



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday evening, June 3, 2019

Day 7

The Honourable Nathan Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 30th Legislature

First Session

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Monday, June 3, 2019

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 1 An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax

[Adjourned debate May 30: Mr. Ellis]

The Speaker: Hon. members, good evening. Are any wishing to speak to Bill 1?

Mr. Jason Nixon: Question.

The Speaker: I see the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar rising.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no doubt that the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre doesn't want to spend any time here talking about this because I'm certain that he, as have a number of our colleagues, has gotten an earful from his constituents over the last three or four days about their decision to implement the federal carbon tax, the Trudeau carbon tax. But we know the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, when asked about environmental concerns, is actually more interested in doing a hackneyed Smothers Brothers routine with the Member for Calgary-Klein than in actually talking about serious environmental policy that affects the lives of millions of people in this province. If he had any measure of shame, he would feel it, but I don't think he has the capacity to do so.

The Speaker: I might just interject only briefly to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. Making a statement like, "I'm not sure he has the capacity to do so," may in fact be considered to be a personal attack of which, of course, all members of the Assembly steer very clear of. You might just keep that in mind as we proceed through the rest of the evening.

Mr. Schmidt: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and far be it for me to launch incendiary attacks, especially with the dry conditions that persist across the province. We don't need any more forest fires starting.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great shame, I guess, that I stand up and speak to this bill, a bill to implement the Trudeau carbon tax on the people of Alberta, because just this past weekend, yesterday, in fact, I went to celebrate the Cloverdale Community League's inauguration of their recently renovated community league hall. Cloverdale is one of the many picturesque communities in the riding of Edmonton-Gold Bar, probably one of the most picturesque communities in the entire province, but we don't like to say that much about it because, of course, in Edmonton-Gold Bar we are the most humble constituency in the entire province.

But, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to take a look at what the good citizens of Cloverdale Community League did with their community league hall. Over the last two years the citizens of Cloverdale have invested in a number of energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. Specifically, they hired Carbon Busters to do an energy assessment and green-visioning project. This is an energy audit firm that looks at the energy usage of a particular building and recommends improvements that they could make.

They did some draft-proofing so that the windows and doors didn't leak so much. They replaced old light fixtures with modern LED light fixtures. They replaced their old exterior doors with new exterior doors. They insulated their hot water pipes. They replaced their old windows. They upgraded the insulation. They installed two new high-efficiency furnaces. They installed a new heat-recovery ventilator. They installed concessionary ventilation, which was previously not ventilated. They installed an electric hot water heater and recirculation system. They invested in an upgrade to their monitoring system. All these new energy efficiency upgrades that they installed, of course, require some monitoring, so they invested in the equipment to do that. They installed PV solar panels, forty-eight 400-watt panels, to generate 22,400 kilowatt hours of real electricity a year. I know the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre thinks that solar panels are ridiculous, but the good citizens of Cloverdale would beg to differ. They upgraded their air-conditioning system. They reroofed with metal-clad roofing, and they did a number of other minor upgrades as well. The total amount for all of those upgrades, Mr. Speaker, was \$371,970.

Now, where did that money come from, Mr. Speaker? Well, I was pleased to provide the Cloverdale Community League with a cheque from the community facility enhancement program in the order of \$125,000. They did get a grant from the city of Edmonton for \$43,280, and the rest of the money came from a variety of programs that were funded from the carbon tax, climate leadership initiative programs, the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre. In the order of \$200,000 or so came from programs that were funded by the carbon tax.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting to see. The Cloverdale Community League is very proud of their new hall. The members opposite are fond of stating erroneously that the carbon tax and the associated programs were all economic pain with no environmental gain. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The combination of the energy efficiency upgrades and the renewable energy system that the Cloverdale Community League put on their new hall resulted in a net generation of 1,500 kilowatt hours of electricity in the month of April. That means that the Cloverdale Community League hall is generating 1,500 kilowatt hours more than it consumed in the month of April, and all of that electricity is sent back into the grid for you and I to use without having to rely on fossil fuels for generation of that. To put that into some equivalence, of course, that saved just in the month of April alone 4,300 kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions. It's the equivalent of planting 14 trees, or it's the equivalent of a car not driving 5,900 kilometres. That saved the Cloverdale Community League \$140 in electricity bills in the month of April alone.

You know, when the members opposite get up and speak about all economic pain and no environmental gain from the carbon tax and the associated programs that the carbon tax funded, of course nothing could be further from the truth. The information that the Cloverdale Community League provided quite clearly demonstrates the economic and environmental benefits that the people of Cloverdale now see coming from the Cloverdale community hall, that is the centre of their community.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that a \$371,000 bill is a steep bill for any community league to come up with. Cloverdale happens to be the home of some people who are pretty fortunate. They've worked hard, they've done well for themselves, and I would say that a lot of them earn above-average incomes. But the Cloverdale community itself is quite small. For the community to come together and raise \$371,000 from bake sales and lotteries and bingos and those kinds of traditional fundraising mechanisms would have taken the community league probably a decade. I know

that there are community leagues in my riding who have undertaken similar fundraising projects, similar in scope at least, and for a community league to raise \$371,000 just from donations and community volunteer efforts takes at least a decade. The good citizens of Cloverdale were able to raise this money from the carbon tax programs, the CFEP program, and the city of Edmonton in the matter of two years, so it's important to remember the speed with which these programs could be undertaken and implemented.

7:40

Now the Cloverdale Community League is in the position of being a leader in renewable energy and energy efficiency. It was part of the Eco-Solar Home Tour that was conducted this weekend across many sites in Edmonton, sites that had been featured because of their innovative use of technology and energy efficiency upgrades to reduce their economic and environmental footprint.

You know, I want to speak a little bit about the jobs that were created through this program. Of course, it wasn't volunteer efforts that allowed the citizens of Cloverdale to upgrade their community league hall and install the renewable energy system. They had to hire people who were experts in this field. They bought a significant amount of equipment. And all of that was done by local Edmonton contractors, Mr. Speaker, who were there at the open house, and I got a chance to talk to them. They're afraid for their jobs. Of course, with the members' opposite intent on taking away the funding for the programs that the carbon tax funded, they're not sure if they're going to have work to do in the next month or so. Not only is it important to understand that there are real economic benefits, real environmental benefits to these programs; it created real jobs in my community.

Everybody was quite upset that the government decided to scrap the carbon tax and scrap the associated programs that were funded by the carbon tax, all for the purposes of implementing a federal carbon tax for which they will see no benefit. It's important to remind everybody in this House that these programs that were funded by the carbon tax, the climate leadership programs, the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre, didn't come out of thin air, Mr. Speaker. Those were programs that were created when our government engaged in consultation with Albertans from all parts of the province to decide how best to achieve energy efficiency and renewable energy development in this province. The people of Alberta told us quite clearly that it was these kinds of programs that would benefit Albertans the most, so that's why we adopted them and that's why we funded them.

Apparently, the members opposite see fit – they think that Justin Trudeau can do a better job of spending carbon tax dollars in Alberta, so they've decided to scrap our made-in-Alberta carbon tax plan that was developed in consultation with the people of Alberta and implement something from Ottawa and turn over all of our dollars to Ottawa. You know, the people in my riding were quite upset. They don't understand why the members opposite rail against transfers to Ottawa, and in their first act as government create a giant transfer to Ottawa by implementing the federal carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I have to stand up and defend the interests of the good citizens of Edmonton-Gold Bar whose jobs are on the line, whose community league's efficiency is on the line, and they're not alone. Of course, there are many Albertans who are in the same position, who wanted to engage in these kinds of activities to enhance the energy efficiency of their homes or other buildings that are significant to them and whose jobs were relied upon because of these programs that were funded by the carbon tax.

I think it's also important to recognize that the Cloverdale Community League is a public space. It's a building that's owned

by the community league and benefited significantly from the energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy installation that they made. So the money that they used to spend on heating and powering that building can now be turned over to providing additional programs to the citizens of Cloverdale. They can operate youth programs, yoga – I know the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti thinks that that's witchcraft, of course. Many citizens in my riding actually like yoga and see benefits from it and enjoy the fact that their community leagues can provide them with those kinds of activities.

The Cloverdale Community League is not alone, Mr. Speaker. There are thousands and thousands of public buildings that have no other option for upgrading their energy efficiency or installing renewable energy. I'm not just thinking of community leagues, I'm thinking of everything in the public sector: hospitals, schools, government buildings. All of those kinds of programs, they're not going to have the access to the dollars that private individuals can have to install these kinds of things in their homes and businesses. So we're taking away significant opportunity for the public sector and those community groups that are providing public goods to provide better services to the people of this province. Of course, that fits very well with the ideology of the members opposite. They don't believe in the public interest. They think that everything should be done privately. Of course, it makes sense that in their first act in the Legislature they would shred one of these significant programs that provides a significant public benefit. It should come as no surprise although we will continue to be disappointed, I think, by the members opposite if we tend to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence, and I look forward to continuing the debate on this important subject.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Standing Order 29(2)(a) for questions or comments to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar is available.

Are there others that wish to speak to the main bill? I see the hon. the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege for me to be able to get up and speak to this matter in third reading. Now, I understand that I get quite a long time to speak, somewhere close to 90 minutes, which is kind of scary. I am going to try to get through my comments in a less Castro-esque way than the Premier did when he spoke to this issue in third reading. In no way, shape, or form – people need to just stay chill over there – am I suggesting that, of course, he's like Castro other than in the length of his speeches periodically. Nonetheless, I will unfortunately have to take a little bit more time than I'd planned because the Premier's comments to the third reading of Bill 1 were filled with a number of inaccuracies, so I am compelled, unfortunately, to begin my comments by correcting the record on a number of fronts.

Now, I suppose this is not so much a correction of the record as it is an observation in profound irony. I believe the Premier began his comments saying that Bill 1 represented what he referred to as a renewal of the spirit of democracy. Now, I have to say, coming from a Premier who is the first of six successful leadership candidates for a political party in this province over the last six or seven years to not disclose the donors to his leadership campaign after committing to in the course of the democratic process, that he is so keen to renew, it is a little bit ironic. But it is much more ironic, of course, when you look to the most recent leadership race, where, of course, as we all know, there was a little bit of a problem with respect to several different investigations by the RCMP with respect to kamikaze candidates and all that kind of stuff and then fines

being levied by the Election Commissioner over inappropriate donations and investigations into political action committees, who overtly stated that their plan was to simply give money to Jason Kenney through the PAC and work closely with him to do what he could not otherwise do because of the corporate ban and all those kinds of things.

Mr. Speaker, really, seriously, this is the person to whom we shall look for a renewal of the spirit of democracy in Alberta? Methinks that we're in trouble if that's where we're going for that particular inspiration.

Nonetheless, let me move on more to the spirit of the bill and the debate of the bill as it relates, at the outset, to the inaccuracies that were contained in the Premier's comments at third reading on Bill 1. He began by talking about how a widow on a fixed income was having money taken from her and getting much less and was really being hurt by the carbon tax that our government brought in. I think that the Premier should know full well that that's absolutely not true.

7:50

In fact, a widow on a fixed income, unless it was a fixed trust fund income of, you know, hundreds of thousands of dollars – and I'm pretty sure that that wasn't what he was trying to describe; I'm sure he was describing somebody on maybe social security or the seniors' benefit or something like that – would in fact end up with more money in her pocket at the end of the day. Why? Because low-income people burn less carbon or use less carbon, yet they got the maximum amount of the rebate.

Economist after economist and the number crunchers inside the government of Alberta confirmed over and over and over again that, in fact, low-income people actually walked away from our process with more money in their pockets. So as a result of cutting Bill 1, we are in fact taking money away from that widow on a fixed income. But if that widow happens to have some really well-to-do kids, who are making \$200,000 a year and have two or three vehicles and, you know, a vacation property and a 2,500-square-foot house and a couple of ATVs, well, that group is, for sure, getting more money. But mom or grandma is getting less money as a result of Bill 1 and its outcome. So that's the first thing. I think the Premier is wise enough to actually know that, so he shouldn't have been saying something that, I have to believe, he knew was untrue.

He also went on to say – and he said it several times through his remarks – that there was actually no offset that was ever offered to small business. Now, that's strange because I could swear that a 33 per cent cut in taxes is what many people would argue was an offset, and in fact that's exactly what happened as a result of the climate leadership plan. That was announced as part of the climate leadership plan as a means of offsetting some of the cost to small business.

Now, obviously, there were other mechanisms for offsetting the cost depending on the nature of the small business, whether or not they were trade exposed or whether they fell into a number of the categories that would have made them eligible for a variety of programs that either would have protected them from trade exposure or, conversely, supported them in finding technological ways in terms of research or practical ways in terms of changing the way they did business to burn less carbon. They would have actually gotten offset through that program as well, but in fact they did absolutely get a 33 per cent tax cut. So, again, I'm pretty sure the Premier should have known that. I kind of wonder if he did. I'm not quite sure why he kept saying that in his speech.

The next thing that he chose to talk about was something that is quite well debated on the record in this House around the

allegations of what someone in my office did or didn't say to someone who talked to someone who talked to somebody about how to respond to concerns in a particular seniors' community centre in a particular riding. I think it is fair to say, as you are fond of saying, Mr. Speaker, that you can have two entire sets of facts, and at the very best that's what this is here.

Certainly, the notion that I or anybody acting on my behalf or on behalf of anyone in our government ever said, "Oh, seniors should just raise their membership fees as a means of dealing with additional costs associated with the carbon tax" – let me just say that we've been very clear that the folks that were allegedly on the other end of the phone do not recall ever saying that. They do recall having it presented to them as an option by the person on the phone and saying: no, that's not the plan; the plan is that we have these other programs you can reach out for. But whatever. I think it's fair to say that there is disagreement, and I suspect that the Premier knows that that's actually already reflected on the record.

Now, more troubling, of course, is that the Premier also then went on to say that the Calgary board of education had to cancel school bus routes and that kids couldn't go to the schools they wanted anymore because the carbon tax cost them at least a million dollars a year in the Calgary board of education. Interestingly, the actual number that they put forward was \$300,000 a year. Yeah, that's maybe a bit more than the Calgary board of education could possibly accommodate. Did it involve hundreds of people suddenly not being able to go to schools they wanted to? No.

When you take into account, Mr. Speaker, the fact that under the leadership of our government the Calgary board of education actually received an incremental bump in funding from our government of \$100 million, I kind of think this idea that a \$300,000 board-wide carbon tax cost for buses suddenly shutting down busing capacity in a whole section of the city is a bit hard to buy. Again, I think the Premier should have been just a teeny bit more precise with the facts because, frankly, that's what people deserve from somebody in that position.

Now, interestingly, though, what did happen with the Calgary board of education more recently was that they voted to carry on with an effort to get solar panels on some of their schools, and they did so because they concluded that they would be able to save about \$127,000 a year in heating costs. If you actually balance that against your \$300,000, well, now we've gone from a million down to about \$163,000. But, you know, who's counting? Oh, wait. Me.

Anyway, interestingly, at the time that they said that, the other key thing that they said was: yeah, we stand to save \$127,000 a year on heating costs thanks to the solar programs, but we do also have this little problem with the \$40 million deficit we're going to have this year because the folks, the new government, won't tell us whether or not they're going to fund enrolment.

So, you know, it's just a little rich to have the Premier over there suggesting that as a result of a \$163,000 cost on busing as a result of the carbon tax, whole swaths of the city were not able to get kids from point A to point B in order to get to the alternative schools of their choice and that somehow that's what's causing that problem, but the \$40 million deficit that they are creating in this year alone is no problem at all. Again, folks: facts. Facts, context. Do your homework. If you want people to listen to the kinds of arguments that you're making, do better. That was not better.

Now, the other thing that he suggested was that we came out publicly and said that we had no intention of increasing the rebate to low- and middle-income Albertans if – if – the price of carbon went from \$30 to \$40 or \$50 a tonne. Again, that is not true, and the reason I know that is not true is because I was the Premier and I was at the table where we would have made that decision in the course of budgeting, and in fact we never made that decision. The

reason we never made that decision was because the whole \$40, \$50 thing was still hypothetical. Why? Because we said that we're not going to even consider what to do with that until we get the pipeline built. That was always a very clear position of our government, that we were not going to endorse or in any way partner or work with the federal government on the \$40 or the \$50 price until the pipeline was built.

So we did not ever consider whether or not the rebate to low- and middle-income families would increase along with the carbon price under the additional pricing possibilities that would have occurred had there been the approval and construction of the Kinder Morgan pipeline. Again, that was not an accurate statement by the Premier. In fact, to the whole point, it was and continues to be a progressive tax that supports lower and middle-income families, very much in contrast to the assertions that the Premier offered.

In addition, there were some flaws in the Premier's argument. I wouldn't go so far as to say that they were absolutely misstatements of the facts that he should have known were not true and that it was irresponsible for him to say them, but I will say that the logic itself was a little rough. One that I thought was interesting was basically: "Canada is small. Other people are producing more emissions than us. We could eliminate all our emissions altogether, and it wouldn't matter, so we shouldn't do anything." That argument: wow. You know, if every single person thought that on so many different levels, wow.

8:00

How about this one? "You know what? There are over 4 million Albertans here. I'm just one of 4 million. Maybe they should all pay their taxes. If I don't pay my taxes, it won't matter. Schools won't close." Well, in the Premier's world probably, you know, 25 buses at the Calgary board of education will be cancelled. Notwithstanding that sort of twisted math, you know, the idea that, "No; it's okay; I'm just one of 4 million Albertans, so why should I pay my taxes; why should I do my bit?" I guess that's an interesting theory. I wonder how many other times the Premier will use that theory?

Mr. Schmidt: Corporate taxes.

Ms Notley: Well, yes. In fact, what's going on there – the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar talks about corporate taxes, but that is actually the theory that they are apparently operating on. But that's a whole different issue.

Anyway, when you have a world-wide global problem that impacts everybody, it's not actually rocket science to suggest that everybody should do their part. So that reasoning is just troubling, and it is flawed, I would suggest, on a moral basis as well as on an economic and a logical basis, and I'll get into the issue of economics in a moment.

At another point the Premier tried to argue that because in one interview I couldn't remember the exact number of megatonnes reduced, somehow that meant that no megatonnes of emissions had been reduced under our plan. Again, multiple times that information was provided. Multiple times the Premier was corrected. He knows the answer now. Yet he insists on coming into this House and putting on the record things which he knows are not true. To be clear, since the time that we brought in the climate leadership plan we have reduced emissions in Alberta by about one-third of the total emissions of the whole province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We have said that. We have repeated that over and over and over. The Premier knows it. Yet he came in here on Thursday and said something that was simply not correct, and he should have known better.

He then tried to argue that our plan would not actually contribute to any kind of reduction in emissions, and he referred to a fairly esteemed economist from B.C. by the last name of Jaccard. I think his first name is Mark; I can't remember it offhand. He suggested that this economist was arguing that, basically, the pricing system that we have right now of \$30 a tonne would only account for about 5 per cent of the proposed emission reductions that our plan had in place and that, therefore, the carbon levy was not relevant. What he failed to note, though, was that the same economist that the Premier was so keen on quoting did identify many other elements of our plan that were absolutely going to reduce emissions along the lines of what we had projected. The reduction of coal-fired plants, the reduction of methane emissions, the emissions cap: all these things are things that Professor Jaccard identified.

But here's the thing. Many of those achievements come into effect because of the programs that we can fund through the carbon tax. For instance, when we accelerated the end of coal-fired emissions, which has a huge impact on Alberta's greenhouse gas emissions, we used and committed some of the funds in the climate leadership plan. Actually, going forward, that's a whole other bill that you guys are going to have to pay to one of your big donors, but that's a whole other issue at some point down the road.

In addition, unlike Conservatives when they did their sort of much more modest attempt to reduce coal-fired plants burning, what we also funded was what we referred to as a just transition. We set aside about \$40 million or \$50 million for workers who were negatively impacted and who would see their jobs lost as a result of the accelerated shutdown of coal-fired plants, again something that was paid for through the revenue from the carbon tax. Of course, by doing that, we then reduced emissions. So there's that thing.

Now, the other thing, of course, that we put in place was the emissions cap from the oil sands. We didn't just sort of arbitrarily make up the emissions cap and say, "Oh, that's it," that we just kind of went to sleep one night and this was the magic number that appeared in our head. No. I mean, we came to that conclusion as a result of a great deal of consultation with industry but also as a result of looking at what could be achieved if the necessary investments were made in the technological innovation that would actually keep the carbon out of the barrel so that production could increase but emissions at the same time would level out and never get above the cap. That's a thing that happens as a result of the climate leadership plan because we're able to invest in these kinds of technological efforts and initiatives.

That is what we were funding through the climate leadership plan, all of those things taken together. Same thing with methane: working together with industry on a number of different mechanisms to reduce their methane reductions, all of that coming together through the programs that were put in place through the climate leadership plan. Of course, you've heard people talk about other ones, you know, incenting a revolutionary jump in renewable energy investment here in the province, that wouldn't have happened without the resources that were made available to the government through the climate leadership plan.

Investing in the green line, investing in the west LRT here in Edmonton: those will take thousands and thousands and thousands of cars off the road and will ultimately allow us to reduce emissions, yet still help people get from point A to point B with something like LRT in a way that's often much more enjoyable than sitting in traffic for hours and hours on end. Those were just some of the things.

Of course, there was the establishment of an energy efficiency agency. Here we were, a province in Canada, the only province in the country that didn't have any kind of an energy efficiency agency at all, no work to support Albertans in reducing their emissions, no

work to invest in other market mechanisms to reduce emissions on a residential or consumer basis. Shocking. I mean, here we are, a province that's allegedly an energy capital of the country, and we didn't ever have any thought or effort dedicated towards energy efficiency. Just pure negligence, Mr. Speaker.

All those things come together, and that's how we reduce emissions. So that's what the plan was doing. It was partially a result of the market signals sent by carbon pricing but also as a result of the long-overdue plans that were helping our province slowly bend the curve on emissions.

Now, one of the other things that the Premier tried to argue, of course, was this idea that because of the climate leadership plan all business was racing out of the province and all investment was happening south of the province, and it was all because of carbon pricing. You know, again, one would expect better from the Premier. We know that in the places that he described what we were actually dealing with is a completely different geography in terms of the oil and gas plays that are in the U.S. that are attracting investment right now – we know that that is true – and that in Alberta we are suffering from a long-standing, chronic bottleneck in terms of our ability to get our product to market.

Investors more and more were looking at the fact that we cannot get our product to market, and particularly small producers were, for instance in the fall, being forced to sell their product for, like, \$8 or \$9 a barrel, and we were all losing out. So many, many producers were just saying: “We need to go to a place where we can actually sell this to somebody for a reasonable price. We can't do it in Canada because we have a broken system and we can't move our product to market.”

8:10

I hate to remind the folks here, but I'm going to do it anyway because, you know, some folks who have been here have heard me say it before but maybe not all the new ones. You know what? We had 44 years of a Conservative government here in Alberta and 10 years of a Conservative government in Ottawa and 10 years of an essentially Conservative government in B.C., and let's count all the pipelines to tidewater we got then. Let's see. People, help me. Let's all join in. How many did we get?

An Hon. Member: Zero.

Ms Notley: Hmm. Yeah. Right there: zero.

The problem with that is that's why our energy industry is struggling right now, because why would you invest in a market where you're only getting \$8 a barrel, whereas down in the U.S. you can get close to the full price? So the Premier was confounding these issues intentionally, and I just don't think it was a terribly intellectually honest argument. I think that he could have done better.

Speaking of intellectually honest, though, one of the reasons that I wanted to take the opportunity today to get up and speak against this bill was because even though I have already outlined my overall sort of higher level positions that I have taken on this and that my colleagues have taken on it over some time, I wanted to take this time tonight to take the opportunity to speak in a little bit more detail about one particular person who contributed tremendously to what is one of the most innovative and ambitious efforts to reduce emissions in an energy producing jurisdiction like ours in the world. I wanted to be able to talk about him just a little bit because he is someone that provided tremendous service to this province and to the people of Alberta. As many people who may follow him on social media would know, he's now very, very ill, struggling with a very, very, very serious illness. I wanted him to be able to see this

and know that his contribution to the climate leadership plan is being recognized in this Legislature.

Eric Denhoff was a deputy minister for this government in charge of Alberta's climate change office. He came to us from B.C. after about 30 years of working in senior government positions under governments of both political stripes in B.C. He was someone that came to the job with a fierce intellect and also a fiercely determined personality to take issues and move them along to create real change with vision.

I will tell you that you don't run across people in any setting, private or public sector, very often who are that dedicated and that talented and that visionary, who are able to get as much done as Eric Denhoff did for the people of Alberta in the time that he was here. He was able to run from meeting to meeting to meeting and sit down and engage in highly complex policy discussions with CEOs in a broad, diverse range of industries and dig in and learn about their industries and learn about extremely complex matters and then find an evidence-based way to come up with a resolution that both met the objectives of the program but also accommodated as much as possible the legitimate issues that were raised by these CEOs of these various and sundry companies.

Of course, that's one of the reasons why we talk about the made-in-Alberta plan that we have, because we were very responsive to industry as they came to us and said, “Well, this is who we trade with; this is the process that we have to use in this jurisdiction in order to produce this product; that's why we have this particular GHG emission, and that is why we are, you know, at a disadvantage with this product but not with that product, or this product not that product, in this market but not that market,” and all those kinds of things, and then come up with a resolution that was pragmatic yet still achieved the objectives we were working on achieving. Of course, all that work is going to be thrown out when we replace Alberta's climate leadership plan with the made-in-Ottawa carbon tax that the Premier is so excited and enthusiastic about welcoming into Alberta, along with all the other elements of Ottawa that he's clearly a much bigger fan of than most people in the province realize.

Anyhow, all that being said, Eric did an amazing job. He also has been writing a little bit about the climate leadership plan and making some really compelling arguments about the plan and why it should be maintained. I won't get into all the details of it, but suffice to say that he talks about meeting with investors from New York who are there to find out about what's going on in Alberta's oil and gas sector. These investment groups are managing hundreds of billions of dollars of capital, and more and more of their clients are not interested in investing in Alberta's oil and gas industry because they perceive it as not having a very long life ahead of it. Under the previous government there had been such reluctance to work with them, to support them in incenting the reduction of carbon in the barrel.

He describes these meetings with them, and then he says, “Well, let me just walk you through what we're doing now,” and he talks about what's going on in the climate leadership plan. I've already talked about most of it already, but what he talked about in sort of a conceptual way was this idea of working with industry to create what was referred to as the best barrel, to basically incent technological change and to set a signal to the market as a whole in order to create a best barrel and to do that under the emissions cap and to do that while working on the methane reduction and improving energy efficiency and incenting renewable energy, to do all these things and to do so in a way that would last over a long period of time so as to provide predictability and certainty for investors. He talked about how in these rooms you saw the mood change and you saw the investors go: “Okay. This is good. I can go

back to my major, major funds and talk about how there's actually a long-term strategy for this industry in Alberta. They get this problem. They are moving at breakneck speeds to take the carbon out of the barrel." That is paired, of course, with it coming from a jurisdiction which is preferable on a number of other fronts – you know, socio, political, economic fronts – in order to therefore maintain the attractiveness of investing in Alberta.

Of course, he then, after describing this, goes on to talk about the uncertainty that he has heard about from some of these folks since the new government has come in and they have embarked upon this plan to rip up the climate leadership plan with no significant or serious or substantive plan to replace it in any kind of meaningful way. You know, many of these investors say: "Yeah. Well, you know what? We know where this is going, and one day we're going to have the Wild West of environmental consideration under the current government, and then presumably at some point the pendulum will swing back and another government will come in and try to do the right thing." Without holding to a thoughtful plan that investors and industry can work within but instead embarking upon this sort of very short-term approach that's being embraced by this government through Bill 1, what we are doing is creating uncertainty for investors who ultimately want to find a long-term destination for their investment funds that they believe can withstand what is coming in terms of the world expectations and demands around best-barrel economics.

8:20

I probably have not done justice to the argument that Eric Denhoff makes in my brief summary there, but I would urge members here to read all of the things that he has to say about the climate leadership plan because he probably knows it better than anybody. He served as a tremendous leader in this province, and he worked diligently and tirelessly to lead the country in thoughtful, creative, evidence-based, science-based efforts to tackle what is, without question, the biggest problem in our generation and facing our generation and probably generations to come.

You know, I speak on behalf of our whole caucus when I say – and I think on behalf of many, many Albertans, too – that we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Eric Denhoff.

Anyway, unfortunately, we are not always privileged to have people with that level of intellect and foresight and stature with us as long as we would like or as consistently as we would like when looking for leadership in our government. We are, as a result, dealing now with this bill, which, for the reasons that Eric Denhoff outlined as well as the reasons that I outlined in speaking to it at second reading, should be rejected. It is going to lead to the termination of many, many programs that were designed to finally get Alberta on the right track to reducing our emissions.

Was every program perfect? Absolutely not. Could they have been improved? Absolutely. Did we need to continue working with Albertans and with industry to make sure that we took this program and this plan and this initiative and got it better and better? Absolutely. Are we going backwards 25 years by cancelling this program? You betcha, Mr. Speaker, we sure are.

You know, I've been going to a lot of graduations the last little while, and I have to tell you that there are a lot of kids out there who are profoundly disappointed with the absolute absence of leadership in the majority of seats in this House. As I've said before, we do have an obligation to do what we can, even if we are a smaller country. I'm going to continue to pay my taxes. I think everybody here in this caucus is going to continue to pay theirs, and sooner or later folks over there are going to have to realize that they have an obligation to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) is available for questions and comments. Are there any?

Seeing none, anyone wishing to speak to Bill 1? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill 1, as my colleague refers to it: a bill to implement the Trudeau carbon tax. I will not be supporting Bill 1 because I believe that climate change is a very serious problem that we need to tackle as a province, as a country, as a globe and work towards making strong progress because this is such an urgent issue not only for our society but also our economy, to all facts of life. We keep hearing – at least I do – on the news, through discussions with colleagues the very real impacts that it's having, not even just locally but economically – insurance companies having to adjust how they provide insurance because of climate change – and its impact in so many facets of our lives.

I know, Mr. Speaker, from the work that I've done representing the people of Edmonton-Mill Woods, talking to the constituents in Edmonton-Mill Woods, that Albertans do want to tackle these tough problems. They do want to talk about solutions and ways to address it. That is what is missing in Bill 1. It does not introduce a plan to address climate change. What it does do is bring us a step closer to having the Trudeau carbon tax as opposed to the made-in-Alberta solution that was the climate leadership plan, that included everything from significant rebates to help support the majority, 60 per cent, of Albertans as well as investments in major projects that benefit our local communities.

For myself as the MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods the valley line LRT will be taking citizens in Alberta from Edmonton-City Centre, my colleague from Edmonton-City Centre, to Mill Woods on a new LRT line, which anyone who is living and travelling in Mill Woods is well aware of because the commute has really been made a lot more unpleasant with all the construction at the moment, but once it is constructed, we are looking forward to that LRT line helping to potentially change how people commute to downtown, maybe fewer cars on the road. It's going to help our community by helping our friends and family members in the community who need that way to travel and get to work and give us all more options.

We know that government shouldn't be ignoring the signs of a changing climate, and our government chose to show leadership, to take strong action, and to do that by engaging, first, in a province-wide consultation with Albertans. We struck a panel that had industry and environmental representatives on it. We learned as we went out to consult with Albertans that a lot of these really important conversations were already happening, particularly between our major oil and gas players as well as environmental activists. Conversations had already been under way to start to tackle the issues of climate change. It was some very large oil and gas companies as well as environmental representatives that advocated for a carbon tax, considered to be one of the most efficient, most effective ways to address climate change, to put a price on carbon, and to do that in a way that makes sure that it's protecting those who aren't able to make those changes as easily. So lower income Albertan seniors on fixed income: getting that rebate was a really big part of that plan.

We listened to Albertans, to a number of stakeholders in putting together the climate leadership plan and the many components within that plan, taking action for the future of our province and making sure that we had cleaner air for our kids, new jobs in renewable energy, massive investment in clean energy technology, green infrastructure, and oil sands innovation.

Being able to be a part of that through being a member of the government caucus and working with Executive Council on some

of the implementation details, working with people like Eric Denhoff, that was just mentioned by the Leader of the Official Opposition, who – I have to echo all of her very, very positive comments because he was a brilliant person to work with, very, very capable, amazingly intelligent, and I know I always trusted him for the solid advice that he provided to me in my capacity in working on the climate leadership plan. Being able to take all of those pieces and take Alberta that step further forward through policies was incredibly important.

8:30

I talked about the valley line LRT in Mill Woods.

Something similar to the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar: one of the community leagues in my neighbourhood, the Ridgewood community league, has installed solar panels and done a number of energy efficiency upgrades. I know from talking to the community league executive members how excited they were to be able to take advantage of programs – and I know they used some funding through the city; I believe they did use some climate leadership funding – to be able to help the local community group. This weekend they were having a community event, and I know they take every opportunity to talk about the solar panels and the energy efficiency upgrades that they did and to share that information with other community leagues in Mill Woods but also across the city and encourage other community leagues to take advantage of that.

Other positive things that I had the chance to learn about in my time talking to people in Alberta as the MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods include some of the very cool projects that were funded through Emissions Reduction Alberta. Because, of course, we have some interesting projects and companies throughout our province, Emissions Reduction Alberta has funded 164 projects to date on all sorts of different portfolios of technology that do greenhouse gas emissions, everything from low-emitting electricity supply and demand to cleaner oil and gas, food, fibre, and bioindustries. When I was able to go and help announce some of these ERA-funded projects, one that caught my eye from my background in technology was one that was going to use software to take the heating and cooling of buildings more efficient, a very interesting project that would not only impact the greenhouse gas emissions for a particular building but was something that, if successful, could then be expanded and that technology used in other places.

Those types of investments were a big part of the overall climate leadership plan, the funding that helped to pay for those types of investments through ERA, other smaller types of investments through Energy Efficiency Alberta. I think it's really important to note that until Energy Efficiency Alberta was created as part of the climate leadership plan, Alberta was the only province or jurisdiction in all of North America – every single U.S. state and every Canadian province except us had an energy efficiency agency. We were definitely behind the eight ball.

Part of the reason that we saw such huge uptake for some of the programs, waiting lists of people was because there was really a demand for this. Albertans wanted to make those upgrades to help improve their energy efficiency, and the various projects and programs, for every dollar invested, returned \$3.30 to Albertans' pockets. I know that a lot of the work Energy Efficiency Alberta did as well as other programs helped to create that solar industry boom that we've been seeing in our province, with the solar industry growing by nearly 500 per cent and our installed solar capacity going from 6 megawatts in 2015 to 35 in 2018. Making sure that people had the opportunity to participate through programs like Energy Efficiency Alberta was a big part of the climate leadership plan and something that a lot of Albertans were really excited to be part of.

Now, as my colleague from St. Albert mentioned during one of her responses to Bill 1, there were different tools you could use to find out what kinds of investments had been made in your particular area of the province. When I looked at Edmonton-Mill Woods, I saw that over \$1.5 million had been reinvested in the communities. I can tell you that being in a neighbourhood that was built kind of between the late '70s, mostly in the '80s – and most homes completed construction in the '90s. A lot of those energy efficiency upgrades were appreciated. I know I talked to homeowners who had the opportunity, through the climate leadership plan, to make upgrades in their own homes that made a real difference.

But I also talked to a number of constituents in Mill Woods where the rebates made a significant difference in their lives and made their lives more affordable as well as offsetting the carbon levy costs. With Bill 1, the bill to implement the Trudeau carbon tax, those rebates will no longer be available for lower income Albertans and will leave them worse off, with no alternate support.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

We also worked, through the climate leadership plan, to support not only individuals, not only major projects, but also small businesses, through the small-business tax cut, cutting small-business tax by a third, reinvesting \$220 million to help save business owners more than a half a billion dollars over three years. Those types of initiatives were ones that we were able to do through having that made-in-Alberta climate leadership plan versus the implementation of a federal carbon tax, where we won't have that same flexibility.

Making sure that we are treating climate change as a serious and critical issue is really important. Madam Speaker, one of the main reasons that I will not be supporting Bill 1, although I am very pleased to be able to rise to speak to it, is because it doesn't offer that alternative path forward. It removes the carbon levy without replacing it or coming up with kind of next steps or what we can do going forward to be leaders and to take action on what is a very serious problem. I mean, talk to any high school students graduating. I know that in the graduating classes I've had the chance to interact with, it's been brought up to me proactively a number of times. I think our youth are really attuned to the need to make sure that we continue to take action on this very important issue.

Right now this bill is going to eliminate an important revenue stream that has been supporting renewable, energy efficiency, rebate programs, ERA, and very interesting technology. It's going to threaten critical transit and infrastructure projects, and it's going to cancel a lot of construction and climate leadership plan related jobs as well as put our new solar industry at risk. Making sure that we are approaching this in a knowledgeable way, that we are thinking about all of the jobs that had been created as part of the climate leadership plan, over 7,000 of them in the first two years, with thousands more potentially to come, and having an alternative, having supports for those new industries, for those jobs is really important.

Of course, finally, I think it's really important to note that we were on track to cut more than 50 megatonnes of emissions over the next 10 years and doing that in a collaborative way with industry. The Leader of the Official Opposition mentioned Eric Denhoff, and one of the ways that I had the opportunity to work with Deputy Minister Denhoff, when he was in that role, was working on and refining the carbon competitiveness incentive regulation. That's work that doesn't get talked about a lot but was really important because it looked at the impacts on different industries and different operators in wildly different technology sectors. It had to be very,

very detailed work, with thousands of different pieces of information going into that, and working with . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Any comments or questions under 29(2)(a)? Seeing none, are there any other speakers? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Member Loyola: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Through you to all the members of the Assembly, I want to wish you all a very good evening. It's always a pleasure to get up and speak in the House. As you all know, I love to speak. I know that our Speaker, Mr. Cooper, always had a big smile on his face . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member.

8:40

Member Loyola: Oh, pardon me.

Our Speaker, when he was in the benches, used to love it when I got up to speak. He'd listen very intently – right? – with a big smile on his face, because, of course, he always knew I had something to say of interest.

With that being said, I stand to speak against Bill 1 this evening. Of course, one of the major reasons why I cannot possibly support this bill is that it has no alternative.

I want to take a step back because for 44 years we had a Conservative government in this province, and they had more than ample opportunity to not only address the issue – not only address the issue – but to actually bring people together, because governing should be about bringing all people together, not sowing seeds of division and placing one group's interests against another. But, of course, that's what we're seeing. We're seeing it again now that we have our good friends in the UCP caucus governing here.

I don't doubt that they represent a good number of Albertans, that they were able to convince Albertans that the carbon levy was a bad thing. One of the things that I learned really early on when I started learning about politics, leadership, and governance was that in politics it's really easy to misinform people and miseducate people. I believe that's what has happened here, Madam Speaker. I think that our leader of the Alberta NDP here and Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition highlighted very well some of the pieces of misinformation that were just being handed out to people in the community as if they were facts and truths. You know, it's sad. It's very sad because that is the way that you sow division amongst people. When you hijack the truth, when you purposefully misinform people for your own political gain, that to me is suspect.

But if you could honestly stand on the other side of this House and have your facts straight and you could convince me with numbers, with facts, with research and you're telling me that this is the truth, that this is what the statistics demonstrate, I would be one of the first ones to say: okay; let's take a look at this. If I can believe the statistics and the research that you're presenting to me and you can convince me that this would be better for all Albertans, heck, I'd even vote for it.

But, Madam Speaker, I cannot vote for Bill 1 because, you see, the whole premise upon which it lies, to me, is a mistruth. There was so much misinformation out there, and no matter how hard we tried as a government to actually get the facts out there in front of people, people unfortunately were buying the myth. They were buying the lies. Not only that, they were going out and repeating these lies, and it's sad for me, because . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, I'd just caution you with some of the words involving "lies" and "lying." Those are most certainly words we don't use in this House. Please continue.

Member Loyola: We do believe that people do tell lies, though, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, it was so pleasant in here when I arrived, and I was so much looking forward to the words and the thoughts that you were going to share with all members in this House, as you have done with Mr. Speaker. I would maybe hope that you could entertain us in such a fashion as you would for Mr. Speaker.

Member Loyola: To me it doesn't matter who's sitting in the Speaker's chair, Madam Speaker. I would continue to use the same language that I always do. But at the pleasure of Madam Speaker I will not use that four-letter word for the remainder of my time here in the House at this moment.

Where was I?

An Hon. Member: Telling lies.

Member Loyola: Oh, yeah. Spreading misinformation. This is one of the biggest problems that we have in our political system right now, that for the sake of ideology we turn statistics and we manipulate or we use only certain numbers that will support our ideological arguments. But are we here to work towards a particular ideology, or are we here to make the best decisions for all Albertans?

I remember so many times when I used to sit on the other side of the House and the opposition at that time would accuse us of being ideological. The funny thing, though, was that the opposition didn't see that they were also being totally and completely entrenched in their own ideology when they were getting up to say their arguments. You know what, Madam Speaker? I'm not going to just say that it was the opposition at that time. We all need to do better. I'm sure that many people in this House know that I'm probably as ideological as they come. The reason why is because I don't stop being a dreamer, being an idealist, believing that we can create a better world for all people. I'm never going to stop being an idealist because at the end of the day what's driving me is wanting to make sure that we build a better society, a better place to live not only for my own children but for everybody's children.

You know, the good Member for Edmonton-Rutherford spoke previously on other readings of the bill about indigenous culture and indigenous cosmology and understanding. One of the things that I love that our government did was that we brought all people to the table to discuss how we were going to deal with climate change as the principle problem of our generation and those that follow. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, that we have a lot to learn from indigenous people. We have so much to learn from indigenous people here in this province and in this country and across the world because, as I'm sure that you've heard and may even well know, a part of indigenous governance and indigenous decision-making is understanding very well how the decisions you're going to make today are going to affect the people seven generations down the road. I think that we need to do a lot more reflecting on exactly that.

8:50

If you're going to get up in this House and you're going to present a bill that's saying: "Look, we don't want this carbon tax. We know that. We don't want the carbon tax, but we are going to do nothing to address climate change right now, when it's the principal problem of our generation" – you don't want to deal with the problem? How can that be? This is serious, members. You're seriously going to sit on the other side of that House, present this in here, and then say: "We have no alternative to address climate

change here in the province of Alberta”? That’s one of the principal reasons why I cannot vote for this bill, Madam Speaker.

There is also the matter of the fact that the federal government was going to implement its own carbon levy or carbon tax, as the members from across the way love to call it, on us regardless. At least what we came up with in the climate leadership plan when we were in government was an Alberta-based solution. Yes, people had to pay their share, but it was a progressive tax that was going to help those who had lower incomes through the rebate, and we well know that 60 per cent of Albertans were getting that full rebate. Where did this fact fall off? How come that wasn’t something that people were talking about? Now Albertans are still going to have to pay their carbon tax, but now there’s no rebate for them. There’s no rebate for them.

These individuals that you say that you care so much about and that you’re trying to save them from the carbon tax, well – guess what? – they’re still going to have to pay the carbon tax, but now the middle- and lower income ones aren’t going to get the rebate that they were previously getting under the climate leadership plan that the Alberta NDP government had implemented back in November of 2015. Tell me how they are better off. I’m looking at the members across the way. Tell me how they’re better off now. I see nothing. I see blank faces. Oh, I got one face over here with a big smile.

Eliminating that revenue stream which not only was going as a rebate to actually help middle- and lower income Albertans, which now they’re not going to get whatsoever, was also going to support renewable energy and the energy efficiency and rebate programs. We were actually making inroads and taking steps to do it exactly the way our indigenous brothers and sisters and two-spirited people were actually engaging us to think about.

Not only that, Madam Speaker, because it’s really important that we were able to bring indigenous voices to the table – not only were we bringing indigenous voices to the table; we were also bringing environmentalists, activists, and organizations to the table as well. And then not only that; we were bringing in people from the petroleum sector. We had everybody sitting at the same table trying to determine what was the best way that we can move forward here in the province of Alberta so that at the end of the day we were going to be doing best for future generations of Albertans.

The Deputy Speaker: Any comments or questions under (29)(2)(a)?

Any members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is third reading – correct? – not 29(2)(a)?

The Deputy Speaker: Yup.

Mr. Bilous: Excellent. Okay. Well, I’ll rise to make a few comments about this bill because I think there have been comments made by the government, by the Premier, by others that I think have omitted some of the facts around the price on carbon, whatever you want to call it. Whether you want to call it a carbon tax, a carbon levy, regardless, you know, one of the things that we committed to when we introduced the carbon pricing in addition to a broader climate leadership plan was the fact that every penny that was collected from it would be reinvested. So it’s interesting how members of the government will talk about these poor, low-income seniors that the carbon tax ended up making unable to pay their bills. Well, the reality, Madam Speaker, is that two-thirds of Albertans received a carbon rebate, and in fact they got the full

rebate, whether or not they only needed 10 per cent of it or 20 per cent of it. I mean, that was just one of the issues.

The other one that I find interesting is that the government seems to think it came up with some novel, new idea to create a fund to help some of the biggest emitters innovate. Well, we did that. We did that, and in fact I stood with the former Minister of Environment and Parks to announce a \$1.4 billion innovation fund. I would love to see the current government top that because we know that through innovation, companies, especially the largest emitters, are able to reduce their footprint, reduce their GHGs, become more competitive. Therefore, their balance sheet looks better at the same time as reducing their GHGs and doing their part globally to reduce our carbon footprint.

Really, it was a win-win solution, and in fact it was industry that had said: we agree to a price on carbon, but there needs to be an investment through what’s collected to help us drive innovation and invest in that because developing new processes is not a cheap thing to do. There needs to be an incentive. There needs to be a reward at the end. We saw that.

In fact, you know, I was singing the praises of Alberta Innovates, which has done a remarkable job in many different areas, from medical biosciences to energy, to environment, to health innovations, that they really have helped drive solutions. In fact, it’s Imperial Oil at Emerald Lake that is using a technology that was co-developed with Alberta Innovates many, many years ago that actually reduces their water consumption by 25 per cent. Now, Madam Speaker, that’s a significant amount of water consumption reduction for a brand new project. That’s an incredible step in the right direction. We want to encourage and incentivize more of that around the province to then be exported internationally.

I would argue that Alberta is a world leader, but it takes investment. It takes a government to act with courage to recognize that, you know, climate change is real and that meaningful action needs to take place, not promises of “one day we’ll bring in something,” not leaving the door open for Ottawa to impose its solution on Alberta. I mean, I know the Premier is a big fan of Ottawa. I think he’s itching to get back there, quite frankly, if I read between the lines, and wants to impose the practices of Ottawa on Alberta.

Well, I think Alberta has its own proud history of traditions. I’m proud of it. In fact, I can tell you that some of the sweeping changes that the government made to the standing orders I find quite frustrating to the spirit and the history of this place, considering, you know, that the hon. Premier has only been in this place for a short period of time compared with many other members.

There is a history of a hundred years in this place with a number of different traditions. Honestly, Madam Speaker, I haven’t been here that long. I’ve only been here since 2012, but I’ve come to appreciate the uniqueness that the Alberta Legislature has even in comparison with other provinces. There are things we do here that I wouldn’t want to change, that I wouldn’t want to bring in from Saskatchewan or any other province, quite frankly.

9:00

It’s a little disappointing that the government is eliminating this without a plan B. The plan B: we’ll have to wait for it. Again, what does that mean for our heavier emitters who have been investing hundreds of millions of dollars to be more energy efficient? Now suddenly it’s not just the Wild West; it’s pollute as much as you want because there’s no incentive otherwise. I think we have seen in the last couple of years a significant number of emissions reductions. We were on track over the course of the next 11 years to make significant strides.

You know, China, until they do things we shouldn't – I mean, I think what members miss is that China is investing hundreds of billions, with a "b," of dollars in innovation, in reducing their GHGs, reducing their footprint. They've cancelled hundreds of coal-fired electricity plants. The difference between China and Alberta is that, yes, right now, today, they are emitting and polluting much more than we are as a province. Obviously, population has something to do with it and land size as well. But I can tell you that when they decide to turn the corner and take meaningful action to address the issues and concerns of climate change, they will move very, very quickly. Quite frankly, they are about to blow by many, many countries who will say: "Wow. We didn't see that coming. Who was that that just passed us?" They're making historic investments in solar, wind, and in geothermal.

You know, for me, I think that part of this was an opportunity that we have. Part of it as well is helping to tell the Alberta story about our energy sector, giving them some additional tools when we talk about how responsible our producers are here and that we need markets to sell our products to. Part of it as well, Madam Speaker, was the number of jobs that were created by these investments, right? I mean, again, it's one thing to hear government members talk about how jobs are their number one priority. Well, here was an opportunity and a way that there were jobs, thousands of jobs, being created through the investment in renewables, our req auctions, et cetera. Those are now going to be jobs lost. I can't wait for tomorrow for the government to take credit for all of the lost jobs that are now fleeing the province. Again, Alberta was the number one destination for renewables. We were the province to invest in. Now people are scratching their heads going: I don't know if there's anywhere in Canada that is really interested in aggressively pursuing these new jobs in green technology and in green opportunities.

For me, Madam Speaker, again, I recognize and appreciate that not everyone was a fan of the carbon tax. There were those that were frustrated by it. I completely understand. I recognize that there were additional costs put on small businesses by that. But I can tell you that where the Premier was wrong in his speech at, I believe, the opening of Bill 2 was in saying that there was nothing for businesses. Well, we actually reduced the small-business tax rate by 33 per cent – I think that that's quite significant to help offset some of those costs – in addition to having programs for businesses to make meaningful investments that would save them money over the course of the lifetime of their buildings and assets. I get that people may want to see the savings today – they want an immediate reward – but the reality of these types of energy savings and energy investments is that they do pay off over the lifetime of a facility, and a lot of people recognize that.

The other thing that's interesting is that, you know, you look at some of the global leaders as far as international energy players and the fact that they are seriously lobbying governments in North America to keep a price on carbon because of, again, the significant investments that they've made, investments that they recognize will not only give them a leg up when we look at other companies who are also looking to Alberta companies as far as how to emulate their processes.

Again, you look at the innovation that exists in Alberta, and sometimes there needs to be a bit of an incentive to innovate. I can tell you that when you look at SAGD technology, that was developed here in Alberta. That is used around the world. It was developed in Alberta because companies had to innovate and find less expensive ways to get our crude out of the ground. We know that we have the wherewithal to do it, but it takes leadership. It takes leadership by government. What we are seeing today is not leadership. We are seeing a government taking the province

backwards in an effort to – sure, it will save some Albertans some money in the short term, but it has long-term consequences, Madam Speaker.

You know, I think we would have liked to have seen a proposal from the government of: what do you plan to replace this with? Right now all we're getting is promises that one day there'll be some kind of new plan, hopefully before the Prime Minister rams his plan down our throats. But that is the reality. In the meantime we're probably going to waste millions of dollars in court challenges that will end up, well, losing us money, again, money that could be invested in meaningful things. But as we've seen even in Saskatchewan's appeal, I think they're in a losing battle. We would rather have seen: let's look at creative ways to address climate change. If our method wasn't accepted by this government, fair enough, but then propose something, counterpropose.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will not be supporting this bill in its current state and will urge all members to do the same.

The Deputy Speaker: Any comments or questions under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any more speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-West Henday.

Mr. Carson: Thank you very much. Once again, it's an honour to have the ability to rise today, and I would thank the constituents of the community of Edmonton-West Henday for giving me this opportunity to do so. It's with great frustration that I have to stand before my constituents and tell them that once again the will of this Assembly was not to work in their best interests.

Now, the fact is that we've spent a week and a half, two weeks, roughly, discussing this piece of legislation. Well, the opposition has. The government has sat there doing God knows what. I would love to find out what that is because it's surely not working in the best interests of my constituents. When I go back to them, they're going to have several questions for me. How could a government get rid of a real plan and implement absolutely nothing in place of it? It's a question that we've brought up several times on the opposition side.

Now, if this government is so proud of the legislation that they have before us, then why, through the readings that we've been through and through Committee of the Whole, where we put forward reasoned amendments to move this to committee to have real discussions about the implications not only to the social fabric of our communities but also to the economic fabric – even then, I don't know. Maybe one person stood up and spewed some rhetoric about why we didn't have the time to move forward on discussing this in committee. But I would argue that we don't have the time to repeat this legislation and try and come up with something else, whenever that might be: in the fall, in a few years, maybe never.

Now, I want to share a quote with this House. It's from Helen Keller, and I find it quite relevant in this moment. The quote is: "Science may have found a cure for most evils; but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all – the apathy of human beings." I find that quite relevant because ahead of us we have the greatest threat to humankind, and we're going to sit in this Legislature and once again say: "We'll put it off. We'll give you back your \$200 a year, and we'll worry about this later."

It is completely shameful, and really I'm not surprised based on the legislation we've seen come forward before this House. We have the Minister of Labour and Immigration, that wants to attack the youth of our province, knowing full well, I suppose, that there are no repercussions to doing that, that as far as we can tell, the laws do not protect against age discrimination against those who are under the age of 18, something I'm sure he's quite proud of, finding that loophole.

9:10

We have a government that is not going to take action, so I thought it very important to one more time stand before this House and say that I tried. I tried, and the government did absolutely nothing. They said that they have a mandate to do nothing, which is not true. The people who voted for you expect more. They expect you to bring forward solutions. You can repeal the price on carbon, as detrimental to our communities as that will be, but you should have real solutions to put in place of it, of which you have absolutely none.

It's unbelievable that we have a minister of environment who's proud of this. He's proud to repeal environmental protections. You have more than enough people on your front bench to protect the will of businesses. We've seen it. We've seen it.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, through the chair.

Mr. Carson: Excuse me, Madam Speaker.

We've seen, through your legislation that you've put forward so far, that you have no problem representing businesses, and it's, I suppose, a thing that government should do. You know, red tape reduction, creating regulations that allow businesses to thrive in our province: of course, that's important. But when we have a minister of environment who's actively working against the environment, it's completely disappointing.

I will not be supporting Bill 1. I am, frankly, ashamed that I have to sit in this Legislature and vote against what is and may be the most important piece of legislation in terms of environmental protections that we'll see for years to come. I doubt it, but I hope that this government has something to put in its place in the very near future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any comments or questions under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, any members wishing to speak? The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. Great to have an opportunity to rise. What an exciting evening, an exciting evening for Albertans. Hopefully, they're going to be able to see the carbon tax repeal act finally pass third reading in this Legislature. A promise made, a promise kept, something that the largest number of Albertans in the history of this province came out and cast a vote for, that was clearly campaigned on. I was listening to the hon. member's comments previously, and I notice that he kind of glossed over that fact, that the vast majority of Albertans spoke loud and clear on April 16, when they sent the NDP to that side of the House, to opposition, because of many things but largely, for sure, because of the carbon tax.

Now, it's disappointing to also see the hon. member spend time articulating and saying that this side of the House does not care about the environment and that this side of the House has not presented any alternatives when it comes to climate change and to dealing with emissions inside our province. Nothing could be further from the truth, Madam Speaker. I won't raise it up because I'm sure you'd call it a prop, but the United Conservative Party ran on a clear platform. It made clear what we would do when it came to emissions. It made clear that we did have a plan that was a different approach than the hon. members'.

While I understand that the hon. members in the NDP continue to want to hang on, to desperately hang on to the carbon tax, the reality is that that was all economic pain, no environmental gain. They know that. That was troubling, hurting people in Alberta. They only want to talk tonight about the direct emission costs, the

direct costs on fuel and stuff to Albertans. That was bad enough. They keep glossing over the fact that it ended up being a tax on everything. It increased the costs of everything inside our society because everything here comes by train or truck – it needs fuel to be able to get it there – and it ended up increasing the costs of everything.

I was interested to listen to the Leader of the Opposition's comments earlier this evening as she spent a considerable amount of time attempting to attack the Premier on his speech at third reading of Bill 1 earlier. I guess it would be last week, Madam Speaker. I'm not going to be able to spend too much time rebutting everything that she said, but the one thing that she did spend a considerable amount of time on was attacking the Premier on a situation that took place in the constituency of Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, particularly in my hometown of Sundre, where the Premier spoke about the West Country seniors' centre. I want to be clear to the House that the Premier did in fact go to the West Country seniors' centre. I was there with him. Thank you for coming, through you, Madam Speaker, to him. Thank you for coming to Sundre and seeing what was taking place there. The Premier took exception to the fact that we would bring up how they treated seniors inside my community as an example of how seniors and fixed-income seniors were treated across this province when it came to the NDP's carbon tax. The reality is that the NDP put that seniors' centre – that's just one example. Those examples are throughout the entire province, but that's one example of the NDP putting that seniors' centre in a situation where they may have had to shut their doors, fixed-income seniors who are just trying to have a place to be able to recreate inside our communities. Madam Speaker, I know that you would have similar stories inside your constituency.

When those seniors came and said, "Look at what your carbon tax is doing to us; it's a regressive tax that's hurting us," this government responded, at least their staff did, by telling those seniors to have a fundraiser to pay for the carbon tax. It's just shameful. It's absolutely shameful. It's shameful that the Premier, who I asked many times to – or, sorry, the Leader of the Opposition. Muscle memory.

Mr. Kenney: The then Premier.

Mr. Jason Nixon: . . . the then Premier, who I asked many times to apologize inside this House for the way she treated my constituents, never would apologize for that. But tonight, Madam Speaker, I'm excited to say that at least they're finally going to have some justice when it comes to the carbon tax because the United Conservative Party is going to keep their promise. We're going to repeal the carbon tax and we're going to go on and we're going to focus on what Albertans have sent us to focus on, which is actually tackling climate change and emissions not taxing fixed-income seniors and punishing them, and I think that's great news.

The Deputy Speaker: Any comments or questions under 29(2)(a)?
Would the hon. Premier like to close debate?

Mr. Kenney: Yes, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: My apologies, hon. Premier.

Is there anybody else who would like to speak?

Seeing none, now would the hon. Premier like to close debate?
Be patient with the new Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kenney: Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, I most assuredly would. After three years of working towards this day, a great day for Albertans, a promise made, a promise kept, I am honoured to

rise in debate on third reading, to close debate on Bill 1, An Act to Repeal the Carbon Tax. I do so holding in my hands the most detailed electoral platform ever offered to Albertans in this most recent election, in which, at page 17, the party, which I have the honour of leading, committed to the following:

The NDP introduced the largest tax increase in Alberta history without campaigning on it. The job-killing carbon tax takes in \$1.4 billion each year, making it more expensive to hire employees, move goods around the province, and heat homes.

And the current carbon tax is just the start – the NDP plans to increase their cash grab by at least 67% to \$2.5 billion, in step with Prime Minister Trudeau.

[But] a United Conservative government will scrap the carbon tax, leaving that money in the pockets of families, businesses, and non-profits while creating [at least] 6,000 new jobs by 2024.

A United Conservative government will [therefore]:

- Introduce Bill 1, The Carbon Tax Repeal Act.

That was our commitment to Albertans, Madam Speaker, which tonight we make good on in this vote. While we do so, we say that we place the good, common-sense judgment of ordinary Albertans ahead of the central management and the meddling of nanny state politicians who want to dictate to ordinary people how they should live their lives.

This failed experiment, the NDP carbon tax, was all about punishing Albertans for living normal lives in this cold, northern, often challenging environment. This was the NDP telling widows that they had to turn the heat down at home when it was 25 below outside. This was about the NDP telling working men that they shouldn't drive their pickups with their tools and their equipment to work anymore. This was the NDP telling soccer moms and hockey dads that they should be punished for filling up the minivan to take the kids to practice. This was the NDP saying that they were going to squeeze Albertans in the midst of a job-killing recession to generate more government revenue in order to waste it on low-flow shower heads and, quotes, free light bulbs installed by a company hired from Ontario. At one level, Madam Speaker, this was an act of gross political arrogance from a socialist government informed by the failed philosophy of central planning and the politics of resentment seeking to punish people simply for living ordinary lives.

Madam Speaker, what I find so remarkable is that even after the massive, unprecedented electoral repudiation of the NDP, at the centre of which was a complete public rejection of their carbon tax, it appears that they will stand in this place tonight to defend the carbon tax that they hid from voters, which they imposed on Albertans, and for which they refuse to apologize.

9:20

But there are still minutes left, Madam Speaker. There are moments, precious moments left, during which I would appeal to my friends from the NDP opposite to reconsider. Now is a moment for the NDP to show Albertans something that has been wholly absent from that party since their massive repudiation on election day. Do you know what that something is? Humility. The ability to admit that you were wrong.

You know, one of the great Premiers that we had in this place was the late Ralph Klein. He wasn't perfect, Lord knows, but when he made big mistakes, he admitted to them. It wasn't too much for him to stand up and say when he was wrong. Well, Madam Speaker, now is the moment for the NDP to stand up and admit that they were wrong.

You know, Madam Speaker, in my speech at the beginning of this third reading debate I mentioned how the NDP's sister party through the international consortium of a group – the party is called

Socialist International. Their sister party in Australia, the Labor Party, imposed, much like the NDP here, a job-killing, intrusive, punitive carbon tax on Australians in one of our sister Commonwealth democracies. Guess what? Much like Albertans a few weeks ago, the Australian voters completely repudiated that seven years ago. Is it not instructive that the Australian Labor Party, the socialist sister party of the NDP, has since abandoned any pretense of imposing a carbon tax in the most recent election, that the French Socialist Party has done the same thing? You have sister parties of the NDP who have learned their lesson, who have listened to the voters, who have acted with humility, who have recognized that punishing people for heating their homes is not an environmental policy. The NDP is increasingly an outlier, an aberration, an exception to the rule. The Alberta NDP in its stubbornness refuses to acknowledge how wrong they were to mislead voters so profoundly in 2015 by failing to disclose to them their intention to impose the largest tax increase in Alberta history.

Madam Deputy Speaker, tonight is a night of reckoning. This is when democracy happens. This is when the hundreds of thousands of Albertans who signed petitions, who sent e-mails, who spoke to their MLAs, but who were so obviously ignored by the previous government, this is when they find their voice, the quiet Albertans, the hard-working Albertans who are not animated by the politics of resentment, who do not think that "profit" is a dirty word, who do not think that heating your home is a crime to be punished by the government, who do not think filling up your gas tank is something to be penalized by a punitive carbon tax. This is the moment for them, all of those Albertans, quiet Albertans who have waited so patiently for an opportunity to speak through this recent election. Tonight is the night when their collective democratic will will be reflected in a vote on the floor of this Assembly.

I say to all of those Albertans: we have kept faith. We as a government in our first commitment said that by May 30 there would be no carbon tax, and with the adoption of this bill, this act tonight, Madam Speaker – and I hope it gets proclamation into law by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor tomorrow – this bill will be effective retroactive to May 30, 2019. With it we will deliver to Albertans the single largest tax cut in Alberta history. We will repeal the single largest act of political dishonesty and cynicism, I submit, in Alberta political history. We will say that Albertans will focus in concrete and practical ways on the environmental challenges that we face, but in ways that do not punish ordinary people struggling to live ordinary lives.

Madam Speaker, with this we move Alberta from the isolation in which the NDP put us where we were aligned with only one province, their socialist friends in Victoria. And now we join the growing number of provincial governments in Canada, who constitute now a majority of provincial governments, defending taxpayers, defending prosperity, defending our energy sector in opposing punitive carbon taxes. Tonight Alberta joins our friends in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and other provinces that have also opposed the carbon tax as well as the Northwest Territories.

Madam Speaker, today we move from the marginalization of the NDP back into the Canadian mainstream. We move from a policy that imposed pain on people in a recession to one that relieves the tax burden on Albertans. We move to a policy that will relieve average families of up to \$1,200 a year from a tax grab just to pad government coffers. Tonight we move to relieving small businesses of a cost of on average \$4,500 a year. Tonight we move against the Trudeau government's efforts to, with the co-operation of socialist parties like the NDP, increase these punitive taxes again and again.

[The Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Speaker, tonight we move to make history. Tonight we move to stand up for democracy, for taxpayers, for jobs, for growth, for prosperity, for the integrity of a promise made and a promise kept.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:28 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Allard	LaGrange	Reid
Armstrong-Homeniuk	Loewen	Rowswell
Copping	Long	Schow
Ellis	Madu	Schulz
Getson	Nally	Shandro
Glubish	Neudorf	Toews
Goodridge	Nicolaides	Toor
Gotfried	Nixon, Jason	Turton
Guthrie	Nixon, Jeremy	van Dijken
Issik	Orr	Williams
Jones	Pitt	Yao
Kenney		

Against the motion:

Bilous	Deol	Gray
Carson	Feehan	Irwin
Ceci	Goehring	Schmidt
Dang		

Totals: For – 34 Against – 10

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a third time]

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

Mr. Jason Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a great and historical night. I'm so happy to see the carbon tax repeal act pass in this place tonight. I think there's been a lot of progress made. I thank all members of the House for their co-operation. As such, I move to adjourn until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The Speaker: Just seeking some clarification from the hon. Government House Leader. Is he confident in the adjournment time until tomorrow at 10 a.m.?

Mr. Jason Nixon: It is Tuesday? [interjections] Yeah, I am confident that it's 10 a.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 9:46 p.m.]

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