



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, May 25, 2017

Day 39

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker
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Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Hon. Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)
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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)
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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (ND),
Deputy Government House Leader
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)
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Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (ND)
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Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
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Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND)
Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND),
Deputy Government Whip
Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)

Party standings:

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

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 25, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. M. le Président, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of this Assembly on behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs a group of 75 brilliant grade 6 students from l'école Coloniale Estates in the beautiful town of Beaumont. L'école Coloniale Estates offers programming in both French immersion and English. The students are accompanied by their teacher, M. Mario Lemay, and five parent assistants and chaperones. I'll just go through them: Mrs. Kimberly Epp, Mrs. Barb Parolin, Mrs. Linda Bouyea, Miss Addie Hobbins, and Mrs. Kim Tremblay. I would ask them to now rise across both sides of the House and accept the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the outstanding grade 6 students, teachers, and parents of the Forestburg school in my beautiful riding of Battle River-Wainwright. Forestburg, as you may know or may not know, is a coal mining community that produces electricity, that Albertans depend upon, through the Battle River power generating station, the Westmoreland coal mine, and ATCO Power. Among many other things, this is a community of farmers. The people here are hard working, and they have awesome students and teachers. Would you please rise as I call out your name: the teacher, Mrs. Laura Pfeffer; chaperones Brock Bartlett and Dion Burlock; and the students. Please help me give them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups here today? Seeing and hearing none, the hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the Assembly the members of the 2016-17 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission, who are sitting in your gallery. This commission was established in October 2016 with the task of reviewing Alberta's 87 constituencies using a whole number of factors to make sure that they are fair and equitable. The commission had a series of hearings across the province, and now they are issuing their interim report. I had the honour of meeting them when they visited Peace River, and I saw first-hand the integrity and dedication that they all bring to this role. I'm very, very pleased to introduce the members of the commission. We have Hon. Justice Myra Bielby, chair, and members Laurie Livingstone, Gwen Day, Bruce McLeod, and Jean Munn. I would ask that our guests rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome, and thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise in the House today to introduce to you and through you my mother, Shaheen Asad, who lives in Toronto with my father, Asad Kazim. She's visiting me from Toronto to celebrate the two-year anniversary of our government after she and my father attended my swearing-in ceremony. I appreciate her indulgence in politics and would like to thank her for her blessings and support in my political journey. I would like to request her to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome, Mom.

The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my absolute pleasure to introduce to you and through you Theresa Jenkins, the executive director at Servants Anonymous, and Victoria Bailey, the research, communications, and development manager at Servants Anonymous. The goal of Servants Anonymous is for all women who are at risk of or who have experienced sexual exploitation to know faith, hope, and love and to be empowered to rebuild their lives. These incredible women have completely inspired me, and I've spoken about them nonstop since I've met them. They are passionately committed to the women and children that they work for and to providing women a lifeline to exit sexual exploitation and trafficking. I'm honoured to introduce them in the House. I would ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Samantha Christie. Samantha is a communications practicum student working in Seniors and Housing. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in political science and is completing her public relations certificate at MacEwan University. Samantha, please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to rise and introduce to you and through you two amazing community leaders from the Al-Rashid mosque. Mr. Khalid Tarabain is the president, and Mr. Omar Najmeddine is the executive director for Al-Rashid and the chair of the board of directors of the Edmonton Islamic Academy, which is located in the beautiful constituency of Edmonton-Castle Downs. I want to thank you for your years of dedication and support in the community and all across Alberta. I will speak more about this in my member's statement this afternoon. I would ask my guests to now please rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of introductions today. It's a privilege to rise and recognize this week, when the House voted on Bill 205 to create an advocate for people with disabilities, and to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Teresa Pinkoski, who I believe is sitting right there. Teresa has demonstrated remarkable leadership through her impressive areas of volunteer work in the community, including Fort Edmonton, a child care centre, and the Strathcona county library. Last year she earned her early learning and child care

diploma at MacEwan. This year Teresa is one of two recipients of the inspiration award, presented by the Canadian Down Syndrome Society, for her accomplishments. She is here with her mother and with her friends Cosima Vicente; Amanda Riley, who's her support worker; May Carter; and Joe Carter. It's really a great pleasure for her to be recognized today. I would like to ask everyone to stand and receive the customary welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, it's also a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Nathan Ip. Nathan Ip is a trustee with the Edmonton public school board, but he's also a campus connections worker who provided support to Teresa during her time at MacEwan University and was part of her success. I would like to ask Nathan to rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and privilege to introduce to you and to all the members of this Assembly 37 members of Global Pravasi Seniors Society visiting from Calgary, many of whom are living in the most beautiful, diverse, and outstanding riding of Calgary-McCall. This society is dedicated to providing resources to seniors, identifying opportunities for them to be engaged and involved in society, and protecting seniors from financial or age-related abuse. I will not name all of them, but I would like to name the executive. I would like them to rise as I call their names: Sat Paul Kaushal, the president; Subash Kalia, vice-president of Global Pravasi and also the president of the Hindu Society of Calgary; Prem Bhandari, secretary; Pritam Singh, treasurer; Sarabjit Randhawa; Baldev Singh Kang; Raj Kumar Handa; Balwant Sharma. I thank them for their important work as advocates for seniors and ask all of them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Legislative Assembly staff from the Property Rights Advocate's office in Edmonton: Ms Karen Johnson, Alberta's Acting Property Rights Advocate, and Ms Angela Balec, the public engagement officer. The office has been around for about four and a half years, providing an evidence-based, unbiased voice to government about current and future property rights and laws and policies. The staff of the office listen to and document stories of Albertans as they share their concerns about property rights. I'd ask Karen and Angela to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

Violence against Women and Girls

Ms McPherson: Women in Alberta continue to face discrimination, sexism in the workplace and in public, lower pay than men, violence in their homes, harassment on the street, and the low opinion of traditionalists, and it's time for it to stop. Earlier this week we were all reminded of the urgent need to address this, not only in Alberta but throughout the world, when a suicide bomber

targeted young people, specifically young women, at a concert, killing 22.

The United Nations has designated the 25th of every month Orange Day as part of the Unite campaign to end violence against women. Goal 5 from the 2030 agenda for sustainable development identifies gender equality and the empowerment of women as key priorities and a key to ending violence against women and girls in our world. Mr. Speaker, on this Orange Day I am so proud to be part of a government that is taking action to promote the equality and empowerment of women. Ours is the first gender-balanced cabinet in Canada, and our province has the first Status of Women ministry, unlike the opposition, who have consistently acted against equality by voting against increased funding for women's shelters; voting against Status of Women grants for achieving women's equality; opposing minimum wage increases, which primarily affect women; making public statements encouraging violence against women; and heckling sexual abuse survivors in this House.

We have lifted thousands of children out of poverty with the Alberta child benefit and the family employment tax credit. We've taken action on violence against women by funding women's shelters and passing a law to help women get out of leases trapping them in dangerous situations.

How can you support equality for the women and girls in your life? Tell your daughters how smart they are. If someone discloses they've been sexually assaulted, believe them. Support capable women in your life running for office. Donate time and money to organizations that support women fleeing violence. Question the subtle ways that women are discriminated against every day. And if you want to continue to see the advancement of women, vote NDP in the next election.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Servants Anonymous Society of Calgary

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is horrifying when you know that young teen girls are being sexually exploited or that little girls are being raped, abused, and held in bondage by pimps. The mortality rates are staggering. Women and girls are dying. However, over 800 women and children owe a new life to an organization called Servants Anonymous Society, started as a true grassroots initiative in 2017, and this marks their 29th year of providing life-saving services. SAS provides immediate, safe, rapid exit programming and 24/7 long-term support to women and girls from across Canada fleeing sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.

SAS programs stabilize, heal, reconnect, help women and girls exit sexual exploitation and then positively, completely help them rebuild their lives. They run many programs, including a cuddle and care child care system in which there are activities and resources that promote healthy child development and allow exit participants to work in a program of recovery while knowing that their children are safe while on-site. The social return on this investment: analysis conducted in 2009 to 2012 shows that the SAS rapid-exit safe program was effective and cost efficient, creating nearly \$9 in social value for every dollar invested. This social value results in decreases of emergency services use, police involvement, incarceration, violent victimization, addictions and substance abuse, and increased employment in the mainstream economy.

Mr. Speaker, the safe program was closed in February of 2016 due to lack of dedicated funding from this government. Alberta can be a leader in helping women and girls to not only exit sexual exploitation but also as a unique service provider that does not typically fit into existing provincial funding models for vulnerable women. Supporting SAS to provide a safe haven for women fleeing

sexual exploiters can literally mean the difference between life and death for them and their children.

I'd like to thank the ministries of Finance, Status of Women, and human services for finding the time to meet with these advocates today.

Opioid Use

Dr. Swann: The opioid death crisis is unprecedented, ripping apart families of all socioeconomic groups, including First Nations. The continual and dramatic increases in opioid deaths since 2013 are extremely saddening given that they are all preventable. While we see increased investment, it's not clear that mental health experts are leading, what the overall strategy is, or how current efforts are being evaluated since there has been no public analysis and reporting. Last year we had 363 deaths due to fentanyl. In the first three months of this year 113 Albertans lost their lives, a 61 per cent increase in deaths over the same period of 2016.

We're starting to see the same disturbing trends here as in B.C., without basic analysis of why we continue to lose ground even after four years, nor have we chosen to call this a public health emergency to mobilize all related resources. This is a mistake. B.C.'s declaration of a public health emergency led to resources being mobilized through the Health ministry across all government departments and between all stakeholders in a co-ordinated plan, with monthly reporting on what is working and what is not. Alberta struggles to report quarterly on fentanyl and other opioid deaths. B.C. embraced an early harm-reduction measure, including safe injection sites. We have yet to see a safe injection site in Alberta.

Naloxone kits are undoubtedly saving lives. The associate minister yesterday admitted there were 1,130 life-saving doses of naloxone given in the first three months of this year. That's 13 near deaths every day in Alberta. Clearly, we are not getting ahead of this devastation.

Wait times have improved for opioid replacement therapy, but outside of Edmonton and Calgary people seeking help continue to wait too long.

Numbers are not enough. There is a troubling lack of analysis of what changes are needed and where for an accurate picture of this epidemic. Strong new leadership from a mental health and addictions expert is needed, who can focus and oversee an evidence-based, co-ordinated plan and overcome the silos. This terribly stigmatized illness needs a new approach, and now is the time for the government to admit that its approach is not working.

This is the most important preventable public health crisis of our time. The lives of our children depend on it.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Government Caucus

Cortes-Vargas: Two years ago Albertans elected a new government, and this new government for the first time in 40 years reflected a province that is diverse, inclusive, and full of fresh ideas. I was one of those new faces, a proud member of the LGBTQ community, a Canadian-Columbian immigrant looking for a better life. My experiences and those of my amazingly diverse caucus members are setting the foundation for the kind of legislation that is making this province better.

I am proud to serve as part of a caucus of people that come from all walks of life. We are a group of people who know what it is like to work in all parts of the Alberta economy. On topics like fair and balanced workplace legislation in this House this diversity of views helps us get things right.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House our members have signed both the front and the back of paycheques. We are nurses. We are teachers. We have run our own businesses, worked for other businesses. We have bus drivers, electricians, and realtors. We have come from pulp mills, autobody shops, farms, and we are from the resource sector, nonprofits, and schools. We have helped people with disability take their place in the community and have fought for their dignity and quality of life. We are social workers. We are psychologists, doctors and lawyers. We are writers. We are ship-pers, activists, school trustees, and, yes, some of us even became union representatives.

Mr. Speaker, our diversity is the strength of our province. While the two right-wing parties believe that working people don't belong in government or in decision-making, it is pretty clear from the last election that that is exactly what Albertans wanted.

I am proud of our fair and balanced plan for family-friendly workplaces, and I am proud that with this diverse team we will make life better for Albertans.

1:50

Oral Question Period

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

Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act

Mr. Jean: The NDP introduced their omnibus labour legislation just yesterday. I want to state once again very clearly that Wildrose is in favour of the compassionate care changes made in this bill. If the government splits the bill into two, we would happily pass those changes through every single stage right now, today. If the Premier was sincere in wanting to help Albertans like Amanda Jensen and was not using her story as a PR exercise, she would agree. To the Premier: will you commit to splitting this bill in two right now and passing it at all stages this afternoon and fast-tracking all the compassionate components of the bill? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's really quite interesting. I recall the member opposite being part of a government that stuffed unrelated issues into bills that were thousands of pages long, and that was the way they did business each and every day. This bill that we're talking about is about modernizing workplace rules and bringing them up to date across the scope to support working families across Alberta. Now, if there are specific parts of it that he'd like to change, I welcome the debate in Committee of the Whole. That's where the debate should occur. Our government's focus is on making life better for working Albertans.

Mr. Jean: No, Mr. Speaker. The debate should happen in front of Albertans. That's called consultation, and you can do that this summer. It would be a great thing to hear from them.

It's sad to hear the Premier using Albertans as props to score political points. The NDP are being incredibly callous with this legislation. They're using common-sense employment standards changes as cover for significant changes to the labour code. These changes will hurt Alberta's economy when we can least afford it. Listen, please, to Albertans. The Calgary Chamber of commerce says that Bill 17 will make it harder to run a business in Alberta. I agree. Why won't the Premier use common sense and split this bill in two and take the time to actually consult with Albertans?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, with each passing day the member's rhetoric gets more extreme. I guess it's because he's fighting Jason Kenney for his job. Let's review this session. The Wildrose leader didn't support providing school lunches, he flip-flopped on GSAs, he called regular Albertans who belonged to unions thugs, and now he's shouting about a bill that even Lorne Gunter thinks is noncontroversial. I honestly didn't believe it was possible to run right of Lorne Gunter.

Mr. Jean: News flash, Mr. Speaker. I don't work for Lorne Gunter; I work for Albertans. They should try to do the same thing.

No consultation, no economic impact study, no problem: that's the NDP way of doing things and the examples of how their ideological fly by the seat of their pants policy methods are piling up. Bill 6, the carbon tax, now sweeping labour changes to change Alberta: all done without consultation and without a sound economic plan. No surprise. It's the NDP. Since the Premier won't hit the pause button in the name of consultation, would she at least recognize that an economic impact study is necessary before forging ahead with this bill?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I don't need an economic impact study to know that fairness for working Albertans finally coming into line with the rest of the country is good for business. It's good for people. It's good for the economy. Here's what the president of the Progressive Contractors Association, not normally a big-union-friendly group, said. "The government appears to have genuinely sought a 'middle-ground'." People understand that that's what we're doing. I think the member opposite should just get onboard and vote to support working Albertans.

The Speaker: Second main question.

Mr. Jean: Removing secret ballots for Alberta workers is not middle of the ground.

Educational Curriculum Review

Mr. Jean: The Premier ought to spend more time with parents so that she can actually understand why Albertans have serious concerns about her government's curriculum overhaul. In the real world parents are seeing scores slipping, and they don't want their kids being used as guinea pigs for yet another educational fad by this government. In the real world parents have a strong desire to be involved in their child's education, and they have the right to. Why isn't the Premier taking the time to listen to parents in this curriculum review and not just her bureaucratic buddies in Edmonton?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the curriculum review is part of one of the biggest engagements with Albertans of any curriculum review ever. Students have been invited to participate. Parents have been invited to participate. Teachers have been invited to participate. The member opposite is actually quite welcome to participate. We are moving forward to make sure that we have a curriculum that serves Albertan students and kids going forward to help them get ready for the new economy, and it's really about time.

Mr. Jean: Come-and-be-told meetings are not consultation.

You'll forgive me if I'm a little bit skeptical about where this review is taking us. You see, buzzwords might work for bureaucrats,

but parents want to actually see a strong foundation in reading, writing, and understanding of history. You see, the Premier talks all the time about being future ready, but you can't be future ready if you haven't learned from the past. When will the Premier realize that getting back to basics in education is exactly what parents are asking for and what our students need to compete in an evermore competitive world?

Ms Notley: Well, as I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, it was our government that actually did a math review that very much focused on improving the kind of work that's going on in math and raising accountability levels throughout the education system to improve the math education received by Alberta students. Many people who often align with the members opposite actually thought that it was a good thing, so I'm pleased that some people were able to acknowledge that. Generally speaking, there is a lot more consultation to go forward. The draft document is just out there, and we look forward to hearing more from people across the province, including, as I said before, the member opposite, because I think at the end of the day we're going to produce . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: If the NDP are going to fundamentally change our curriculum system, as all signs seem to suggest they're going to do, then the very least they can do is publicly post the results of their reviews. That includes going back to the fall review and posting written suggestions, and that means doing the same thing for the online survey that's under way now. Will the Premier agree to publicly posting all results of these surveys, including written responses from all Albertans, for all Albertans to see? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we commit to doing is carrying on with this consultation, carrying on with the very open dialogue about the matters that are in front of us. In fact, it absolutely boggles the mind that the kinds of things that are in the draft document now the member opposite sees as bad. The notion of engaged citizens is somehow seen as a socialist plot to the members opposite. I said before that they are moving to the extreme, but even this seems too much for them. Engaged citizenship is good for all Alberta, and we are proud to support that.

The Speaker: Third main question.

Child and Youth Advocate Death Review

Mr. Jean: Yesterday the Child and Youth Advocate released another heartbreaking report that highlights again ongoing problems in our child welfare system. Levi was 15 when he took his own life. In one four-year stretch he was moved 12 times between the homes of his mother, relatives, and his foster families. He had nightmares that he would have to move again. This was a child who was bounced around by a system that ultimately failed him. Premier, why don't you have a policy to limit the number of times a child can be bounced around until action is taken?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much. I want to begin, of course, by thanking the advocate for sharing Levi's story. It's absolutely heartbreaking that Levi did not get the support that he needed, and our thoughts go out to not only Levi's family as they grieve for the

loss of their son and their brother and their grandson but to all people who find themselves in those situations.

We accept these important recommendations, and we will work closely with the advocate to move forward on them. We know that we need to do better, and we look forward to hearing productive and effective recommendations from the all-party committee that we've set up to focus on exactly these kinds of issues, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jean: Sounds like no policy, Mr. Speaker.

Levi repeatedly told adults that he did not like being around his mother when she drank. When he was eight, he wrote to his mother asking to stay with his foster family, but Levi was returned to her care. When he was 12, Levi was found living in a tent because of his mother's drinking. No action was taken. Levi's voice was ignored. Now, the advocate recommends that children be actively engaged in decisions that affect them. It makes a lot of sense. What is the Premier going to make sure and do so that kids are being heard in our system in the future?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that the facts that the member describes and that the advocate describes demonstrate that it's clear that the former human services ministry was not able to do everything possible that should have happened for this young man. You know, when the people decide that we need to focus on keeping families together in order to correct the mistakes of the past, when people felt that families were split too often, sometimes what happens is that families are kept together when they shouldn't be. The advocate is absolutely correct that what we need to do is listen to these kids. That work has already started within the ministry. I know it has. And we'll keep . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Jean: A shocking response, Mr. Speaker. In fact, a shocking nonresponse.

The Child and Youth Advocate shouldn't have to scream and shout to be taken seriously. It's nice to hear the Premier saying that she's listening, but his report into Levi's death is the fourth time that he's made recommendations about the effects that exposure to parental violence or addictions has on a child. We hear the ministry accept the recommendation, but there seems no will to actually implement these changes. A new system is needed, and it's needed now. Will the Premier agree to bring in the advocate's recommendations to a committee of the Legislature immediately so we can hold the minister and her staff fully accountable?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we've gone one step further. We've set up an all-party committee which is reviewing all of these issues. This is exactly the opportunity for us to do what the member has asked us to do. So I hope that when they go to the committee, they focus on these difficult challenges, these large problems, these issues of how we care for kids and care for families, all of whom are struggling, to ensure the best outcomes for kids and keeping people together. That's what we'll continue to work on, and I invite the members opposite to participate fully in that committee.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

The hon. leader of the third party.

Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act (continued)

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is hiding bad policy behind good policy. Yesterday they introduced Ashley Jensen to highlight employment standards changes, that we on this side support, to protect the job of a mother who takes time off to care for her child with cancer. Of course, we support that. Sadly, the NDP is using Ashley as a human shield for bad policy in the same bill. Shame. To the Premier. It's obvious you're using this Albertan for political cover. Why wouldn't you separate two different bills, the positive changes for job protection from the many negative changes that you are pushing?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's all fine for the member opposite to say that it's an automatic thing that we should move forward with the kinds of leaves that – the many stories that Albertans have been telling about the struggles they've had under the leadership of the former government come to the forefront. I'm glad that he's finally seen the light. For 44 years that government failed to bring in the kinds of changes that every other worker in this country had and deserved, and for him to come here now and complain about us moving forward on it is the most hypocritical thing I've seen in this House in some time. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. McIver: Wrong again. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

Mr. McIver: The Premier sat here last term when we introduced compassionate care changes . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members.

Mr. McIver: . . . brought in by MLA Jeneroux.

The Labour minister was asked repeatedly if she'd take the private ballot away for union certification. She said no, but it turns out that it does happen. By the time a vote can happen, after six months of card signing, everyone will know who signed a card and who has not, leaving workers open to intimidation from both sides, union and management. To the Premier: why are you leaving Alberta workers vulnerable to intimidation from all sides by removing the secret ballot provision?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, under the rules that were put in place by the Conservative government back in the '80s, a system was created that left Alberta workers vulnerable in a way that no other worker in the country had experienced. Quite frankly, the Supreme Court of Canada has issued so many decisions about matters related to labour relations that if you applied those decisions to our labour laws, there are so many ways in which we were in breach of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms under the leadership of the former government. We are righting the balance. We are about creating a fair and modern workplace, and it is about time.

Mr. McIver: The Premier is making it worse.

Mr. Speaker, many nonprofits and charities manage their budgets by working long hours near key times of the year and then letting employees take banked hours off during slower times. Bill 17 now means that they have to pay 1.5 times the hourly pay. Now nonprofits will need to raise more money to provide the same service or provide less mission-based work per year. Congratulations. You fixed what wasn't broken. To the Premier. Your government is constantly hurting the people you claim to help. Are

you that beholden to your union masters that charities are just collateral damage?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Whether the hard-working people of Alberta are earning a living as workers working for oil companies, working for banks, working for accountants, or working for charities, each and every one of them deserves to have certain basic rights in the employment sector. Quite frankly, people who work for charities deserve to be treated fairly. The don't deserve to be told to work volunteer hours because somehow what they do is less valuable. It is not less valuable; it is as valuable. That's what our rules will make sure happens. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order, please. [interjection] Hon. minister.
The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Some Hon. Members: Calgary-Mountain View.

The Speaker: It must have been that introduction by the Opposition House Leader yesterday that caused me to overlook it.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: That's twice, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Twice.

Health Information Reporting

Dr. Swann: This afternoon the Auditor General is set to release a report called Better Healthcare for Albertans, which analyzes the root causes of the government's lack of progress in specific parts of the health care system. One way to gauge the system is to look at the AHS quarterly performance reports. However, the last quarter of 2016 came out in April 2017, and this quarter's performance is still not on the AHS website. The PCs often delayed, changed, or stopped reporting altogether when it failed to meet targets. I had hoped that the NDP would do better. To the Minister of Health: where is the report, and why the delays?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the hon. member. I haven't seen the report yet, but I will certainly follow up with AHS immediately and follow up with the House and with the public as soon as possible.

Dr. Swann: Well, last week, Mr. Speaker, the Métis Nation of Alberta released three new health reports detailing higher rates of injury, tobacco-related disease, and problems with Métis people accessing the health system. However, as Keith Gerein's article points out, these studies are based on outdated information, including one report that doesn't have data more recent than 2009-10. Again to the Minister: given the importance of these issues what are you doing to improve the quality and availability of Métis health information to address specific concerns raised in the report?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government has committed to rebuilding the relationship with the indigenous peoples of this land. In February of 2017 our government signed a 10-year framework agreement with the Métis Nation of Alberta, and we are very proud of that. This commitment includes working with indigenous communities, including the \$300,000 that

we used to develop these reports, and also providing analytical support to the community. We're proud to work with them and not do things to them.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, late Friday afternoon, just ahead of a long weekend, Alberta Health posted the first-quarter opioid death reports, showing a 61 per cent increase over the same quarter in 2016, without so much as a comment from the minister, much less a thoughtful analysis of what's working and what's not working in our approach. Surely we deserve a higher degree of reporting and transparency. Will the minister commit today to establishing a predictable, monthly reporting to the public and some analysis of how the program is working? If not, why not?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. Mr. Speaker, we had a choice. As soon as the data was available, we chose to release it rather than holding on to that data and waiting through the whole weekend. We thought it was important to be open and public with that data, so we made it available as soon as we possibly could. In terms of availability I was actually at a press conference that afternoon where we were talking about work that we're doing to help with truth and reconciliation as well as with missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I'm very happy to answer questions, and if the member has some that he'd like to pose, I would be happy to continue to enter into this dialogue. We've been doing extensive work, and we want to be open with our data. That's why we made it available as soon as possible.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

2:10

Supportive Living Accommodations for Rural Seniors

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After much anticipation the greatly needed Boyle supportive living facility has now been built, but it is not fully operational because sections of the building were not built to code. Given the relatively small number of residents in the facility and given that the Greater North Foundation believes the facility can safely function at a level 3 to 4 care, as it was intended, in its current state, to the Minister of Seniors and Housing: can the government confirm whether this will happen?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Seniors built this province, and they deserve to retire in dignity. Our government is proud to invest over \$13 million in the Boyle supportive living facility to make life better for seniors in this area. The facility is designed and constructed to the B3 building code. I understand that many housing management bodies want to ensure that these facilities serve seniors as their required level of care increases. We have been working with Municipal Affairs on this to create clarity over the building codes needed for seniors' facilities, and I will have more to say on this in the coming weeks.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that seniors living in partnerships are far too often split up by the requirements for differing levels of care and given that the Boyle supportive living facility will offer both enhanced lodge accommodations and levels 3 to 4 care, which supports the needs of smaller rural communities, to the same minister: will the government use the approach taken in this case for other rural facilities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seniors tell me that they want to age in the community where they have lived most of their lives, close to family and friends. My ministry has been working with Health to create these campuses of care. This is a priority for our government, and that's why we're investing \$1.2 billion in seniors' lodges and affordable housing. For example, in Canmore the Bow River seniors' lodge project will house both lodge and supportive care units to allow seniors to stay in the facility while accessing additional services. I'm looking forward to the completion of the Boyle supportive living facility such as this.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the demand for services for seniors will only keep increasing across rural Alberta, to the same minister: what is the government doing to ensure that seniors, especially those living in rural Alberta, will have access to the services they require?

Ms Sigurdson: Mr. Speaker, having grown up in a small town in northern Alberta, Valleyview, I understand the importance of providing services to seniors in rural communities. That's why we've introduced the seniors' home adaptation repair program, which supports seniors to access up to \$40,000 to make necessary home adaptations. We've also enhanced the special-needs assistance for seniors who have to travel long distances for medical appointments. Through Health our government has invested an additional \$200 million for home-care services. These are a few of the things our government is doing to make life better for seniors in Alberta.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Energy Industry Opposition

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2015 federal election foreign money and third parties were very active. One of the worst offenders was the Tides Foundation. Tides has been funding antipipeline activism for years. Between 2009 and 2015 Tides made over 400 payments to anti oil sands and antipipeline groups. My question is simple. If this NDP government doesn't have a soft spot for Tides, why don't you file a case against them for interference in the 2015 election?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government has made sure that our elections financing rules are some of the strongest in the country, including strong protections against third-party advertising. Any third-party advertiser needs to register with Elections Alberta and needs to disclose their donors, increasing the transparency so that we know where big money is in play in our political system and all Albertans can be aware of that. This is groundbreaking. It was passed last session. I'm quite proud that we now have these rules in place.

Mr. Panda: Given that the Tides Foundation gave \$615,000 to Stand, the Pembina Institute, Environmental Defence, and Équiterre, four groups who helped develop the NDP's climate plan, and given that the national director for Stand, Karen Mahon, is serving as an oil sands adviser to this Premier while at the same time she's working to destroy the Kinder Morgan pipeline, why is the NDP

government denying their involvement with the Tides Foundation when the proof is in the pudding?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, we are incredibly proud of the fact that with our very first bill we took corporate and union money out of campaigns. It was very important and long overdue. It's time to make sure that we ensure that the people of Alberta have as strong a voice as possible, and fortunately we have a majority government and the ability to do that, no matter what the members opposite try to do.

There are, as the member said, very clear guidelines around third-party advertising. We take them very seriously, and we hope that the members opposite abide by the legislation and ensure that corporations don't buy tickets to fundraisers.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, given that the New Venture Fund started a website called Dirty Oil Sands, which, according to the *Financial Post*, was registered to Tzporah Berman, the Premier's other top oil sands adviser, and given that the Dirty Oil Sands campaign conceivably received funds from foreign governments, why is the NDP government working with the anti-Alberta organizations like Tides and radical activists like Karen Mahon and Tzporah Berman, who are clearly on the take from people who would ruin Alberta?

The Speaker: All hon. members, but specifically, hon. member, be cautious about the use of names in the House and any allegations about their character because, remember, they cannot be represented in this House.

The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, this side of the government has taken a different approach because, we know, for far too long the other side wanted to go full John Wayne and pull everybody against each other. Our side is not doing that. We've gathered oil companies together, we've gathered environmental groups and everyday Albertans, and you know what the results were? Two pipelines. We've got the permissions, we're going to keep going, and we're going to get those pipeline shovels in the ground soon.

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

Calgary Cancer Centre

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year's budget allocated \$370 million to a number of health facilities in Alberta. This included the Calgary cancer centre. The Minister of Infrastructure stated that the increased amount of capital investment of \$110 million this year was mainly the result of moving cash flows to reflect the progress of facilities, including the Calgary cancer centre. To the Minister of Infrastructure: with the money allocated in this budget, can you tell us what tangible results we can expect to see this year?

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, our capital plan has been expanded significantly in order to take advantage of lower prices and to keep Albertans working and to catch up on the terrible infrastructure deficit which was left to us by the previous government. By reprofiling money forward into the current year, we can ensure that the construction continues to increase and take place so that we're able to finish and get in the ground new projects that will benefit all Albertans.

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

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in estimates you stated that the Calgary cancer centre is a design/bid/build and given that the design will be done when the tender is awarded, to the minister: can you tell us if the Calgary cancer centre has been tendered?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I will get that information as to when the project will be tendered and provide it to him directly.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that in estimates the Minister of Infrastructure expressed his concerns that the previous government was designing the Grande Prairie hospital to a political announcement and didn't take into account the actual needs, to the minister: as you have announced that the Calgary cancer centre is to be built but don't yet have a design, wouldn't you say that you are now designing the Calgary cancer centre to your political announcement?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the Minister of Infrastructure for giving me the opportunity to answer this question. For more than 10 years the people of Calgary waited, announcement after announcement after announcement, on that Conservative government. Guess what? Lots of evidence was gathered. The design/build will be completed by the end of the summer, and we expect construction to start later this year as well. It's about time. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.
The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

2:20 Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sexual exploitation and trafficking is growing, and it is full of complexities. The city of Calgary estimates that there are 3,000 women and girls experiencing sexual exploitation in Calgary alone. Barriers to leaving include a lack of money or food, addictions and mental health issues, or concerns about children and family members. One of the main policy areas of Status of Women is preventing and addressing gender-based violence. To the Minister of Status of Women: what are you doing for supports to eliminate sexual exploitation?

Ms McLean: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, we must stop trafficking before it starts and provide needed supports so that the victims can heal and rebuild their lives. That's why we're working in partnership with Community and Social Services as well as the Department of Justice to combat human trafficking, sexual violence, and family violence. Our government provides funding to community agencies directly addressing the needs of human trafficking victims, including the Strathcona Shelter Society, the Centre to End all Sexual Exploitation, and the Action Coalition on Human Trafficking, which is a partnership of government, community partners, and survivors.

Mrs. Aheer: Well, hopefully, that funding will fund SAS as well.

Given that courageous victims are taking early steps to exit sexual exploitation and sex trafficking – they need wraparound supports like those provided by Servants Anonymous Society – and given that these supports like housing, mental health, addictions care, child care, and employment training cross many different government ministries and given that Community and Social Services was just separated from the Ministry of Children's Services, to the Minister of Community and Social Services: what is your government doing to make sure that all of these separate services are available specifically to those exiting sexual exploitation?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the important question. I met with the Servants Anonymous Society of Calgary this morning and had an opportunity to learn about the important work they do. We have family and community support program grants, and we will work with an organization like Servants Anonymous and other organizations across the province to make sure that survivors have the supports they need. In addition to that, we have also increased FCSS funding, that goes to prevention programs, and also added ...

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

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. Given that the problem isn't going away and more and more women and girls are at risk every day and given that most women become involved in sexual exploitation at the average age of 12 and given that youth are at risk and are much more likely to be sexually exploited, to the Minister of Children's Services: how is your ministry responding to this increasing problem, and what are you going to do to ensure that Alberta's at-risk youth are not falling into the hands of predators?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again, Member, for the question. As she stated, the new research suggests that it starts fairly early on, and I guess it's incumbent on us as government that we must stop trafficking before it begins. My colleague from Status of Women has outlined certain programs that we fund. In addition to that, Justice is also participating in the implementation of a federal action plan on human trafficking through work on the federal-provincial-territorial working group on human trafficking. As I said earlier, we will be there for ...

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Whirling Disease in Alberta Fish

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The outbreak of whirling disease on Alberta fish farms has led to them being quarantined since the fall of 2016. Very little communication has been provided to some in the industry. One quarantined fish farm has received no written confirmation of test results or any other documents. At the time of inspection he asked for copies of the documents and was told: no, you don't get a copy. Is this normal practice, that affected farms do not get copies of documents or written confirmation of test results?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to report that our government is taking swift action to protect our fish population from whirling disease. The day after whirling disease was detected in Banff national park, we signed a ministerial order outlining the three-point action plan to educate Albertans, detect and contain the disease. In order to expedite the communication with stakeholders, we formed a whirling disease committee. A representative from the aquaculture industry sits on that committee. This allows us to communicate quickly with stakeholders and get their input on how to contain this disease.

Mr. Orr: The fish farm industry is struggling to manage this outbreak. I would hope that the government would consult and work with them. Instead, operators are saying that they are being ignored and that the government is only focused on public fish farms instead of private commercial fish farms. It appears that the government is going into competition with the commercial fish industry. Will the government save the future of fish farms, both public and private, by working with them, or will your competition just be forced out of business?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have sent information packages to registered fish farm operators, and staff have met with those operators. We will continue working for fish farm operators as we continue to combat whirling disease.

Mr. Orr: The ministry has written a letter to some quarantined trout farms offering them a paltry \$25,000, and no explanation of how this figure was arrived at has been provided. Given that in the livestock industries quarantined and slaughtered animals are compensated at fair market value and since these are the livelihoods of families and communities – if they're not compensated at fair market value, a family may not have food on their table – how was this figure calculated, is it negotiable, and is it meant to be fair market value or just a silencer?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you. We did offer ex gratia payments to certain operators who were placed under quarantine. Staff are working with operators to help them apply for those payments. I would encourage the hon. member, if there's a specific constituent, to contact the Minister of Environment and Parks' office. There may be more questions we can help them with. But I need to reiterate that whirling disease is seriously impacting Alberta's world-famous fishery. The CFIA now requires a permit when transferring fish and fish farm equipment from an infected area. For more information I would suggest you contact the Environment and Parks website.

Tax Policies

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, recently the Finance minister trumpeted how the indexed exemption amounts on Alberta's income taxes were yet another example of how this government is making life better for Albertans. You know, it sounds wonderful, but the minister is taking credit for something he had nothing to do with. It kind of reminds me of the ranchers I used to do work for who said how great their calves looked until I pointed out that the calves all looked like the neighbour's bull. But I digress. To the minister: are you claiming that indexing the exemption amount to inflation is something you came up with, or are you simply taking credit for something that was done by the previous government?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We carried on something that was done by the previous government, but we carried it on because we know that we don't want to see incomes further eroded. It's important. We expanded it. We had the choice not to expand it to the lower income people, but we did, and we'll continue to do that.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that a two-income family with two children and a household income of \$105,000 will pay \$100 less in income tax thanks to this measure that the minister had nothing to do with and given that the same family will pay roughly \$400 more in carbon taxes, that this minister had everything to do with, and given that the minister is only telling Albertans half the story, the \$100 part and not the \$400 part, to the minister: when can we expect your department to issue a press release to correct the error you've made?

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, I won't be issuing a press release on Friday afternoon or any other time, I can tell you, because there is no need to introduce a press release. You know, we are making life more affordable for Alberta families. We are cutting school fees. We are freezing tuition. We are doing things like capping electricity rates. That side made life more expensive. We're making it cheaper for Albertans.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that this government brags about a \$7.5 billion tax advantage over the next lowest taxed jurisdiction in Canada and that this advantage will grow to \$8.7 billion this year – but, of course, they had nothing to do with that either – and given that this advantage was \$11 billion when this government took office, to the Finance minister: is this taxation advantage that you inherited and have already eroded by one-third something that you try to maintain, or is this just the room that you have to play with before Alberta is no longer the lowest taxed jurisdiction in the country?

2:30

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, I know we've all been here for a while, two years, but you know, there's been a recession in this province for two years. Has that side not been aware that it's been the toughest recession? We've contracted 3.5 per cent of our GDP in 2015-16. We didn't cause it. We're fixing it. We're bringing diversification into this province. We've got the backs of Albertans, and we're investing across this province. That'll get us back.

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

Digital Media and Postproduction Grant Programs

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Calgary-Currie has hundreds of people whose livelihood is in the cultural sector, and I know that culture is an economic driver in our province. To the Minister of Culture and Tourism: what is this government doing to help Albertans looking for work in the post-production, digital animation, visual effects, and interactive digital media sectors?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of culture.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I'm very happy to share with you that two new pilot grant programs, worth \$3 million, will be put in to make it easier for Albertans looking to work in these sectors. A \$1.5 million interactive digital media grant will cover up to 35 per cent of labour

costs for new hires, and a \$1.5 million postproduction, digital animation, and visual effects grant will cover up to 18 per cent of eligible labour expenses. These grants were designed with input from industry stakeholders, who are very excited to see our government's involvement and support of the industry.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is great news. Can the Minister of Culture and Tourism inform the House who will ultimately benefit from these grants?

The Speaker: Point of order is noted.

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These grants will help Alberta's postproduction and digital media companies grow and create jobs, diversify our economy, and make life better for Albertans, and they are expected to benefit Albertans looking to get into the cultural industry, many of them being recent graduates. The grants will benefit any small to medium-sized businesses by helping to offset the costs of hiring new labour in the postproduction, visual effects, digital animation, and interactive media sectors. Eligible companies can apply for grant funding using albertamediafund.ca.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the conservatives across the way have no plans for this sector and given that their reckless cuts across this government would only make the lives of Albertans worse in this tough economy, can the Minister of Culture and Tourism explain how this will protect and diversify our economy, create more jobs, and make life better for Albertans?

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order, please.

Miranda: The interactive digital media and postproduction grants offer much-needed stimulus and support for the cultural industry, Mr. Speaker. We're going to help attract more film and television, digital media products, games, and animation production here to our province. It will also help individuals and companies develop technical expertise that is very much needed. Overall, these grants will help Alberta's postproduction and digital media companies grow, create jobs, and make life better for Albertans.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Midwifery Services

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year the Wildrose called on the NDP government to remove the cap on midwife funding. We explained the importance of giving women choice instead of instituting artificial funding caps. Small midwifery clinics in locations across our province are still worried that this health service is not being properly funded. To the Minister of Health: will you remove the cap for midwife funding?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I'd like to remind everyone that this government values

Alberta midwives and their important role in the health and well-being of mothers and their babies, and even in this tough economy we've supported midwives with a large commitment to expand funding for access to midwifery services. By working with the Alberta Association of Midwives, I'm pleased to report that the funding we've put in place means almost 600 more midwife-attended births this fiscal year alone, and that number is going to continue to go up over the next two years.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, given that this government likes to brag about their 68 per cent increase to midwife funding and while this stat may sound all great and good, it only increases the number of midwife births by 3 per cent, which doesn't even address the waiting list, and considering that this is only a fraction of the 50,000 to 55,000 births each year, when is the Minister of Status of Women going to stop the smoke and mirrors and stand up for women's choice? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Payne: Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely supports women's choice in all aspects of their reproduction. Frankly, the member opposite might do well to compare the midwives' agreement here in Alberta with some of the other jurisdictions across this country. We have some of the most generous policies available for midwives and are continuing to work in partnership with the Alberta Association of Midwives to expand access to this very important service for Alberta women. Meanwhile the opposition rattles on about removing the midwifery budget while at the same time talking about cutting billions from our health care system.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, given that a midwife birth can offer substantial cost savings to the entire health care system and given that this government is currently running a \$10.3 billion deficit, will the minister take the advice of the Wildrose Official Opposition, save taxpayers' money, improve choice for women, and immediately remove the cap on midwifery services?

Ms Payne: Mr. Speaker, we absolutely value the work of midwives and the benefit that they provide for mothers and their babies. In fact, I was lucky enough to have midwives attend both of my births. You know, frankly, we do know that midwifery has the possibility of helping to save dollars in the system, often with reduced medical intervention through the course of both pregnancy as well as during the birth itself. That said, our government is pleased to be working in co-operation with the Alberta Association of Midwives to expand further access to midwifery care for Alberta women, unlike the opposition.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act (continued)

Mr. Gottfried: Mr. Speaker, Bill 17 includes some positive change for Albertans. We can all support job-protected leave for victims of domestic violence or for parents who need to care for critically ill or injured children. However, this government exploits the emotional elements of the bill to shield themselves from valid criticism while refusing to admit that many . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Please.

Mr. Gottfried: . . . of the sections clearly pander the bill to special-interest groups. To the Minister of Labour: were you afraid that if you

introduced the labour code provisions separately from employment standards, you wouldn't be able to conveniently hide behind vulnerable Albertans when debating this bill? [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. [interjection] Order. Calgary-Hays.
The Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a disgrace to hear the Member for Calgary-Hays misname Amanda Jensen. For over 30 years that party didn't do anything, and she fell through the cracks because although they held consultations, they did not make any changes that would help everyday Albertans. They had consultations. They knew there were problems. Amanda Jensen was let go because of laws that that government allowed to stand. [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet down, folks.

Mr. Gotfried: So you are hiding behind vulnerable Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, given this government has once caved to union pressure and introduced an antidemocratic hybrid card check system for union certification and given that the government's own press release states that Bill 17 will "simplify union certification" and given that the Alberta Federation of Labour was in full force on social media yesterday singing the praises of this bill and attacking its critics, again to the minister. You stated publicly that protecting the secret ballot process for union certification was of paramount concern for employers. Why did you ignore them in favour of your union comrades? [interjection]

The Speaker: Hon. Member for St. Albert.

Ms Renaud: Sorry.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have kept the secret ballot vote as part of our labour relations system. It's ironic to see the member opposite stand up and talk about intimidation when his party's leader was accused of intimidating voters during the leadership race. His own leader was forced to return thousands of dollars of donations because the supporters gave more than the law allowed when he was an MP. On this side of the House we are going to keep standing up for Alberta families. We're going to stand up for Albertans like Amanda Jensen. The opposition wants to sit on their hands and let these Albertans slip through the cracks. We will not let that happen. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Government House Leader, remind the caucus again of that earlier rule I've advised. When I stand, you be quiet, okay?

Mr. Mason: Yes. I'll do that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental.

2:40

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No consultation and hiding behind Albertans: that's the way it's going to be.

Given how obvious it is that the government was afraid of losing the narrative on Bill 17 before it was even introduced given the ad campaign they rolled out yesterday and given that this government has a long history of wasting taxpayer dollars on propaganda in support of pending legislation to make themselves feel good or convince themselves that Albertans support their misguided policies, again to the minister: what is the total cost of the ad campaign

launched in support of Bill 17? Please share this information with Albertans.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Making sure that Alberta has fair and family-friendly workplace legislation is a priority of this government. Making sure that people can take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones when someone is sick is a priority as is making sure that Albertans know about these important changes so that they will be able to be more protected when they are sick. Today I spoke with two doctors who every day in their practice talk to people who are afraid to call in sick because they might lose their jobs. Making sure that Albertans know about this through a small ad campaign is a priority for us.

The Speaker: Hon. members, unanimous consent to introduce some guests who have arrived?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests (continued)

The Speaker: The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the House some friends of the Speaker's and mine from Medicine Hat. Now, everybody knows that Medicine Hat has the best weather. They know we have great people. But more people need to know that we have one of the best chambers of commerce in all of Canada. I would like to take a few minutes and introduce five of the people, volunteers and staff, that make this happen. As I call your name, if you could please rise. I'd like to introduce the president of the Medicine Hat chamber of commerce, Aaron Fleming. Next, I'd like to introduce our second vice-president, Sarah MacKenzie. Then I'd like to introduce the treasurer, Tracy Noullet; our executive director, Lisa Kowalchuk; and her executive assistant, Katalin Lang. If everyone would please share in the normal warm reception for our guests. Thank you for coming.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements (continued)

The Speaker: Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ramadan

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to have the opportunity to rise and wish Ramadan Mubarak to all and especially those of my constituents and those Albertans of the Muslim faith. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During this month adult Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset and are also expected to abstain from other activities which keep their hearts and minds tied to earthly things. It is a time of renewed devotion to the spiritual practice of Islam and is meant to not only cleanse the body and spirit but also increase empathy for others who may be suffering from hunger. I would especially like to recognize the devotion and discipline of those members of the Muslim faith who observe Ramadan in a northern climate like ours. With long hours of daylight may come long hours of fasting, and those of us who are not Muslim should recognize and support our friends and neighbours.

One of the reasons that Ramadan is held to be sacred is that the Quran, Islam's holy book, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, during this month. Observing Ramadan is one of the core tenets of Islam and is observed widely amongst all Muslims. Muslims believe in the oneness of God, the importance of regular prayer, the giving of charity to the poor, and the importance of pilgrimage.

The Muslim community has been a part of Alberta for many years. The oldest mosque in Canada, the Al-Rashid mosque, was built in Edmonton and officially opened in 1938. Over the years Muslim Albertans have made many contributions to this province, not least during the fire in Fort McMurray last year, when Muslim charitable organizations contributed generously. It is a reminder that all of us share a responsibility for our neighbours of all faiths, cultures, and ethnicities.

As Muslims take this time to renew their faith and devotion, may we all take this time to consider our own faith and renew our pledge to build a strong, inclusive, and caring society.

Once again Ramadan Mubarak to all. Assalamu Alaikum. Peace be with you.

Thank you.

Municipal Minimum Property Tax

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, in *Hamlet* Polonius offers this advice to Laertes.

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Now, this NDP government appears to be following Polonius's advice. Higher taxes, runaway spending, massive deficits, ballooning debts: these are all, certainly, them being true to their NDP selves.

But on one issue the NDP supports transferring wealth from the poor to the rich. Over 70 Alberta municipalities apply minimum tax, which allows municipalities to levy a property tax bill that in some cases is higher than the assessed value of the property. Poor people pay more, and rich people get a tax break. Now, the first two NDP Municipal Affairs ministers could have changed this reverse Robin Hood policy, but they didn't. What do NDP stalwarts have to say about this? Well, the late Jack Layton in his book *Homelessness: How to End the National Crisis* describes how shifting property taxes from higher to lower income Canadians, as minimum tax does, makes homelessness worse. A recent survey by the Broadbent Institute showed that 82 per cent of respondents believe that the gap between the rich and the poor in Canada is growing. Minimum tax widens that gap.

Now, recently the Premier's former chief of staff advised the NDP to challenge what he ironically called reverse Robin Hood policies that transfer wealth from ordinary people to the rich. It's strange, Mr. Speaker, because when it comes to things this government is eager to change, minimum tax meets all the criteria. It was brought in by the previous government – yes, those evil PCs they love to blame for everything – and Alberta is the only province that allows minimum tax. Normally this government rushes to bring us in line with the other provinces, but on minimum tax this government has ignored its own party sages as well as Polonius's counsel.

But perhaps we shouldn't be surprised because earlier in the same speech Polonius recommends, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be," and we all know how well the NDP has followed that. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Select Special Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner Search Committee it is my honour to table our report, which recommends the appointment of Marianne Ryan as the next Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner for the province of Alberta. This will be for a five-year term commencing July 1, 2017.

Now that our committee's mandate is complete, I'd like to quickly thank all of my committee colleagues for their co-operation and dedication throughout the search process and to acknowledge the valuable and important support provided to the committee by the staff from executive search and the Legislative Assembly Office.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 207

Regulatory Burden Reduction Act

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I rise and beg leave to introduce Bill 207, Regulatory Burden Reduction Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is very short and was deliberately made so in order to illustrate brevity and simplicity in creating regulations. I will get right to the point of the bill. It is simple. For every regulation created or amended that adds a burden to business, one or more regulations need to be eliminated.

In this depressed economic environment business owners want to spend their time and money working to create jobs, not filling out red tape and forms. Red tape manifested throughout government regulations takes business owners away from doing what they do best. Instead, they have to spend time on government administration and reporting.

In Canada regulatory compliance costs business owners over \$30 billion a year. Outdated, redundant, or excessive regulations hobble businesses and are silent eliminators of jobs. Regulatory compliance costs are disproportionately borne by small businesses. Small and medium-sized firms constitute the largest segment of the Canadian economy and consistently account for the lion's share of new job creation.

I look forward to a productive debate on Bill 207 and urge the Assembly to help eliminate barriers.

2:50

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

[Motion carried; Bill 207 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As chair of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices and in accordance with section 20(2) of the Auditor General Act I'm pleased to table five copies of the following report: Better Healthcare for Albertans, A Report by the Office of the Auditor General of Alberta, May 2017. Copies of this report will be provided to all members.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Hawkwood.

Connolly: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and table this article from February 15, 2005, the same year, actually, that

the PCs announced the Calgary cancer centre, where the title is Gays Can Marry – But Not Each Other. Calgary MP Jason Kenney says discrimination is okay. Then it goes on to cite that Libby Davies and Svend Robinson, the first two openly gay MPs, are reasons why gays shouldn't be able to marry.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to table three reports. I have the requisite number of copies for that. The first one is the '15-16 annual report for Alberta's Promise.

The second is the Social Care Facilities Review Committee reports for '14-15 and '15-16.

I have the requisite number of copies for all three of them. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, did you have a tabling today?

Dr. Swann: Oh, yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have several tablings today. The first is an article by Chris Nelson from the *Calgary Herald* called: politicians may run, but they can't hide. It's about the opioid crisis.

The second is based on my questions around the recent Métis health burdens and the delays and late reporting on statistics for their health concerns.

The final is from former MLA Harry Chase, who comments on the clear-cut logging in the Kananaskis area and his concerns as a former watchdog and campground manager and the devastation he's witnessed in the past.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two items for tabling today. I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of a couple of items that I quoted from in my member's statement. The first, an op-ed opinion piece by Mr. Tom Parkin, Postmedia Network, entitled The Next NDP Leader Needs Western Support – Here's How to Earn It.

The second item, Mr. Speaker, is five copies of a summary entitled Progress Summit 2017: Progress in the Age of Trump, a Polling Presentation for the Broadbent Institute.

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

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a tabling as well. This is the Alberta NDP Party platform for 1963. This is one that I believe that they should actually read, especially when it comes to the fact that they're phasing out coal.

Thank you very much. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Hon. members, pursuant to section 6 of the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act the chair is pleased to table with the Assembly and, by doing so, make public the interim report of the 2016-17 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission. I would ask that the pages provide each member with a copy of the report.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon. Mr. Mason, Minister of Infrastructure and Minister of Transportation, responses to questions raised by Mr. Taylor, the

hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright; Mr. Drysdale, the hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti; and Mr. Orr, the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka, the April 12, 2017, Ministry of Infrastructure 2017-18 main estimates debate.

The Speaker: I believe we have two points of order.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, as much as I dislike puffballs and feel they're a monumental waste of the House's time, I will withdraw that point of order for today. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Anticipation

Questions on Large Policy Matters

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. During question period today the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek asked a number of questions with respect to a bill that is currently on the Order Paper. I let the first one go by, but the first supplemental clearly had to do with policy and items that were contained within the bill itself and such. I believe that those questions were out of order.

The Speaker: The member that would like to speak to this point of order?

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek we will remind him to be more careful in the future and to not be offside with this particular rule. We thank the Government House Leader for this valuable reminder.

The Speaker: Thank you very much.

[Ms Sweet in the chair]

Orders of the Day

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 17

Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act

The Acting Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased to kick off debate about the merits of Bill 17, the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act.

Workplaces legislation touches the lives of every Albertan. Nearly everyone in this province works to make a living or depends on someone who does. Unfortunately for Albertans, the rules that govern our workplaces haven't been updated since 1988. That's nearly three decades with no major changes, just some minor tweaking every now and then. Think about how much our workplaces and our world have changed over the past 30 years, Madam Speaker. Not only have Alberta's workplace laws lagged behind the times; they've lagged behind the rest of Canada as well, and Albertans deserve better than this. Albertans deserve fair and family-friendly workplace laws that support a strong economy and ensure they can take care of themselves and their families. Albertans need modern, balanced workplace legislation that protects the rights of hard-working Albertans and helps businesses to stay competitive.

Madam Speaker, Bill 17, the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, is the legislation that Albertans deserve and need. If passed, this bill would make a number of important updates to our

workplace legislation that would make life better for Albertans and protect those who rely on the basic rights and protections enshrined in law. The bill does this by addressing issues that are keys to how Albertans work today, including family-friendly leaves, youth employment, modernized workplace standards, administrative penalties, labour relations, and application to farms and ranches. I'd like to touch on each of these sections of the bill in turn.

The first is family-friendly leaves. Bill 17 enhances existing job-protected leaves and introduces new categories of leave so that Albertans can take care of their family responsibilities without fear of losing their jobs. Madam Speaker, in consulting with Albertans, we posted comparisons between Alberta's leaves that we currently have and other jurisdictions'. Alberta had four job-protected leaves: maternity, paternity, reservist, and an eight-week compassionate care. Most of our other provinces had somewhere between 10 and 14 job-protected leaves, so there was a gap identified. In the survey results that we received from Albertans, a majority of Albertans, including employers, supported matching our federally supported employment insurance leaves, that Canadians pay into and Albertans pay into. That is a key part of what I have brought forward and introduced with this package. To match the federal employment insurance system, we are reducing the eligibility requirements for maternity leave and, again, making sure that the lengths of our leaves in all cases line up with employment insurance.

3:00

We are introducing new leaves as well, Madam Speaker, including a leave that supports victims of domestic violence so that they can seek help without worrying about losing their job. Bill 17 also provides leaves for those struggling with short-term illness, mourning the loss of a loved one, or for someone who might need to care for their critically ill child, and it gives new Canadians attending a citizenship ceremony an unpaid half day off to recognize this important milestone in their life. We can all empathize with someone who is in each of these positions, and that's why we must enshrine these protections and allow Albertans to tend to their personal responsibilities without being worried about losing their jobs.

The second area of updates has to do with our youth employment. Madam Speaker, as it stands, Alberta's workplace rules do not align with our international labour obligations such as the International Labour Organization's convention 138 on youth employment, which Canada has agreed to ratify and which comes into effect in just a short while.

To line up with the ILO obligations and, more importantly, to protect young Albertans, Bill 17 makes several changes. First, the minimum age for light work would be set at 13, with 12-year-olds only able to work in artistic endeavours through a permit process. Youth aged 15 and under will be required to choose work from an allowable light work list. The hours youth work and the duties they're permitted to perform will be restricted. My department will consult with stakeholders to develop these lists of light work and hazardous work, and these sections to do with youth work will be proclaimed once that work is completed. All of these changes will help ensure that young Albertans have the proper protections from exploitation and for their safety.

I would like to note, Madam Speaker, that the changes I'm describing speak specifically to true employment relationships and not to children helping with chores, doing casual babysitting, or participating in 4-H. The government has no interest in disrupting these traditional and beneficial roles for young Albertans, but we do think it's important that Alberta follow the conventions that the ILO has recommended and that we make sure we are putting in laws that protect our young people.

The next area I'll discuss is simplifying and modernizing workplace standards. This is a broad subject that covers many aspects of Albertans' daily experiences on the job, and it makes up a large part of Bill 17. In keeping with other Canadian jurisdictions, we are proposing that rates of banked overtime and pay be no less than time and a half, something that other Canadians have had for quite some time. The bill would update the rules around hours of work, including rest periods and compressed work weeks. In the case of Alberta, Madam Speaker, we had a rule that allowed a 30-minute rest break if you worked more than five hours, and we're adjusting that to match other jurisdictions where you receive a 30-minute rest break for every five hours so that someone who works that 12-hour shift would have an adequate rest break.

Likewise, vacation rules and holiday pay would be updated and better clarified under the bill. We're also proposing that employers no longer be allowed to pay an employee with a disability less than minimum wage and that wage deduction rules be clarified so that employees are not held responsible in dine-and-dash or gas-and-dash situations.

We are also introducing minimum notice periods for termination by an employer, making sure that the employees would be better protected and that there is some sense and clarity in how those termination notices operate. Under Bill 17 employees would be provided with a minimum notice for their termination based on how long they have held their position, and if an employee provides less notice than required, employers would have the option to pay wages only for the notice that has been given.

I look forward to discussing the merits of these changes and all of the changes that Alberta employees and employers have asked for as we work through the bill in detail.

The fourth area that Bill 17 deals with is administrative penalties. After all, delinquent employers have no motivation to follow the proposed new rules if they don't have any teeth to them. While most Alberta employers treat employees with fairness and respect, during consultations we heard too many stories of others who skirted the rules and neglected their duties.

To ensure that employers follow the proposed guidelines, one of the critical provisions of this legislation calls for the creation of an administrative penalty system. Employers who contravene the law would face reasonable and enforceable penalties, and those who do so repeatedly would face further disciplinary action. In this way, Bill 17 would set up a much stronger system to ensure that Alberta workers enjoy the protections and rights they deserve. Madam Speaker, I have to tell you that when I was at the round-table sessions and when we looked at the survey submissions from our stakeholders, having an administrative penalty system that held employers to account and made sure we were enforcing our legislation was something that everyone seemed to agree on. This was a point of common ground between our stakeholders.

Bill 17 also ensures that Alberta has a fair and balanced labour relations system that respects the collective bargaining rights of both employees and employers. For example, if this legislation passes, it would implement first contract arbitration when an agreement between parties has not been reached after 90 days. This helps limit the number of strikes, that can harm long-term relationships between parties. Within our first contract solution, Madam Speaker, we have tried to make sure that it is the responsibility of the two parties to come to an agreement, giving the Labour Relations Board tools to help them reach that agreement by having them go back to mediation or adjust in other ways. Those tools will be very important because we believe the best settlements are those that are reached between the two parties, so our legislation is designed to help facilitate just that.

We've also introduced a hybrid system for certification, where based on verified membership cards from more than 65 per cent of employees, a union can be certified. If 40 to 65 per cent of eligible employees sign cards, a supervised vote would be conducted, and the Labour Relations Board still retains the ability to hold a vote where it believes appropriate, such as when there might be conflicting evidence of support. Our proposed system will help avoid the intimidation that can occur on both sides of a negotiation between that first and second vote. These changes balance the interests of employers and employees and ensure businesses are on a level and competitive playing field and that they will contribute to a strong economy.

Finally, the last aspect of Bill 17 I'll discuss is how the changes I've described apply to Alberta's agricultural community. The technical working groups gathered extensive input from Albertans. With that feedback we have been able to strike the right balance in ensuring that waged, nonfamily workers on farms and ranches have the same rights as their peers in other sectors while also respecting the unique qualities of farms and ranches in Alberta. Exemptions for family members for both new and existing employment standards remain in place. New protections include tools to end strikes during critical times like harvest and adjustments to balance work and rest requirements. All of these are to ensure that Alberta's proud agricultural traditions can continue and thrive.

Madam Speaker, we took with great seriousness the suggestions made by our technical working groups, and I would once again like to thank those who participated and submitted their thoughts both through the technical working group process and through the consultation that we hosted afterwards.

Madam Speaker, as you can see, this government has been working hard to make life better for Albertans. Through this badly needed update to our province's workplace legislation, Albertans would have family-friendly workplaces that empower them to take care of their personal responsibilities. We heard from employers and employees alike that these proposed changes would help protect vulnerable Albertans and support a strong, competitive economy. These sensible, balanced changes have been a long time coming. After nearly three decades of inaction, Albertans deserve safe, up-to-date workplace legislation, and that's why I'm very proud to be moving forward with Bill 17, the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act. I look forward to debating it further with my colleagues.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Are there any other members wishing to speak? The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

3:10

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 17. First of all, I'd like to say that there are some great parts to this bill, and we all acknowledge that and have asked to actually have those parts separated out of the bill so that they could be passed through the House before, you know, the end of this week even. We could have had it done today or first thing Monday as well. There are some great things about it.

But, again, it's 124 pages long. We've heard that people are looking for consultation. The business community, chambers of commerce, and just regular, concerned Albertans would like to have their say in something so fundamental as this 124-page bill. Therefore, I will be presenting an amendment. If I can get the pages to pass it out, I'll wait until you have a copy of it.

The Acting Speaker: Please go ahead.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I move that the motion for second reading of Bill 17, Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, be amended by deleting all of the words after "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 17, Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Families and Communities in accordance with Standing Order 74.2.

Now, the reason for this amendment, Madam Speaker, is that this will provide time for proper consultation with affected parties, concerned businesses, chambers of commerce, and concerned Albertans. It will also give the government time to consider splitting this bill into two parts, as we suggested, as was suggested by the Leader of the Official Opposition as well as the House leader of the third party. As well, it would give members of the government time to reflect on whether or not they should actually be speaking to this bill and voting on the stages of this bill or on amendments to it based on recent rulings on the Member for Calgary-Hays and also the fact that during the debates on Bill 12 17 per cent of the Official Opposition had to recuse itself from discussion or voting on Bill 12 because they had interests, although indirect, in the housing industry.

Now, I'd just like to point out a few things for the members opposite to reflect on. Affiliated union members contribute \$16.04 per year to the Alberta Federation of Labour. The Alberta Federation of Labour was fined \$50,000 for robodialing during the 2012 election, and I can guarantee you it wasn't for the Wildrose Party. Major contributions to the NDP leadership campaign were from union organizations: our Premier, \$42,050 from union donations; the Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, over 50 per cent from union support, a total of \$5,443; the Member for Edmonton-Calder, 60 per cent of the donations came from unions, to a total of \$21,250.

Madam Speaker, I would just like the members opposite to take this into consideration, reflect on what's happened in this House in the very recent past, in this spring session, and really, really consider whether they should actually speak to this bill, vote on it, or recuse themselves, which would be the proper thing to do.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak to REF1? The hon. Minister of Labour and democratic renewal.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I stand to say that I will not be supporting this amendment. Making sure that we have fair and family-friendly workplaces in this province is of high priority. Albertans have been done a disservice by being left with workplace legislation that had not been kept up to date, that did not give them the rights that other Canadians have enjoyed. We have Albertans who are paying into the employment insurance system and then are not able to access the leaves that they pay into, that all Canadians agree are an important safety net. We want to care for our neighbours. We want to make sure people can care for their family's responsibilities. We have legislation that is not in line with Supreme Court rulings. Making sure that we have legislation that is not at risk of being challenged should be a priority for any government. Keeping legislation up to date is a priority.

For these reasons I will not be supporting the member's motion, and I must say that I'm very proud that on this side of the House I work with a caucus filled with teachers and electricians, people who worked in grocery stores, people who worked in hospitals, people who worked in good, hard-working jobs. It's because we have caucus members with such a wide variety of experience that we represent Alberta, and it's because of caucus members like that that

we've been able to bring forward groundbreaking legislation that better reflects Alberta.

I'm quite proud of my caucus, Madam Speaker, and I will not be supporting this amendment.

The Acting Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak to the referral REF1? Oh, sorry; 29(2)(a) first.

Seeing none, I will recognize the hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I definitely agree that the amendment to send this to committee is the right thing to do. I was hoping that the government across the aisle here would have realized how important consultation is by now. With the fiasco that was created by Bill 6 due to lack of consultations, I was hoping they wouldn't make the same mistake twice, but it doesn't appear that that's the case. Thirty days is just simply not enough time to consult on such an extensive bill as this, and even now, since yesterday, companies of all stripes are issuing releases saying that there needs to be some consultation on this. The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada just recently said: we also note our deep concerns with the very compressed consultation period that was undertaken prior to the introduction of this bill. They are among the many who are concerned that not enough consultation has been done.

I have a feeling that even the NDP themselves were not ready with this bill as they wanted to put a constituency week into the schedule that wasn't in the schedule. They needed a break in order to get this ready. They filibustered their own bills all last week in order to create time to dream this thing up in a hurry. They weren't ready then, they're not ready for debate now, and I can assure you that if they weren't ready, Albertans aren't ready because they haven't even had time to look at it.

Not only that, but it seems now that they want to get rid of the family-friendly Legislature idea by invoking night sittings all of a sudden. They want to introduce a week off, then they want night-friendly sittings so that they can ram this bill through in the night as fast as possible, and then also they're going to extend the House, so here we are at the very end of session sticking this thing through in a hurry. I find it interesting, actually, that the House staff, NDP caucus staff, opposition staff will actually have to work contrary to the contents of this bill in order to pass this very legislation. It makes no sense. We'll be working late into the night, more than 12-hour days, overtime questionable. I guess that doesn't even count for MLAs.

This bill needs to be sent to committee. That's the reality of it. There are parts of this bill that we actually would like to pass very quickly if the NDP would be willing to separate it into two different parts, which is another reason that it should go to committee, but it doesn't seem they want to pass it that way. They would rather sneak labour in on top of something else, and it's negatively going to affect the businesses of Alberta. It's 124 pages long. They've sent bills that are only three or four pages long to committee for further study, but here we have 124 pages. It has to be rushed through, not willing to let committee look at it.

3:20

It's interesting that, in fact, the government approached us for our support to send their time zone bill to committee for further study, yet this bill, that would affect all aspects of all working people and as well employers, needs to be passed in a matter of a couple of weeks with virtually no consultation. We're willing to pass parts of it now, but that would require the NDP to actually play nice and split the bill apart as it should have been presented.

Not only are they trying to rush this bill through without consultations, but they give opposition parties just a matter of days to consult with their constituents and stakeholders. Actually, it isn't even days. We've had 24 hours to consult with stakeholders and constituents . . . [interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Hon. members. Sorry, Member. I recognize you're all interested in the material in front of you. If you could all please be respectful to the members as they're speaking and stop moving around the House and/or hanging over each other's desks, that would be much appreciated, please.

Member, please continue.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. If the NDP were back in the opposition role, where they used to be and might soon be, they would be screaming mad at this kind of a procedural process. They seem to have taken on the mantle of being an oppressive, unfair government who doesn't care for anything except their own agenda, and it is disappointing. Any single MLA across the aisle who ever once said that they wanted to make this House a better place: well, we have all failed in that, apparently.

Make this House a better place. Allow us to send this to committee, properly consult with stakeholders. Allow us to talk to our constituents and find out how they actually want us to vote. That's our job, and if this bill is rushed through in the night, we are prevented from doing our jobs, and it's not how we should function in this House or in our province. They are not allowing our elected officials to be good elected officials when we have this kind of process.

I just say that to do this properly, we need more than a few hours, more than a week. We need time to consult on this massive document that drastically alters the landscape of our labour in Alberta. If the members opposite believe that a week is long enough, then they really don't know what it means to consult with constituents or stakeholders. Again, the bill needs to be sent to committee. It needs more consultation. Please vote to send it to committee. Give me something to believe in, that there is good in this House still. If we don't learn from our mistakes, I don't know where we're going to end up because we will be creating the same kind of public outcry that we had on Bill 6.

There has been no real consultation in this, just a sham approach to it. The bill has been written in a rush, without due deliberation or stakeholder review at all except for some union bosses. To present it at the very end of session, to extend this session, to squeeze it in so that it runs through the night to minimize news coverage, to hope it's over before Albertans can speak up: you haven't got Albertans' backs. You're trying to do it behind their backs. Send it to committee and support democracy.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to – oh, 29(2)(a). My apologies.

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to the referral? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this amendment to Bill 17, the so-called Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act. This is a thoughtful amendment, particularly in light of the history that we've seen carry on in this House. As I begin, I can't help but comment on the Labour minister's remarks when she took the floor talking about electricians in her caucus. I know she's got at least one caucus member

that's on the record for not being fond of electricians. I'm sure that the minister will deal with that.

It is important that the labour bill is respectful to people in every line of work because all work is valuable, all people that do work need to be valued, and they all need to have a chance to comment and, hopefully, have some influence on legislation that will affect their working lives from now until the legislation changes.

What we have here is a government in a rush to do some good things, surely, in the leaves for vulnerable people. Despite the fact that the government has brought in a person, Ms Jensen, that was really badly treated under the previous legislation – unfortunately, they're using her for cover for a lot of other things that are in this legislation that are not nearly as family friendly or nearly as good for the workplace or the workforce as the leave provisions that the government has chosen to add. As we've made clear on this side of the House, we'll be happy to support those leave provisions that are in this legislation.

However, Madam Speaker, those are not the only things in this legislation. We probably could have gone a little bit further down the road if a few things had happened better; first of all, if there had been a legitimate consultation process. We've heard in question period over the last few weeks, knowing this legislation was cooking somewhere in the back halls and the backrooms of NDP land, the Labour minister talk about how there had been consultation. What we heard at the briefing for the bill was that essentially Mr. Sims was hired to do consultation, but we're not sure how little the minister actually attended the consultations.

I know I heard from at least one business group that had a, quote, consultation, where the minister sat there playing on her cellphone the whole time and not listening to a thing, looked at her watch when the time was up, and said: I guess we've consulted; it's time to go. They don't know for sure what the minister listened to, but they told me that they were pretty sure the minister didn't listen to a syllable that they said when they were there. She was just checking a box so that she could come into this House and say: I consulted with this group of businesses. You know what? That is exactly the problem when you have invitation-only consultation, which is what this ministry and this government and this Premier have decided to go with on this piece of important legislation. They've tried to break the province up into groups of people that were outnumbered by their friends. A lot of Albertans that will be affected by this legislation would have liked to have had their voices truly heard and considered. They were really left out, and you just cannot argue with that if you're honest as the government, but of course they will argue with it.

The fact is that this bill was brought in at the end of a legislative session. You know how they say, "The end is near"? Well, in this case the end was near because – you know what? There's no excuse for this government not to have been prepared. They started this legislative session about a month later than legislative sessions usually start. The government with their majority is in complete control of the timing of the legislative session. They're in complete control of the government's legislative agenda. They're in control of what gets to move and how fast it gets to move. In fact, they were so disorganized – some would say that they couldn't organize a two-car parade – that they actually spent the last 10 days filibustering their own bills because they were so unorganized, Madam Speaker. I know you know that, and I know you can't comment on that, and I won't ask you to because you're in the chair, but you know.

The government was completely disorganized and not ready to go on time with their legislation to the point where there are several pieces of legislation that members of all the opposition said, "Yeah, we'll support this," and the government stood up and filibustered

them for days on end because they were completely unorganized and could not get ready. Well, if they weren't ready for this legislation up until two days ago, how can they possibly expect that Albertans across this province were consulted and were ready for this legislation? To make that argument by the government would be completely less than credible, completely inconsistent, completely wrong, completely beyond the ability of most Albertans to believe because, frankly, the government just doesn't have their act together. This is just one more example.

As was said by my colleague, in the name of family-friendly workplaces the government has decided to stay up all night and pass it in the middle of the night if necessary, as they put a motion in the House today to do. It's not what a government that's proud of a piece of legislation would do. It's what a government would do when they're trying to sneak something through when no one is looking and make it as close as possible to summer vacation. Let's face it. I love Alberta. I will say that I believe all members of this House love Alberta, but even those of us that love Alberta know the summer is short, and we Albertans love to spend as much time outside running and jumping and playing and such when the summer is short. And this government, in their attempt to hide this very negative bill, has decided to sneak it through as close to summer as possible, when people are paying the least attention possible, having done the poorest and least amount of consultation possible on something that will affect everybody's life that works in this province and, in some cases, in a very negative way.

3:30

When you look at the amendment suggesting that it be referred to a standing committee, where, actually, Albertans would have a chance to talk to members of the Legislature after having seen the bill, to give us advice on what they like about the bill – there are things to like, Madam Speaker. There are, but there are also things to strongly and vehemently dislike in this bill. Either way, Albertans deserve to have the opportunity to make their feelings and their thoughts and their intentions known about it rather than having this government try to ram it through right before summer, at the last minute, with night sittings, when most people intended to be home with their families. It's completely reasonable that all members of this House would support this amendment to make sure that this bill gets to actually be heard, discussed, considered by the 4 million plus people in Alberta, that will be affected by the bill.

Madam Speaker, there are so many things in the bill. To be clear, I don't pretend that I understand it all yet because, again, we just had it dropped on our desks yesterday. It's as thick as a phone book. Although those that are less than 25 years old may not know what a phone book is, I don't blame them for that because they just haven't been around for the last few years. That's only a function of some of them having never needed to use a phone book. We older people at some point in our lives had no other choice but to use a phone book. I'm not blaming you who are younger and probably, by extension, better looking than me. But the fact is that it's as thick as a phone book, and to try to drop it on the table and have night sittings and run it through this House when nobody has the time to absorb it, to understand it, to get advice on it, to talk about it with their friends and their neighbours is completely unfair, completely out of step with how a democracy should run, certainly one that cares about her citizens.

This amendment actually is going to help the government do a better job. If the government was to be wise enough to vote for this, they actually might look, for one of the rare times since they've been elected, like they care about the citizens of Alberta, like they actually might want to listen a little bit to the citizens of Alberta, because, Madam Speaker, there's been precious, precious, precious

little evidence that this government has had a lick of patience to listen to Albertans and what matters to them before they ram through this huge piece of legislation.

Again, fair and family-friendly and even the small parts that I have been able to see from reading the bill in the short period of time we've had: the minister was asked in the House several times – she could have had us doing some research on this before – whether she was going to get rid of the secret ballot provision in the legislation. The fact is that, for all intents and purposes, she has.

Now, I expect to hear the government-side people howling and saying: sure, there are private votes there. But they know, because they were able to consider it in the government caucus before we got to see it yesterday, that under the current legislation, with the way it's structured, after a card check has been going on now for up to six months, there might be a ballot that's secret, but it won't really be a secret because everybody will pretty much know who's signed the card and who hasn't, leaving those employees at risk of being intimidated by their company and intimidated by the union that wants to start. Both sides, they could be intimidated by. Again, I know that members of the House will say that only one side or the other is guilty of doing this. But, I think, if we're honest with ourselves, at different times both sides, over the history of time, have been guilty of intimidating employees in situations like this.

Employees need to be protected from intimidation from whatever source, from the company or from the union that wants to establish itself. There's no excuse ever for employees to be intimidated. That is just one of the many things that this government and the opposition need to hear about from Albertans, to know what they think, to know whether they like this, to know whether they don't like this. I'll call it a fake secret ballot because you can't call it a real secret ballot after you've been outside getting cards signed up for six months. Perhaps there are improvements that can be made.

For the government to carry on now night and day – again, even by the fact that the government has now put itself in a position to add night sittings, Madam Speaker, they've put themselves in a position to have a great deal of the debate take place late at night, when most Albertans are home in bed, home spending time with their spouses, home spending time with their kids. Of course, that just makes it harder than ever for people to keep track of this legislation, which just makes it absolutely more logical that you would send this to committee – that you would send this to committee – where all members of this House are privy to those committee deliberations as opposed to just the government side being privy to the caucus deliberations, where all members of this House could reach out to employees and workers across each of our ridings and across Alberta and find out what they like and dislike about this legislation.

The government needs to acknowledge that if they're as proud of it as they claim they are, although I'm a little stretched to believe that – but let's just take their word for it just for a second, for argument's sake. If they're as proud of it and Albertans are as proud of it as the government claims they are, then the message that we opposition members are going to hear is: you better vote for this legislation because we love every paragraph, we love every syllable, we love every sentence, we love every word. But, Madam Speaker, the government doesn't believe we're going to hear that because they know they've got nasty stuff in this bill, things that will actually make it harder on workers in Alberta, make it harder on small businesses in Alberta, and things that actually appear to be tipping the level playing field that's largely existed in Alberta for a long time.

I can tell you that I spent some time as labour minister. When I talked to people largely from all stripes of the labour movement when I was there, what I heard when we looked at making some

changes here was that – and we decided that the changes being presented weren't good enough. One of the few things that I'll agree with the minister on is that we didn't move on that. But I can tell you that having talked to everybody from Merit Contractors, who, I think it would be reasonable to say, are not the most pro-union people in the province – I also talked to the people in the unionized construction contractors. They all said to me at the time and in between, the progressive contractors in CLAC and other members: you know, as long as you don't make any bad changes, there are some things that could probably be tweaked and made better in the legislation, but things are largely in balance right now. They all said to me: there are a few little changes we would have liked, but as long as you don't upset the balance that largely exists, then things are okay.

So I acknowledge that there are some tweaks and improvements that can be made to the legislation, but there's no reason we can't talk about it. There's no reason that all Albertans, no matter what their beliefs are, no matter what stripe they are, no matter how they make their living, whether they're a professional or a tradesperson or a labourer or somebody just learning on the job to do something, shouldn't have their voices heard, because all work is honest. All work is important, and all Albertans doing that work must be respected. We can't really know whether this legislation does that until those workers get a chance to peek at it and communicate to the government through their MLAs, whether the MLA is on the opposition side or the government side. Albertans need a chance to communicate that, which is all the more reason why this legislation should be fleshed out in a committee.

Again, the other thing about it, too, is that committees are usually, not always, I think all members of this House would agree, but usually less adversarial than this House is.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the referral?

Some Hon. Members: It's 29(2)(a).

The Acting Speaker: Oh, 29(2)(a). I will get there.

Mr. Gotfried: Under 29(2)(a), I'd actually like to hear a little bit more of the member's comments on his thoughts on some of the reasons for referral of this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek asking me that question because there is a lot more to be said on this bill. What's most important is that members of this House – their voices are important but not as important as the voices from across Alberta, and those voices have not yet been heard. They haven't been heard because the government hasn't given them a chance to be heard.

3:40

This actually gives the government a chance to have a better track record of listening. This amendment actually gives the government a chance to say: "You know, having thought about it, we realize that what's obvious is right and that Albertans haven't had a chance. Alberta businesses, large, haven't had a chance. Alberta businesses, small, haven't had a chance. Alberta workers have not had a chance. Whether they're higher earning professionals or starting out and not making so much money or whether they're labourers or tradespeople or whatever type of work they're in, they haven't had a chance to look at this and say: 'How will this affect my work life?'"

What would I like to tell my MLA about what I would like to see changed in this bill?"

You know what? There are bound to be things where those workers will come to me and other MLAs and say: don't you dare change this section because I love it. But we won't know until they actually get a chance to see it, to understand it, to talk about it with people they trust, to have those conversations back and forth, to relay that information to members of this House, whose job it is to serve Albertans and to make sure that the bill can be protected where it's right and can be improved where it's wrong.

Madam Speaker, actually, when it comes to labour legislation – and I can assure you, though I was a labour minister for a little bit of time, that there are some experts around here, and I am not one of them. I am not one of them.

Ms Hoffman: Yep.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Health minister, for agreeing with me on that. I appreciate that.

Madam Speaker, most other members of this House are not experts on it either, and if they're honest with themselves, a little more time for them to look at this thing and talk to their constituents – I know what it's like when you're in government. Even the government members, private members and ministers alike, can't talk openly and publicly about a piece of legislation that hasn't been released yet because, of course, there are rules about talking out in the public about the final text of a bill before it's presented in the House.

I'm sure that the government members all have obeyed that rule, which, by extension, means that they actually haven't had the opportunity to go out and fully discuss it with their constituents because that would be wrong – and I know they wouldn't do that – which makes this amendment to refer this bill to committee all the more important, all the more valuable, all the more necessary, all the more in the government's favour, putting them in a position to look Albertans in the eye and say, "We actually did try to listen to you this time," because, Madam Speaker, as you know, they failed so miserably so many times. They failed miserably on Bill 6. They failed miserably on their budget. They failed miserably on the amount of debt that they are putting Albertans under. They failed miserably so many times.

This amendment actually offers the government some redemption, one shining example – and they need redemption, believe me – where they can actually go out to Albertans and say, "I know we haven't listened to you for two years," because they haven't, and Albertans will say, "We know you haven't listened to us for two years." But if the government-side members were to support this amendment, it would put them in a position, for the first time, probably, in the two years that they've had the privilege of being government, to go out to their constituents and say, "I know we've got it wrong almost all of the last two years, but this time we're actually going to make the effort to get it right."

For that reason and so many more reasons, the government ought to support this amendment. They ought to actually walk the walk instead of just talking the talk and vote yes.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Any other members wishing to speak to the referral? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really appreciate this opportunity to ask that our members consider this referral motion. Now, I know that there are a lot of people here that know that I like to really dig into the past, so after hearing our Labour minister go on and on about all of the movies in 1988 – *Beetlejuice* and *Die*

Hard and all those movies – I thought: "You know what? I'd love to read *Hansard* and see what they had to say at the time regarding this legislation that they put through in 1988. What process did they use that was able to get that piece of legislation through?"

Now, I'm going to be reading a large portion from *Hansard* here. It's going to show that there is a significant difference between what was done in 1988 and what is being done today: 36 days of consultation and then a bill that they had to filibuster their own legislation to be able to get to. If you look at it, they couldn't even staple it because it's so thick. It's quite the bill that we've got, 124 pages. I have to say that it's quite a weighty bill.

But to get back to this, I'd like to read from June 6, 1988. This is regarding Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code, and this is at second reading. Actually, it's pretty similar if you look at it. We're right around that same time frame, right? Now, the start of the quote says:

Before going into some of the provisions of Bill 21, I would like to briefly review the process by which we reached the stage we are now at with the second reading of a new Employment Standards Code. In the Speech from the Throne in the second week of June 1986,

Two full years in advance, by the way. Two full years.

there was a specific commitment to a thorough review of labour legislation in the province. There was some discussion about how that commitment should be met, and there was an unprecedented process initiated. The process, first of all, was that of appointing a multisector-based committee of Albertans:

Now, I didn't see any appointments or any discussions or any committees, which is why this referral is so important. This is why we actually need to engage Albertans, because we've already seen with Bill 6 what has happened when we don't engage Albertans.

It says:

three from organized labour,

Three.

three representing employers, and three from the general public. Those members were chosen not as specific representatives for their own narrow group – be it city management or be it the operating engineers – but they were chosen to represent in a reasonably sized committee as much as possible of the economic activity in the province and, as much as possible, all of the different employee/employer relations that exist in the province: manufacturing, construction, public sector, private sector, male, female, the teaching profession, and others. The result was a committee that, although numbering nine, covered a very broad spectrum of Alberta society, Alberta economic activity, and Alberta employment.

What we've got here is that they struck a group. They took that group, and they said: "Let's start the process of talking about what this is going to look like. Let's involve different people and get the process started." Now, this is important because if they would have started with a 50-person committee, this may not have been moving forward anywhere. What they needed to do was start the process. This is what they did back then. They started the process through a committee.

Then to continue on:

The committee looked at legislation and at the systems in several other jurisdictions, and in November of 1986 published an interim report which included information from those jurisdictions and asked certain questions of Albertans prior to a very thorough process of public meetings.

Public meetings. Did you hear? They didn't say: hidden meetings or special invitation committees. They said: public meetings to bring Albertans together to discuss this. That's what's important here. They brought Albertans together to discuss this. They brought the nine people together. Then they said: let's come out with an interim report, and then let's go out and talk to Albertans. Inside of

that report we actually had comparisons done to other provinces to see where we were at.

3:50

At those public hearings, interest groups, individuals, organized labour, individual employees, employer associations, and individual employers came and spoke to the committee. In addition to that, there was a large number of briefs submitted in written form. Some of those were supplementary to the verbal statements made to the committee at those public meetings, and some of them had no verbal statement attached to them. There was, as I say, an extremely large public input into the process.

Again, we're going into the fact that this was a public process, not something that was rushed, like we saw with this. It was something that was actually thought out and moved forward.

Now, let's start with:

Subsequent to the tabling for first reading in this Legislature of Bill 60, the government received over 300 written submissions from all types of Albertans, employers and employees: individual employers, associations of employers; individual employees, unions, associations of unions – in other words, a very broad input again. I myself held over 200 meetings with various groups of Albertans –

Now, I think I heard – and the government can correct me if I am wrong – that the minister held four. That seems quite a bit lower than 200.

Then it goes on:

– public meetings, private meetings – and again that input was considered in the process over the winter of 1987-88, subsequent to which again the government caucus considered the input. The result was two separate Bills, one of which I am currently addressing, Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code, the other being Bill 22, the Labour Relations Code.

So now we're hearing that they saw the wisdom of splitting this into two bills, which is exactly what the Wildrose is asking right at this point. Why are we rushing through this? We understand that there are things that vulnerable Albertans need addressed. We agree that those needed to be addressed, so moving those forward in two bills – yet we had foresight in the past government. Am I the only one reading *Hansard*? Apparently. [interjections] Apparently this is funny as well.

It is now, Mr. Speaker, some seven weeks since the introduction of Bills 21 and 22 on April 15 of this year. During that time, again we have received input, but the input has changed very much. The input now is, in general, an acceptance of the provisions in the Employment Standards Code and is also, quite naturally, specific requests for individual items to be reconsidered or for individual items to be deleted or to be added. But I might say, Mr. Speaker, that in general the responses have been remarkably favourable to the concepts that are in Bill 21, the Employment Standards Code.

That's how you do consultation.

Now, it's remarkable that we couldn't even do like we did with the MGA. This was tabled in the spring, and then we went through the summer and saw consultation done by this government, and then what happened in the fall, once we actually had feedback from the AUMA, the AAMD and C, and municipalities and stakeholders, is that we were able to tailor that. Then we came up with another bill and said: okay; we got some more feedback that we need to work on. That is the correct way. That way, unfortunately, wasn't started by the NDP government. That was by the past government. There were two years, I believe, for that MGA to be reviewed.

When you're looking at large-scale reviews of legislation like these, you need more than 36 days. You need more. You need to talk to more than the two or three people that are on the NDP board of directors.

What we need to go with here is: how exactly is this consultation done? You knew how it was done before, yet you decided just to fall off the rails and do it on your own, do it quickly, get through this as fast as you possibly could. You put some really good stuff in here, and then you put a poison pill in. Then what happens is that you said: let's launch this out to the press, and we will condemn anybody that says that there's something wrong with this legislation. That is the wrong way of doing this. What we need to do is make sure Albertans are heard. The process that we've got here is that we're going to see labour legislation that is 124 pages thick going through this House within two weeks, possibly three weeks. That is an incredible, incredible insult to Albertans.

That is why we need to consider this referral. The referral itself is saying: let's step back; let's put this to a committee. The committee can at least go out to Albertans, maybe bring some stakeholders out here. Let's hear what Albertans have to say, which is why this motion for a referral makes so much sense. Let's slow this process down.

If at the end we still hear that Albertans really want to make sure that they get rid of the secret ballot system for unions, then possibly – I can't see how that's democratic, but at least you've done your due diligence. But by rushing this through, it only reinforces that this government is only for unions right now, and that is a shame. I will tell you that I have a deep respect when it comes to our unions and hard-working men and women on the front lines, and from the fact that they're not able to even be consulted on this as well, because they're seeing this and going through it in three weeks as well, we need to be making sure that all Albertans are included in this process.

Now, the fact that we've had 12 weeks during the spring session and that they gave five weeks in total consultation is something that needs to be changed. I can't tell you enough that when we see a government moving this rapidly, all we're looking for is trouble. We're looking at a point where we're going to be correcting this bill six months from now because we rushed through it too fast. We're going to find that things aren't working quite right or quite the way we anticipated it. That's because excluding the groups that are involved or are going to be impacted by this is fundamentally wrong. This is something that we as Albertans rejected with Bill 6 and that we are going to continue to reject as this government pushes through legislation that radically changes the direction of Alberta without consultation with Albertans.

Now, what we need to do is bring this back to a healthy piece. It appears that this government isn't interested in the two-year consultation period that we've done in the past, but at least give us through the summer. At least give us some time with a committee so that we're able to move forward with this. But you know what? So far this government has had its blinders on. When it gets something like this moving forward, all it does is that it wants to get it through as fast as it possibly can, and then we have to live with the consequences.

Now, I sat on the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee. We sat as a group, and we debated as a committee. Well, we had the wonderful witness . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak? Comments or questions under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, are there any members wishing to speak to the referral? The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gottfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I wanted to thank the Member for Lac

La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills for proposing this amendment and the referral of Bill 17, Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act.

Madam Speaker, there are a few things I want to talk about here. I mean, I think that in this House we all want what's best for Albertans, and I like to believe that that's true of all members of this House.

4:00

An Hon. Member: All members of this House.

Mr. Gottfried: All members.

It was mentioned by the Minister of Labour that this bill was about everyday Albertans, that it was about working Albertans, that it was about their futures, about their livelihoods. Madam Speaker, I think that therein lie some of our concerns with this. This isn't about us in this House. This is for us to do what's best for Albertans. They deserve the attention, they deserve the consultation, and they deserve the opportunity to understand what we're doing in here, in the 124 pages here, that's supposed to benefit them, not just benefit them but protect them, give them the opportunity to live the life, and have the opportunities that they feel are most important to them.

Madam Speaker, it's been mentioned by some of the other members here about the opportunity to split this bill, that there are some things in the employment standards, some good things in there. But we're also hearing – I'm already getting feedback – that there are some things in that particular bill that deserve attention as well, some unintended consequences. I think we've heard that statement before in this House. However, the big concerns we have are on the labour code side. Again, I agree that, really, these should be split, but the opportunity for us to refer this to a committee maybe will allow us to find a way to address them separately but equally with Albertans and with the key stakeholders.

When we're talking about things like secret ballots, Madam Speaker, I worry about the removal of the secret balloting process, which, to me, is a fundamental expectation within a democratic society. I think we owe it to Albertans to let a committee have a look at those principles that our forefathers fought for, democratic principles of being able to vote freely, that we shouldn't take for granted. I think that in elections in Alberta, all kinds of elections, every eligible Canadian should have the right to vote freely, without fear of intimidation or reprisal. Really, nobody should have the right to know whom we voted for. I talk to people all the time who say: "Well, I might be supporting you, I might not be supporting you, but that's my business. That's my choice. That's my privacy. It's my freedom to do so." I think those are principles that everybody in this House can agree with.

It would be kind of like us going out to our constituencies and saying: "Well, whichever party can sell the most memberships wins the election. We don't need to have an election. If you sell more, if you sell 65 per cent or more, you just win. We don't need to have a vote. We'll just card check in our communities for the next election. How about that?" Maybe we need to push this to committee, where they can take a look at those principles and decide whether those need to be defended.

Madam Speaker, we've also talked here about some of the concerns about conflict of interest. The government may want to consider that maybe they should refer this bill before half of their caucus has to recuse themselves on a vote. Wouldn't that be interesting? Numbers could be changed drastically here so that maybe the balance of power isn't on that side when they have to recuse half of their members there. I guess we'll hear from the Ethics Commissioner on that in the future. To maybe change a little bit of a phrase from Abraham Lincoln, I don't think this government wants to be seen as the government of the unions, by the unions,

and for the unions. I don't have the beard to do that one. I don't think this government wants to be the one that takes that time-honoured phrase and is accused of having conflicts of interest in that regard.

We've also talked about the lack of consultation. One of our members has talked about 36 days of consultation. It's actually not 36 days; it was 27 working days. Twenty-seven working days for a very detailed, very robust, 124-page piece of legislation, which, by the way, we hear has had some extractions from what was rumoured to be a 1,200-page submission from the AFL. So at just 10 per cent of that, we've thrown that in the legislation, and, you know, that should be good enough for Albertans; we don't need to consult anymore because we consulted with the AFL: government of the unions, by the unions, and for the unions.

Talking about timing and about consultation and lack of robust consultation, we also got unbound copies of this bill again. We've had that happen a few times in this House. That means it probably didn't make it to the printer's in time to get done in the proper way. Maybe the ink is not dry. Boy, we're going to have to look at that final copy to see if there were some final changes that didn't make it there in time so that we had to use quick copy or someone to do that. It should be a very interesting thing as we get those final copies out, that phone book that the Member for Calgary-Hays referred to, which we all will of course have plenty of time over this weekend to look through and find out along with our fellow Albertans what's in there, what lurks in there.

There are some good things, admittedly. We've discussed that in this House. There are some things that are protective of Albertans during difficult times, during vulnerable times, during crises in their lives, and we have no problem with and, in fact, fully support those types of things. But we're also hearing from some of our private-sector partners out there that hidden sometimes even in the employment standards are some things that are going to be very costly for Alberta businesses and Alberta employers and that could affect the sustainability, viability, and economics of our private-sector employers. Admittedly, I think everyone in this House can agree that most of the jobs in this province are created not only by private-sector employers but by small and medium-sized enterprises out there. That's where the bulk of our employment is created.

Everything we do has unintended consequences, and we need to know that, and we need to consult on that. I believe that in a committee setting, an all-party committee setting, where we can consult Albertans in a more robust way, we have an opportunity to ensure, as, again, I believe all members of this House want, that we have the best legislation for Albertans.

Madam Speaker, there are many other things that we could talk about around this bill in terms of employees' rights, not about what's best for employers or businesses, not about what's best for unions but about what's best for Albertans, for those employees in all of those sectors we talked about – the electricians and the teachers and the construction workers and the airline workers and all of these different categories of workers in our society – who, again, deserve the opportunity to do what's best for themselves, what's best for their families, to earn a living.

Some will agree that unionization is the way to go, and some will disagree, but I think we need to afford that protection to them so that they can make that decision freely, so that they're not influenced by peer pressure – I think we've all felt that, whether that's in a school or a workplace – so that they're not concerned about the potential of being outcast or of having repercussions or of being ostracized in the workplace or about intimidation or, God forbid, the B word, the "bullying" word.

Again, we should do all we can in this Legislature to ensure that there is no opportunity for things like workplace bullying, whether

that's intentional or unintentional or driven by an employer or an employee group or a union group. We need to protect Albertans as best we can with this legislation to achieve that, Madam Speaker.

I would like to support doing the right thing today, doing what's best for Albertans, putting aside our ideologies, and putting this legislation in front of a committee. I've had the pleasure of working on some committees, and when they are working well, they work very well. When the people come to the table with the right intentions, which is to be nonpartisan, to park their ideologies at the door as much as they possibly can and to do what's best for Albertans, it can and does work well. I think we've collaborated with many of the members, on all sides of this House, on achieving positive results from those committee settings.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I'd just again like to thank the Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills for his very thoughtful amendment to this, and I would encourage all members of the House to put their ideologies and partisanship aside and support this opportunity for us to ensure that this is the best legislation it can possibly be.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any members wishing to speak under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. I'd like the hon. member to comment on how he feels about taking this over the summer – it'll be a little more work when a lot of people want to have time off – and about whether he believes this is an important enough issue that it actually should go over whatever period of time it needs to to make sure that we can deal with something as important as labour legislation, that affects all Albertans.

4:10

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Calgary-Hays for his very thoughtful question. To the member, I'd like to say that I think all of us in this House are here to do a job. We're here, we're elected, and we're hired by Albertans – they're our bosses – to come here and do the work that will ensure that we work for and protect Albertans as best as we can.

Madam Speaker, one of my committees will be meeting over the summer to talk about daylight saving time. I respect the opportunity to provide some committee work on that particular bill, but I can tell you that this labour legislation is much more important to Albertans' everyday lives, to their livelihoods, to their futures than whether they change a clock in the spring and the fall, with all due respect. I know that we'll get to the right result on that particular piece of legislation as well.

I think it's incumbent upon us to do what's right for Albertans here, and if referring it to a committee and doing some work over the summer is what needs to be done, I know that I'm prepared to do it, I know that my colleagues are prepared to do it, and I would expect that all members of this House are prepared to do it to ensure that we do come out of this with the best legislation, that we do listen in a robust manner, in an open and transparent manner, not by invitation but by invitation for all to give us their opinions: employers, employees, small businesses, medium-sized businesses, large businesses, union groups, employee associations, all the groups that will matter, and, Madam Speaker, even some individual Albertans. What a unique and refreshing thought, that maybe some individual Albertans might want to step forward and give us their opinions. I hope that we'll have the opportunity, and I hope that if

we have the opportunity to put this to committee, those Albertans will come to our constituency offices, which are a place for them to connect with this House, with this Legislature, and share with us.

I know I have my MLA cafés, and I know that there are many members that have many opportunities to engage their constituents. This is a great opportunity for us to do that, to ensure that we are not doing it only as a regular course of business but that we have a very specific piece of business that we're seeking their input on.

Again, I thank the Member for Calgary-Hays for his question. I know that I'm prepared to do the work that is required to ensure that we have the best legislation, and I challenge the rest of this House to step up to the plate and be ready to sacrifice some of their summer. We all know that we like to spend some time with our families and friends and our constituents as much as we can, but this is too important for us not to do, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. McIver: Yeah.

The Acting Speaker: Please go ahead.

Mr. McIver: I just wanted to know whether the hon. member has heard from workers in his riding, not employers but workers. Have any of them told you that they know what's in this legislation and what their opinion is? What's their depth of knowledge so far on this after it's been out in the public for one day?

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you again to the Member for Calgary-Hays. He's got some very insightful questions about how we engage with our constituents.

To honestly answer that question, I have to tell you that this all came so quickly for most Albertans. We only started to hear from our constituents with only a couple of weeks left in the consultation, which tells me that the consultation was not robust enough.

I've been putting into my newsletters that we're addressing this labour bill, but Albertans are busy. They're trying to stay employed. They're trying to get gainful employment. They're trying to provide for their families. Let's be honest; they're struggling. Many Albertans are struggling, and this is not top of mind for them. But it is coming up. They're seeing that there are some things here that will impact them, that will impact their futures and their livelihoods and their ability to provide for themselves and their families.

Madam Speaker, I think that this is a great question . . .

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Are there any other members wishing to speak to the referral amendment? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak to the referral amendment on Bill 17, Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act. You know, we have been given a rare opportunity in this House as Members of the Legislative Assembly to represent the people of Alberta; more specifically, to represent our constituents on the issues of the day that come before this House. I can't think of too many things that are more important in the lives of Albertans than their jobs and their capacity to be able to meet the needs of their families, their financial needs. So when we start talking about the Employment Standards Code and the Labour Relations Code, Madam Speaker, this is a very important piece of legislation that we need to deal with.

As I said, I'm glad they built this into the title. We do need a fair and family-friendly workplace. That's why we work. That's why we spend the long hours and we give our best efforts in our jobs, so that we can take care of our families. Any legislation that deals with that is important, and it's why we need to make sure, Madam Speaker, that we get this right. It's why we need to make sure and why I will support this referral amendment, because it speaks to the very heart of our capacity as families and as men and women to be able to take care of those families and to earn a living and to do so in a way that provides us with not only job satisfaction but with the capacity to make sure that we take care of the most important people in our lives.

As I said, we have a rare privilege in this House in that we get the opportunity to speak to these kinds of issues, and we must always remember that in a democracy it's about providing and crafting legislation that will actually meet the needs of the people of Alberta. I see some problems with the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, which I believe a referral to committee would help us with. We know that there are times – and I think this government has shown a trend, a pattern, that they are indeed struggling with this whole idea of consultation. We've had many members of the Legislature here today mention the fact that for a 124-page document – some are calling it an omnibus bill – this document has had very little consultation, that prior legislation in this area, in the 1980s, had years of consultation whereas this has had anywhere between 27 business days or 36 days total.

Madam Speaker, we would argue and we would suggest that this is part of the pattern that we see in this government of a lack of consultation. We know that starting in the very first session, we brought this to the government's attention. There are times, when you don't consult with the people of Alberta, when you find yourself out of step with those people. In a democracy that's a very serious thing, to be out of step with the people that you're called to represent.

We know that right out of the gate, when they were first elected, they voted for a 7.25 per cent raise for senior government officials. They were out of step because they did not do the appropriate amount of consultation. My colleague from Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre said at that time:

This sends the completely wrong message to Albertans struggling and looking for leadership from their government during difficult economic times . . . The economy is hurting, the NDP are threatening new and higher taxes, and now they are voting for massive pay increases for senior government officials.

That was not done on our part just to try and bring the government down. Rather, it was there as a sincere attempt to help them reconnect as a young government with the people of Alberta, to make sure that they were indeed listening to the people and not out of step with Albertans. That's one of the things that a referral to committee will do. It will help this government to reconnect, to make sure that they are indeed voicing the opinions and the desires of the people of Alberta.

4:20

You know we've seen a pattern of lack of consultation on things like Bill 6, the carbon tax, the Climate Leadership Implementation Act, and the Renewable Electricity Act. To simply ignore this amendment is to ignore the fact that they are being given a chance to again go back to the public to consult before they table most of their legislation, before they bring it back into the House. This is a wise thing to do because at the end of the day this legislation has to be able to have the support of the people of Alberta. Right now we're hearing from many stakeholders that they are very concerned about this legislation. When you don't consult, you run the risk of

having a bill die a death by a thousand cuts as one stakeholder after the other after the other after the other begins to voice their disagreement with that bill. So we would suggest that this government would be wise, rather than eroding public confidence in this bill and in this government, to go back to the table and do more consultation.

Let me be clear, Madam Speaker. We and I on this side of the House see that there is a value to some portions and parts of this bill. We can see that in the portions that deal with the Employment Standards Codes, there's much to be supported in that. There is no question that the compassionate care issues that are enshrined in this legislation can be addressed immediately and can be addressed with the support of this House. There are some very good pieces here. When we take a look at maternity leave and the parental leave clauses and the compassionate care leave, the death or disappearance of a child leave or critical illness of a child leave; long-term illness, domestic violence, bereavement leave; leave for citizenship ceremonies, these are all good things that need to be incorporated into the fabric of Alberta working society. These can and should and will be supported, I believe, not only by members of this House but by the general public, Albertans in general.

But there are significant portions of this bill, especially in the Labour Relations Code, that we need to take another look at. That's why I will support this referral to a committee. We need to understand and we need to realize that there are problems when you place an omnibus bill before a House. We've seen government after government all across this country – federally, provincially – get into trouble when they try to package large numbers of ideas into one bill. They run the risk, because they haven't done the consultation and because they've packaged it into such a large document, that one or two pieces of that omnibus bill can actually bring down some potentially good legislation.

As the opposition, who is charged with providing accountability to the government and trying to offer suggestions as to how the government could pass better legislation, we are as the opposition, as the Wildrose, suggesting to the government that they would be further ahead and that they would be wise to separate and split this omnibus bill into two parts, one that would pass through very quickly with the support of the House, the compassionate leave portions of this omnibus bill, but that it would then take more time at committee. Through this referral amendment they could then take the time to listen to Albertans and to listen to the stakeholders that need to deal with those portions of this bill that have some significant issues with them.

You know, that's the problem with an omnibus bill. The portions that Albertans would support can be held up and maybe even be lost when you do not separate those portions of the bill that do not have the support of Albertans and, as far as we're concerned, will not have the support of the opposition. A wise government would listen to this, would not dig in their heels, but instead would listen to the wise counsel of the opposition.

A referral to committee allows for that extra consultation. We've heard that already. You know, this is not consultation just for one segment of Albertans. This is not a consultation on this bill that should be just for unions. We've heard that in many cases the small amount of consultation that occurred over that 36 days was attended on a regular basis, all of them, by unions but that very few major stakeholders from the other side of the equation were allowed or capable of attending. We believe as the opposition that there needs to be more consultation and stakeholders from the business community allowed and brought before the committee, or the committee could go out to the business community and receive their feedback on the Labour Relations Code portion of this bill, we believe, from

stakeholders like the Chambers of Commerce. We need expert testimony. We need the testimony of those people that are involved in business, that understand how the business community works.

You know, we just spent time last night at the Resource Diversification Council. In my conversations with some of the businesses at the Resource Diversification Council they were saying: "You know, we're now in an economic climate where even the pennies have to be counted. Any increase to our input costs are going to seriously influence and impact our capacity to hire people and to do business." If that's what they're saying – and I know the hon. members from the NDP were there. Many of them were there. I saw them there last night. They must have been having those conversations. They must have had those kinds of conversations. I know that's what I was hearing last night. Because of that, we need to make sure that we've included those business perspectives in this consultation. This is just simply good governance. This is simply a model of good government, and it allows us the capacity to make good legislation.

When I was in my social studies class, I made sure that my kids had the ability to look at both sides of the issue, look at case study examples from one point of view and from another point of view. My response to them was always: "I don't care what your position is on the paper that I'm assigning you. I don't care which way you go on this. What I care about is that you have the capacity to be able to explain your position and to be able to defend your position using relevant case study examples." That's a good educational tool. That's what good education looks like. I would argue that in the Legislature making sure that we've listened to all of the stakeholders and that we have a balanced perspective so that we have good legislation is always a good thing, and referring this to committee will allow us to do that, Madam Speaker.

A referral amendment like we're looking at right here recognizes that we live in unique times, that these are difficult economic times, and that anything that we choose to do in this House will have ramifications to Albertans and to their capacity to have jobs, to the capital that needs to be spent in this province. We cannot be passing legislation that's going to hurt the economy of Alberta. This is a very serious issue. We have to make sure that we are making the wise choices based on information, and the only way that we're going to be able to get that is if we refer this to committee. You know, I believe that this government does need to take time to reflect, and this committee would allow it to be able to do that.

You know, it's been brought up that there may be a conflict of interest, that we may have the Ethics Commissioner ruling on whether some of us can speak to this bill or not speak to this bill. I believe that it would be wise and it would be a good thing for this government if this is referred to committee, for them to take the time and to reflect and have that second sober thought as to whether or not this is the opportunity that they're going to take to realize or to think about whether they should indeed be addressing this issue right now. [interjection] You know what? As a social studies teacher that means very little.

We're looking at a situation here for referral to committee that I believe has really got an opportunity for us to be able to pass better legislation. Let's use the summer to receive the meaningful feedback that we need so that we can bring all the changes that are needed.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The House now stands adjourned until Monday afternoon at 1:30.

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

Bill Status Report for the 29th Legislature - 3rd Session (2017)

Activity to Thursday, May 25, 2017

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

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

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

Bill 1 — An Act to Reduce School Fees (Eggen)

First Reading — 6 (*Mar. 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 105-10 (*Mar. 8, 2017 morn.*), 192-96 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft.*), 235-42 (*Mar. 14, 2017 morn.*), 269-71 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft.*), 273-74 (*Mar. 15, 2017 morn., adjourned*), 282-91 (*Mar. 15, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 424-31 (*Mar. 21, 2017 aft.*), 556-58 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 674-78 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2017 c6]

Bill 2* — An Act to Remove Barriers for Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence (Ganley)

First Reading — 67-68 (*Mar. 7, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 110-11 (*Mar. 8, 2017 morn.*), 192 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft.*), 314-22 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft.*), 336-39 (*Mar. 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 455-59 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 678-79 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017; SA 2017 c7]

Bill 3* — Voluntary Blood Donations Act (Hoffman)

First Reading — 208 (*Mar. 13, 2017 aft., passed.*)

Second Reading — 323-36 (*Mar. 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 394-400 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*), 421-24 (*Mar. 21, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 472-80 (*Mar. 23, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 cV-5]

Bill 4 — Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2017 (\$)

First Reading — 191 (*Mar. 9, 2017 aft, passed*)

Second Reading — 306-07 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., adjourned*), 322 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 389-93 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*)

Third Reading — 449-52 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 c2]

Bill 5 — Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2017 (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading — 266 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 310-14 (*Mar. 15, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 393-94 (*Mar. 21, 2017 morn.*)

Third Reading — 452-55 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — (*Mar. 30, 2017 outside of House sitting*) [Comes into force Mar. 30, 2017; SA 2017 c1]

Bill 6 — Northland School Division Act (Eggen)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 558-61 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 671-74 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 755-59 (*May 2, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017; SA 2017 cN-5.1]

Bill 7 — An Act to Enhance Post-secondary Academic Bargaining (Schmidt)

First Reading — 552 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 679-81 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft.*)

Committee of the Whole — 810-15 (*May 3, 2017 morn.*), 828-38 (*May 3, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 865-66 (*May 4, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — 879 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017, with exception; SA 2017 c4]

Bill 8* — An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government (S. Anderson)

First Reading — 577 (*Apr. 10, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 691-700 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 716-22 (*Apr. 20, 2017 aft.*), 780-84 (*May 2, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Committee of the Whole — 784-95 (*May 2, 2017 aft.*), 838-45 (*May 3, 2017 aft.*), 855-65 (*May 4, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 991-1004 (*May 11, 2017 morn.*), 1101-06 (*May 16, 2017 aft.*), 1107-10 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed on division*)

Bill 9 — Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2017 (Carlier)

First Reading — 606 (*Apr. 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 683-87 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 687-90 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 759-62 (*May 2, 2017 morn., passed*)

Royal Assent — 880 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2017 c5]

Bill 10 — Appropriation Act, 2017 (\$) (Ceci)

First Reading — 670-71 (*Apr. 19, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Second Reading — 690-91 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 700-02 (*Apr. 20, 2017 morn.*), 722-23 (*Apr. 20, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 762-67 (*May 2, 2017 morn.*), 795-97 (*May 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 799-810 (*May 3, 2017 morn.*), 845-47 (*May 3, 2017 aft., passed on division*)

Royal Assent — 880 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force May 4, 2017; SA 2017 c3]

Bill 11* — Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act, 2017 (Gray)

First Reading — 771 (*May 2, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 849-55 (*May 4, 2017 morn.*), 924-39 (*May 9, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1072-77 (*May 16, 2017 morn.*), 1092-1101 (*May 16, 2017 aft.*), 1168-69 (*May 18, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 11991202 (*May 23, 2017 morn., passed*)

Bill 12* — New Home Buyer Protection Amendment Act, 2017 (S. Anderson)

First Reading — 877 (*May 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 939-44 (*May 9, 2017 aft.*), 945-56 (*May 10, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 956-62 (*May 10, 2017 morn.*), 1004-1008 (*May 11, 2017 morn.*), 1008-10 (*May 11, 2017 morn.*), 1111-20 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)

Third Reading — 1169-71 (*May 18, 2017 morn., passed*)

Bill 13 — Securities Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)

First Reading — 893 (*May 8, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 977-90 (*May 10, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1027-31 (*May 11, 2017 aft.*), 1065-72 (*May 16, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1137-44 (*May 17, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 14 — An Act to Support Orphan Well Rehabilitation (McCuaig-Boyd)

First Reading — 1090 (*May 16, 2017 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1144-52 (*May 17, 2017 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1225-30 (*May 23, 2017 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1244-46 (*May 24, 2017 morn., passed*)

Bill 15 — Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2017 (Ceci)

First Reading — 1137 (*May 17, 2017 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1184-89 (*May 18, 2017 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1215-25 (*May 23, 2017 aft., passed*)
Third Reading — 1246-48 (*May 24, 2017 morn., passed*)

Bill 16 — An Act to Cap Regulated Electricity Rates (\$) (McCuaig-Boyd)

First Reading — 1214 (*May 23, 2017 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 1262-78 (*May 24, 2017 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1279-91 (*May 25, 2017 morn.*), 1291-97 (*May 25, 2017 morn., adjourned*)

Bill 17 — Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act (Gray)

First Reading — 1260 (*May 24, 2017 aft., passed on division*)
Second Reading — 1311-22 (*May 25, 2017 aft., adjourned on referral amendment*)

Bill 201 — Justice System Accountability Act (Jean)

First Reading — 127 (*Mar. 8, 2017 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 208-20 (*Mar. 13, 2017 aft., defeated on division*)

Bill 202* — Protecting Victims of Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act (Cyr)

First Reading — 245 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 375-86 (*Mar. 20, 2017 aft., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 578-86 (*Apr. 10, 2017 aft., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 738-40 (*May 1, 2017 aft., passed on division*)
Royal Assent — 880 (*May 4, 2017 aft.*) [Comes into force 3 months after date of Royal Assent; SA 2017 cP-26.9]

Bill 203 — Alberta Standard Time Act (Dang)

First Reading — 253 (*Mar. 14, 2017 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 496-503 (*Apr. 3, 2017 aft., referred to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future*)

Bill 204 — Protection of Property Rights Statutes Amendment Act, 2017 (Stier)

First Reading — 444 (*Mar. 22, 2017 aft., passed*)
Second Reading — 503-07 (*Apr. 3, 2017 aft.*), 899-905 (*May 8, 2017 aft.*), 1046-50 (*May 15, 2017 aft., reasoned amendment agreed to on division*)

Bill 205* — Advocate for Persons with Disabilities Act (Jansen)

First Reading — 552 (*Apr. 6, 2017 aft.*)
Second Reading — 1050-57 (*May 15, 2017 aft.*), 1120-25 (*May 17, 2017 morn., moved to Government Bills and Orders*), 1153-63 (*May 18, 2017 morn., passed*)
Committee of the Whole — 1163-68 (*May 18, 2017 morn.*), 1191-99 (*May 23, 2017 morn., passed with amendments*)
Third Reading — 1231-43 (*May 24, 2017 morn., passed on division*)

Bill 206 — Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Adoption Advertising) Amendment Act, 2017 (Aheer)

First Reading — 1024 (*May 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill 207 — Regulatory Burden Reduction Act (Hunter)

First Reading — 1310 (*May 25, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr1 — Calgary Jewish Centre Amendment Act, 2017 (Kazim)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1110 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1110-11 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed*)

Third Reading — 1261-62 (*May 24, 2017 aft., passed*)

Bill Pr2 — Paula Jean Anderson Adoption Termination Act (MacIntyre)

First Reading — 524 (*Apr. 4, 2017 aft., passed*)

Second Reading — 1027 (*May 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Committee of the Whole — 1027 (*May 11, 2017 aft., passed*)

Third Reading — 1110 (*May 17, 2017 morn., passed*)

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