards.

5:40

I remember when I travelled along with my Wildrose colleagues to Fort McMurray last summer and saw recovered oil sands sites. They had wood buffalo roaming there, and it was absolutely beautiful. You could hear what sounded like a shotgun going off regularly, about every minute or so, and I asked what it was. It's to keep ducks out of the former tailings ponds. The cost for this is absolutely incredible. Now, if a single duck were to land in the tailings ponds, we'd probably see it on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*, with folks in Toronto declaring Alberta oil to be horrible. You can have birds running into windmills, and you'll never hear about it, period, so we are held to a particularly high standard. It is an unfair standard, but it is a standard nonetheless that our industry has chosen to meet themselves, without the lecturing hand of government. They've decided to do it themselves.

I am proud of Alberta oil, and I'm not an apologist for it. Now, while I'm pleased to see that the government, the NDP, has undergone a kind of conversion on the road to Damascus with their view of Alberta's oil, many members on the government side were well known for protesting against Alberta oil. They called it dirty oil. People who are ministers now stood on the steps of the Legislature just a few years ago, not long ago at all, and chanted: "No new approvals. No new approvals." It was just a few years ago,

and now they are senior cabinet ministers. I genuinely believe that they want pipelines and that they want to see our industry succeed, but there has been a conversion of sorts on the road to Damascus, and I am so glad that they have seen the light of Alberta oil.

My concern, though, is that they are apologists for it. They are only in support of Alberta oil if it's used as an excuse to strangle Albertans with a massive, new, \$5 billion carbon tax, a carbon tax that they are accepting from Ottawa, that they are refusing to fight Justin Trudeau on. Now, they say that this is a made-in-Alberta plan; it is not. It is accepting the diktats of Ottawa when Ottawa declares that you must have a carbon tax, but Ottawa has no constitutional grounds to impose one on a province-by-province level. They are accepting it as a convenient excuse – a convenient excuse – for imposing it here and trying to pass the blame to somebody else. It is an apologetic support of Alberta oil. It is only supporting Alberta oil if – with a big asterisk there – Alberta oil companies and Alberta taxpayers and consumers are paying a massive carbon tax. My support for Alberta oil is not conditional on a carbon tax, Mr. Speaker.

Now, if they were truly in support of Alberta oil, they could prove it by doing something really simple right now. The Premier or the Energy minister could stand up and announce that effective immediately they are firing Tzepporah Berman. They could prove that they truly support Alberta oil by ceasing to fund and pay the salaries of people who are campaigning against Alberta oil. The NDP is taking taxpayers' dollars to support anti-oil activists who are fighting right now in the B.C. election, which will be held tomorrow.

Now, I could tell you that the B.C. NDP is no friend of Alberta oil. The B.C. NDP is a radical, radical branch, a Leap Manifesto branch, of the NDP that is attempting to shut down Alberta's access to tidewater by stopping . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I would remind you of the same that I reminded another member of earlier: please stay to the subject matter that you've got.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Yeah. I'm speaking about pipelines, Mr. Speaker.

The B.C. NDP is opposing pipelines to tidewater, and the NDP in Alberta is taking taxpayers' money to fund people who are campaigning for the B.C. NDP. If they truly supported Alberta oil, they would stand up right now and announce that they will not put people on the payroll with Alberta tax dollars who are campaigning against pipelines to Alberta. They have implicitly accepted Ottawa's control to impose a carbon tax on Alberta. This side of the House – I think I can speak for the Official Opposition, and I'd presume to speak for the third party, too – categorically rejects that anyone named Trudeau can tell Alberta's oil industry what it can do.

We make no apologies for it, and I'm proud of the Member for Calgary-Foothills for putting forward this motion, which will put front and centre the fact that this Assembly will support Alberta's oil without apology, without conditions as they would impose.

Let's all stand up on the record. Let's stand up for Alberta. Let's stand up for clean oil, for ethical oil, and for Canadian oil. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I rise to request unanimous consent to go to one-minute bells.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I admit that after hearing the Member for Strathmore-Brooks today, I'd think he comes from B.C. but that yesterday he came from Saskatchewan. I'd like to remind him that we're debating the motion having to do with pipelines in Alberta and not anything from B.C. or from any other province.

I wanted to thank the member for inviting us once again to talk about pipelines and the work that our government has done to get the federal government to approve the pipelines. The more that we talk about it, maybe the opposition will believe it.

One of the wishes I really have in this House is that I wish the opposition would be consistent. Clean, ethical oil is defined as coming from countries that uphold not only human rights but that have high environmental standards. I'm thinking that if the opposition really believes it about clean, ethical oil, they would indeed support our government's climate change plan and that they would support all the efforts that our government has put in place to really ensure that the environmental standards are obeyed. I think that as a government we've been very vigilant to ensure that there are no pipeline leaks and so on.

I really hope that the opposition would consistently believe in what they're saying through this motion. I want to remind the opposition, as my other colleagues have done, that it is the Premier, through her work with the federal government and the ministers, who has ensured approval for the pipelines.

I'm very proud, Mr. Speaker, that indeed one of those pipelines will be starting from my constituency and that the pipelines are going to provide employment not only to my constituency but also to my friends in this House who come from constituencies nearby. In my riding we have the makers, the manufacturers, of the pipeline components. We have a steelmaker that makes the rebar. So the pipeline is something that's very important to me and to my colleagues.

There are also two refineries in the area. Refining the oil in our province is important for well-paying, long-lasting employment and for creating a long-lasting economy for our province. I would like to remind everyone that it is our government who has provided the petrochemical diversification program so that the oil and gas can be further refined and we can further upgrade the crude in the riding. It is because our government is focused and remains committed to making life better for Albertans, with new pipelines, good jobs, and a better return on every barrel of oil.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss one aspect of the motion that I'm not sure the mover has really thought about, and I'm kind of intrigued by what he thinks about it. I did some research on the words "oppressive" and "dictatorship." The word "oppressive" means burdensome, unjustly harsh, or tyrannical. A dictator is defined as a person exercising absolute power, especially a ruler who has absolute, unrestricted control in a government without hereditary succession.

5:50

I'm intrigued about how the MLA for Calgary-Foothills would define these words. For example, would he define it as a country that holds democratic elections but disenfranchises some from voting or a country where the military has power through a coup and keeps postponing elections or a country that is moving towards democracy but still hasn't appointed legislators or a country where the elections are not held in a fair or open manner? I've had that experience as an elections observer. Or is it like what happened yesterday, a country that holds fair and open elections but is dissed

by its friends in the Rebel media because the person who was elected was not xenophobic and anti-EU?

Really, I have to say that when I heard the words "oppressive dictatorships," I was really upset that your friends in the Rebel media would dis a fairly elected government. I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, where the mover of the motion is on what is an oppressive dictatorship when his friends were pushing for a xenophobic government. I'm also wondering what the mover of the motion thinks about an elected Legislature where legislators are disqualified for made-up reasons or where legislators are put in jail on trumped-up charges or where they lose the popular vote but are still elected.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the motion to urge the federal government to develop strategies to facilitate the building of pipelines, I do have some problems with the second part of the motion because I am not persuaded that the members opposite can define accurately who they mean by an oppressive dictator. I'm also concerned that the people who are maybe the most affected by the member's definition are the most destitute in Africa and the Middle East.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I will be voting for the motion, I would really ask the members of the opposition to pay particular attention to the definition of ethical oil and to support the government around our climate change plan.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Any other individuals who would like to speak to the motion?

I would call upon the Member for Calgary-Foothills to close debate.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my hon. colleagues for their remarks pertaining to motion 505. I have some curious facts here to add to the debate. Whether we are talking about Canadian oil for Canadians or North American energy independence, when it comes to production, in 2016 the United States produced 9 million barrels per day whereas Canada produced half of that, 4 and a half million barrels per day. Whereas Canada has 171 billion barrels of proven reserves, the United States only has 35 billion barrels. What that means is that although our resource is five times bigger than the U.S., the U.S. produces double what we produce here.

Also, there are some interesting facts about the economics of importing foreign oil. We spend every year \$13 billion in foreign exchange paying for imports from other countries. We import about 759,000 barrels per day, and we spend \$13 billion in foreign exchange, which works out to be about \$35 million per day. On the other hand, we are losing \$50 million per day, as per the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, due to the lack of marketing infrastructure in Canada.

Alberta has been selling at a discount to the only customer we have, the south of the border, who is our strongest competitor now. Many believe President Trump will take advantage of the opposition to pipelines within Canada, whether it is Tzeporah Berman or whoever it is, because Mr. Trump has all the intelligence at his disposal. He can figure it out. Some of the NDP colleagues here in the past have opposed pipelines for whatever reason. Suddenly they've taken a 180-degree turn, and now they say that they're pro development. I respect that if they've had a change of heart. But today I asked the Premier at least to confirm that she agrees that Alberta oil is ethical compared to other sources of crude. She didn't give me any answer on that.

Now, every day they take credit for those two pipelines, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk a little bit about that. Out of those two

pipelines, the one, line 9, is a replacement pipeline, which is a repair to line 9, which they make out to be a big deal as a new pipeline, which is okay. But then the other pipeline, which is going west, is Trans Mountain. I'm really worried that if tomorrow, with the help of Ms Berman and other people appointed by NDP here, they succeed in convincing British Columbians to vote for the NDP there, that is saying that they won't allow that Trans Mountain pipeline. So the two pipelines which they're talking about will become suddenly one. I'm really concerned about that. I'm really, really concerned about that. That's why we asked them to fire Ms Berman. But they refused to do that, and she continues to be on the oil sands advisory group, paid by the government.

In the end, anyway, Mr. Speaker, if they change their heart, if they support this motion, I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I want them to be consistent. When they ask us to be consistent, I want them to be consistent. When they say that they support pipelines but when government-paid employees are protesting pipelines and they encourage them to do that, then they can't have it both ways.

In any case, Canada needs to be strong and self-sufficient. By building the Energy East pipeline, we'll get our market access, and we'll lessen our dependence on exports to American markets.

I thank all of the members for agreeing to support this motion. This is a common-sense motion. When it is passed today and if it is acted upon in the future, this would strengthen Alberta's energy industry and create jobs across the country, and we'll be building more pipelines in every single direction across Canada. That way, we'll lessen our dependence on foreign oil. Also, we'll lessen our dependence on exports to the United States. That way, we'll move our country away from foreign oil and move close to energy independence. This is all about economic prosperity, Canadian oil for Canadians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[The voice vote indicated that Motion Other than Government Motion 505 carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:59 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Anderson, S.	Gill	Panda
Babcock	Hinkley	Piquette
Barnes	Hoffman	Pitt
Bilous	Horne	Renaud
Carlier	Jansen	Rodney
Carson	Kazim	Rosendahl
Connolly	Kleinsteuber	Sabir
Coolahan	Littlewood	Schneider
Cooper	Loewen	Schreiner
Cortes-Vargas	Luff	Shepherd
Cyr	Malkinson	Sigurdson
Dach	McKitrick	Smith
Dang	McPherson	Turner
Drever	Miller	van Dijken
Feehan	Miranda	Woollard
Fildebrandt	Nielsen	Yao
Ganley		

Totals: For – 49 Against – 0

[Motion Other than Government Motion 505 carried unanimously]

The Speaker: Pursuant to Government Motion 18 we stand adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30, hon. members. It is the MLA for a Day. I hope as many of you can be there as possible.

Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6:03 p.m. pursuant to Government Motion 18]

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