

Ric Dolphin's

Insight

into Government

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ASSISTED SUICIDE

DEBATE IN THE REVIVIFIED SENATE MAY KILL DEATH BILL

The Supreme Court's deadline for doc-assisted dying legislation went by with Bill C-14 stalled in the Senate. Senate amendments make passage in the House unlikely. Thus the temporary assisted-death regulations adopted by Alberta could be permanent.

For those Albertans in pain and wishing a quick, painless, legal end, it may be some time before the conditions are as accommodating as they are right now and likely for a few weeks to come. Maybe longer. Maybe indefinitely. But let's not jump the gun.

For as predicted in last week's *Insight* (and virtually everywhere else), Bill C-14, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)* that the Supreme Court of Canada had given the federal gov't until June 6 to enact, wasn't. It's been taken up by a newly emancipated Senate, which has decided to fully debate the bill and add amendments before sending it back to the House.

This means that until such time as Parliament gets the bill back and passes it (assuming the Senate passes it), Alberta and the rest of the provinces, save for Québec (which enacted its own euthanasia legislation in January), will be operating on regulations based on the Supreme Court's "Carter" decision (*Insight*, June 3), whose recommendations are more permissive than the tenets of Bill C14.

On Friday associate health minister **Brandy Payne** unveiled the details of Alberta's regulatory framework, the first provincial regulations to go into effect. Payne had announced the regulations the week before in a motion that was briefly, but emotionally, debated in the Legislature.

Drawing on input from medical bodies including the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Alberta Medical Association, as well as from the general public on-line and in a commissioned poll, Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services have been preparing these regulations and procedures almost from the time of the Supreme Court's overturning of the Criminal Code prohibition of assisted suicide in February of 2015 when the federal gov't was given a year to enact concordant legislation (later extended by four months to June 6).

The three main elements of the Alberta framework are:

- Establishing a central-care co-

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POLITICAL PULSE

END OF SESSION

SWAGGERING DIPPERS AND SLIGHTLY BLOODED ROSERS

The first spring session of the 29th Legislature ended Tuesday afternoon, with members still bleary-eyed from the marathon session the night before that had gone to 4:27 a.m. The Opposition members had tabled amendment after amendment (20-plus) to the Notley gov't's carbon-tax Bill 20, legislation which every member on the right side of the aisle—even the old lefty environmentalist, Liberal Leader **David Swann**, 67, (Calgary-Mountainview)—was against.

(The nine-hour session was the longest in four years, but far off the record set in 2007, when members sat from 8 pm Dec. 4 to 5:53 pm Dec. 5 during an almost 22-hour filibuster.)

By Friday the spring session was a memory, but a proud one for Premier **Rachel Notley** and the NDP, who had pushed through 21 gov't bills (see pp. 4, 5)—an accomplishment about which they were now bragging to the record 1,000-plus delegates congregated in an upscale downtown Calgary hotel for a three-day AGM—the party's first convention as gov't.

The NDP has money and power now and it showed: not only in the choice of this upscale venue, but in the production values and the triumphalist tone of the presentations and the swagger extant in the halls of the Hyatt.

Exclaimed Notley's chief of staff and former campaign manager **Brian Topp** during a Friday afternoon panel discussion-cum-gloat on last year's election campaign: "Let's face it we kicked ass!"

And no, the former contender for the federal NDP leadership who lost to **Thomas Mulcair**, has no plans to run again. Why would one trade the second best NDP job in Canada for one of the worst.

(More on the convention and some of the crazier resolutions that didn't quite make it to prime time, —a ban on fracking, no pipeline approval without full aboriginal consent, the establishment of a psychological strike force to seek out and correct ingrained prejudices in NDP members and gov't employees—tin next week's *Insight*.)

For **Brian Jean** (Fort McMurray-Conklin) and the **Wil-drose**, the 2016 spring sitting carries slightly tarter memories. (The former MP's planned August marriage in Jasper to his Ottawa Parliamentary aide **Kim Michelutti** should make for a sweeter summer.)

Jean's house and other properties burned down in the Great Fire of Fort Mac (the public cost of which has, we heard, reached \$615M). Sad as it was for Brian—whose lachrymosity during every public appearance became a little wearing—his presence on site and the seemingly genuine empathy he showed his fellow Mac'ites brought him no small measure of political goodwill in his hometown.

Outside of the disaster zone? Not so much love. Jean's expulsion and un-expulsion (repulsion?) of MLA **Derek Fildebrandt** (Strathmore-Brooks) last weekend made the leader look weak and indecisive (*Insight* June 3), and confirmed in some members' minds that he is simply the puppet of the Machiavellian back-room boy **Vitor Marciano**.

There are rumblings and grumbings at the constituency level not only about Jean's leadership capabilities, but about his attempts to move the party to the

Turn to Political Pulse on pg. 3...

ordinating service, operated by AHS, to provide information, resources and support to patients, families and providers on medical assistance in dying and end-of-life care options.

- Amending the Standard of Practice governing physicians' delivery of medical assistance in dying to add extra safeguards.
- Establishing a Medical Assistance in Dying Regulatory Review Committee to review, within one year, the regulation and practice of medical assistance in dying in Alberta and make recommendations to the Minister. Committee members will include the Chief Medical Examiner or designate; the registrars (or designates) from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta; the Alberta College of Pharmacists; and a representative of Alberta Health Services.

GIVEN THE DEADLOCK THAT WILL OCCUR BETWEEN PARLIAMENT & SENATE WHEN C-14 RETURNS TO THE HOUSE, ONE WONDERS IF THE BILL WAS DESIGNED TO FAIL

No physician—and under Carter it is only physicians who can provide the service—will be forced to assist, nor will any of the Catholic institutions be required to offer the service, as they are similarly excused from performing abortions.

Those wishing an assisted suicide must be at least 18 years old, have the capacity to consent, and “have a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease, or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the patient in the circumstances of his or her condition.”

(For more details go to the AHS webpage at

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/pf/if-pf-aid-how-access-medical-assistance-in-dying-in-alberta.pdf>.)

That last bit—about those with an “irremediable condition”—is straight out of Carter, and proved controversial with the fed gov't, who left it out of Bill C-14, which now stipulates that the patient must, essentially, have a terminal condition with death expected “in the foreseeable future.”

Of course Alberta will only permit the loosened eligibility until such time as Senate sends C-14 back to the House and the House passes the bill. *If* the House passes the bill...

Let's take a step back.

After passing third reading in the House of Commons on June 1, C-14 was sent on to the Senate. But instead of behaving like the trained geriatric seals to which they are sometimes compared, the 90 current members of the Red Chamber (15 seats remain vacant) did not merely rubber stamp the bill and swiftly return it to Parliament for proclamation. For this is a Senate that has developed a sense of responsibility, perhaps even a conscience, in the last couple of years.

The change has been happening since **Justin Trudeau**, prior to becoming Prime Minister, removed all Liberal senators from the Liberal caucus in 2014, freeing them to vote freely. And when Prime Minister Trudeau appointed seven new senators in March, none of whom had past Liberal affiliations, he did with the stated hope that they would make the Senate into a less partisan and more independent institution.

The senators seem to have taken this to heart. Liberal senators like Senate Liberal Leader **Jim Cowan** have not stinted in his criticism of the Liberal gov't's Bill C-14 as being “flawed” and “too restrictive.” The spirit of independence has also taken hold of a number of Conservative senators, whose push for a more permissive bill starkly contrast with their colleagues in Parliament opposition to a bill considered too permissive.

The senators' lengthy debates on C-14 have been heartfelt and considered. They've grilled witnesses—including federal Health Minister **Jane Philpott** and Attorney General **Jody Wilson-Raybould**—and they've agonized over the ramifications of what might happen if they pass the bill (endless Charter

challenges) or, more intriguingly, if they reject it.

“Were we to vote ‘no’ to this legislation, would the floodgates open?” asked Sen. **Jane Cordy** of Nova Scotia, during debate on Wednesday. “Would we, in fact, have assisted dying in Canada with no guidelines or safeguards in place?”

That prospect is in some respects similar to what happened in 1988 with the Mulroney gov't's restrictive abortion bill. It was narrowly passed by Parliament and sent to the Senate where there was a tie vote, which under parliamentary rules meant the bill was defeated. No gov't since has attempted to bring forward another abortion bill, leaving the provinces, who are responsible for the delivery of health care, free to regulate the practice as they see fit.

By the end of this week, it seemed the Senate would not

defeat Bill C-14, but send it back to the House bristling with amendments—amendments similar to those already proposed and defeated in the House. If the House rejects the amendments, the bill will not pass and the effect will be much the same as that of the killed abortion legislation—i.e. the provinces will be left to regulate assisted suicide as they see fit. Which is in fact what they are now doing as they await federal legislation.

Foremost among the amendments to C-14 passed by the Senate so far, and one that involved six hours of often emotional debate Wednesday night, was that very same granting of eligibility for those suffering an “irremediable condition” that the Liberals's sill disallowed.

Should this become law, it would make Canada the only North American jurisdiction that allows physician assisted dying for non-terminal patients (only four states even allow PAD). This would place Canada among the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg—the three European countries out of the four that allow assisted suicide, where imminent death is not a pre-requisite. (Of course as of last Tuesday all the provinces have been granting eligibility to “irremediabiles” under Carter while they wait. This effectively makes Canada the only North American jurisdiction to allow non-terminals PAD.)

Judging from the reactions by gov't ministers, however, this amendment—along with some of the others that the Senate will be proposing in the weeks to come, including advance consent (also in Carter)—will be rejected in the House. Philpott said allowing PAD for non-terminals would open the door to those suffering from strictly mental conditions to qualify for assisted suicide—a broadening and muddying of eligibility that some fear will lead to the kind of escalation seen in the Netherlands where the number of sanctioned deaths trebled between 2002 and 2013.

Wilson-Raybould said the amendment would “broaden the regime of medical assistance in dying in this country and we have sought to ensure that we, at every step, find the right balance that is required for such a turn in direction.”

What does all that mean? It means the Liberal gov't leavened the bill to mollify the conservatives and religious groups and the 50% of doctors don't want to help kill people. But the bill's diversions from Carter will, as various constitutional lawyers stressed during their testimony to the Senate, face untold constitutional challenges in the courts. (One could almost hear them drool.)

Bill C-14's exclusion of the non-terminal is already well on its way to losing a charter challenge even before the bill is passed.

While parliament was debating C-14 in May, the Alberta court of Appeal upheld a lower court decision granting a Red Deer woman a physician assisted suicide based on the Carter

decision. The woman, identified only as “E.F.”, suffered from a mysterious mental condition that was physically debilitating and extremely painful but not terminal.

As the defendant in the case, the federal gov’t has yet to decide if it will seek to appeal the case in the Supreme Court. We suspect they may hold off.

Contemplating the inevitable deadlock that will occur between Parliament and Senate when the amended C-14 comes back to the House, one can’t help thinking C-14 was designed to fail.

That is: high-level Liberal legalists drafted it in such a way as to appear as conciliatory as possible to those clamorous opponents of assisted suicide and “judge-made law,” while all the time knowing that those compromises would offer a plethora of constitutional challenges, and that the newly re-masculated Senate, anxious to prove its worth in the wake recent scandals, would pick up on this and send the bill back with amendments, amendments still unacceptable to Parliament.

Thus would the bill fail and the provinces would be forced to devise their own regulations. This laissez-faire approach seems to have worked fairly well for abortions these last 28 years. (Unless of course you were one of the unlucky foetus-es.) And it might work just as well for PADs, which Alberta started to regulate this week and, we suspect, might well do so indefinitely.

POLITICAL PULSE ... from Page 1

centre by abandoning the socially conservative principles on which it was founded. (Former Leader Danielle Smith faced the same criticism, but was forgiven—until the final months of her reign—because of her dynamic leadership qualities.)

Jean’s liberalization program has included an “I believe climate change is real” offensive by members in the House, and the constant evocation of abused women and rape victims whose plight the Rosers claim will be worsened by NDP fiscal policies. Brian has also promised to attend the Calgary gay pride parade (he missed the one in Edmonton, he said, as he was busy with wedding plans).

Jean’s attempts to broaden the ten have been undermined by several MLAs tweeting or retweeting items sceptical about the anthropogenic causes of global warming and, of course Fildebrandt’s commendation—later claimed to be inadvertent—of a constituent who on Facebook referred to the lesbian Ontario premier as “Mr. Wynne or whatever the hell she identifies as.”

Outside of getting married, Jean says he will spend his summer travelling the province and connecting with the grass-roots. One expects a fair bit of fertilizer will be applied.

DATA bank ...

FOUR BUDGETS

During debate in the House various opposition members like to compare other provinces’ finances with Alberta for good or evil. The provinces usually cited are British Columbia, Saskatchewan (whose budget was tabled last week) and Ontario. Here are some selected line items from each of those province’s budget. Remember that the figures for the current year are estimates.

ITEM	Alberta 2016-17	Alberta 2015-16	BC 2016-17	BC 2015-16	Sask. 2016-17	Sask. 2015-16	Ontario 2016-17	Ontario 2015-16
POPULATION	4.2M	4.1M	4.7M	4.6M	1.14M	1.12M	13.8M	13.7M
R Personal Income Tax	\$11.4B	\$11.3B	\$8.2B	\$8.4B	\$2.8B	\$2.7B	\$32.2B	\$30.3B
E Corporate Income Tax	\$4.3B	\$5B	\$2.8B	\$2.8B	\$968M	\$1B	\$12.1B	\$11.4B
V Provincial sales tax	n/a	n/a	\$6.3B	\$5.95B	\$1.31B	\$1.29B	\$23.97B	\$23.49B
N Resource revenue	\$1.4B	\$2.5B	\$2.5B	\$2.3B	\$2.5B	\$2.2B	n/a	n/a
U Gov’t enterprise revenue	\$2.4B	\$2.5B	\$3B	\$2.7B	\$1.08B	\$1.14B	\$5B	\$4.3B
E Investment Income	\$2.1B	\$2.4B	\$1.28B	\$1.20B	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
S Premiums, fees, licenses	\$3.65B	\$3.59B	\$5.8B	\$6B	\$2.1B	\$1.95B	\$6B	\$6B
S Liquor & gaming	\$2.3B	\$2.4B	\$2.3B	\$2.1B	\$511M	\$500M	\$4.4B	\$4.6B
TOTAL REVENUE	\$41.4B	\$42.9B	\$48B	\$47B	\$14B	\$13.9B	\$130.6B	\$126.5B
E Health spending	\$20.4B	\$19.9B	\$17.97B	\$17.45B	\$5.4B	\$5.1B	\$51.8B	\$50.8B
X Education	\$7.9B	\$7.6B	\$5.6B	\$5.5B	\$2.2B	\$2B	\$25.6B	\$24.8B
P Advanced Education	\$5.9B	\$5.8B	\$1.98B	\$1.96B	\$760.4M	\$765.7M	\$7.9B	\$7.8B
E Human Services	\$4.4B	\$4.2B	\$4.2B	\$4B	\$1.04B	\$1.04B	\$11.5B	\$11.3B
N Agriculture & Forestry	\$1.1B	\$1.6B	\$752M	\$1B	\$390.7M	\$355.7M	\$1.7B	\$1.6B
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$51.1B	\$49.3B	\$47.5B	\$46.4B	\$14.5B	\$14.3B	\$133.9B	\$132.1B
S PER CAPITA EXPENSE	\$12.1K	\$12K	\$10.1K	\$11K	\$12.7K	\$12.8K	\$9.8K	\$9.6K
E SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(\$10.4B)	(\$6.4B)	\$377M	\$264M	\$434M	\$427M	(\$5.7B)	(\$4.3B)
S CAPITAL SPENDING	\$8.5B	\$6.9B	\$7.4B	\$6.2B	\$3.5B	\$2.7B	\$16.2B	\$12.9B
S TOTAL DEBT	\$30.5B	\$18.9B	\$67.7B	\$65.3B	\$14.8B	\$13.5B	\$308.3B	\$296.1B
DEBT TO GDP RATIO	9.6%	5.7%	17%	17.4%	19.9%	17.6%	39.6%	39.6%
PER CAPITA DEBT	\$7.3K	\$4.5K	\$14.4K	\$13.9K	\$13K	\$12.1K	\$22.3K	\$21.6K

BILLS PASSED IN SPRING SITTING

(For more detail go to: http://www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=bills_home)

Bill No.	TITLE (SPONSOR)/STATUS	PURPOSE
1	<i>Promoting Job Creation & Diversification Act</i> (Bilous); Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	The gov't's supposed flagship bill read following the Throne Speech is essentially a mandate letter setting out the duties of Economic Development & Trade Minister Deron Bilous "authorizing" him to "establish programs that focus on supporting working people and job creators, attracting investment and diversifying Alberta's economy."
2	<i>Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2016</i> (Ceci); Royal Assent; came into force Mar. 23.	The gov't equivalent of a pay-day loan, which tided them over to beyond the end of the current budgeted year (Mar. 31) and until May 31 when the 2016-17 budget (tabled April 14) was passed—a total of \$8.7B for operational expenses.
3	<i>Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2016</i> (Ceci); Royal Assent; came into force Mar. 23.	Authorized a further sum of \$106.4M in addition to the money allotted in previous budget to Mar. 31, for unforeseen expenses including accommodating extra school students & paying for flood mitigation berms in High River.
4	<i>An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services</i> (Gray); Royal Assent; came into force May 27 with exceptions.	This complicated piece of legislation essentially establishes the ground rules for negotiations between a gov't appointed commissioner and union locals to decide which job designations are or are not classified as "essential" and prohibited from striking. Essential is defined in the act as holding a position, (a) the interruption of which would endanger the life, personal safety or health of the public, or (b) that are necessary to the maintenance and administration of the rule of law or public security.
5	<i>Seniors' Home Adaptation and Repair Act</i> (Sigurdson); Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	This bill essentially puts the gov't into the home-equity loan business by making it the issuer of low-interest loans of up to \$40K to seniors (65+) for household improvements that allow them to remain in their homes longer. Eligibility requires a minimum household income of \$75K p.a. and at least 25% equity in the home (144K households are eligible). The loan is repaid when the house is eventually sold. Grant money totalling \$2M p.a. is also available to low-income seniors wishing to make modifications worth up to \$5K p.a. to enable them to stay in their home.
6	<i>Securities Amendment Act, 2016</i> (Ceci); Royal Assent; came into force May 27 with exceptions.	The annual bill that updates and harmonizes Alberta securities law with that in other provinces. In past years the NDP opposition criticized the Tories for resisting inclusion in a national securities regulator, but Finance Minister Joe Ceci has become as bullish as any of his PC predecessors on local regulation, saying, "We firmly believe that our unique capital markets, driven by the enormous needs of the resource sector, are best served by a street-level regulator in Alberta, a regulator that knows the industry and can provide local oversight right here in Alberta ..."
7	<i>Electoral Boundaries Commission Amendment Act, 2016</i> (Ganley); Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	Authorizes the early appointment of an Electoral Boundaries Commission by Oct. 31, 2016, a year earlier than is currently allowed under the act, which specifies an eight-year gap and two elections between commissions. Last year's early election, however, threw things off and would have meant a commission could not be held until July 2017, which apparently leaves not enough time for it to do its work before the spring 2019 election. The alternative would have been to put the commission off until after the next election, which would have been advantageous to the Wildrose as the number of rural ridings would have remained unchanged during the election. Chances are that the commission will redistribute the ridings to favour the urban areas and thus the NDP.
8	<i>Fair Trading Amendment Act, 2016</i> (McLean); Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	This amendment will give the minister more control over the regulatory organizations delegated to oversee fair trading practices and ensure consumer protection in various fields. Currently the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) is the only such agency and in March of 2015 was accused in a leaked gov't memo of conducting biased investigations and protecting unscrupulous car dealers. The agency also had an extremely high turnover.
9	<i>An Act to Modernize Enforcement of Provincial Offences</i> (Ganley); Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	The justice minister's bill will streamline how minor provincial laws and bylaws are managed. One amendment will enable the expansion of electronic ticketing for minor infractions, thus saving time and reducing errors. Another amendment will end the jailing of those failing to pay their fines for such minor infractions as public drunkenness, vagrancy, and jaywalking. Instead the fines will be applied to their drivers' licenses or registration (as is the currently the case for traffic tickets) preventing renewal unless paid.
10	<i>Fiscal Statutes Amendment Act, 2016</i> (Ceci); awaiting Royal Assent;	This act amends several pieces of financial and tax legislation, most controversially the <i>Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act</i> , which had set a debt ceiling of 15% of GDP at the time of the October budget. There, is no ceiling now.
11	<i>Alberta Research and Innovation Amendment Act, 2016</i> (Bilous); Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	Consolidates the four Alberta Innovates corporations—Bio Solutions, Energy & Environment Solutions, Technology Futures, and Health Solutions—created in 2010 by the Stelmach gov't. Economic Development Minister Deron Bilous pitched this as a streamlining measure that will make the research and granting operations more efficient, but will of course also result in millions of dollars of savings (the 30 executives alone make around \$8M p.a.). Health Solutions' Pam Valentine is interim CEO of the merged entity until a permanent one is hired in the fall.

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Bill No.	TITLE (SPONSOR)/STATUS	P U R P O S E
12	<i>Aboriginal Consultation Levy Repeal Act (Feehan)</i> ; Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	Repeals the Tories' Bill 22, passed in the spring of 2013, which levied industry to provide funds to aboriginal communities negotiating with oil companies on lands deemed traditional. The bill was opposed by the NDP at the time, and was considered paternalistic by the indigenous groups who claimed not to have been consulted about it. Its repeal will supposedly enable the gov't to forge a more equal relationship with Indian and Métis gov'ts.
13	<i>Veterinary Profession Amendment Act, 2016 (Gray)</i> ; Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	Will allow veterinary technologists to be given representation on the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association's governing council and practice review board with full voting rights. The AVMA is responsible for setting and enforcing the rules on the practice of veterinary medicine in Alberta.
14	<i>Health Professions Amendment Act, 2016 (Hoffman)</i> ; Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	The act adds diagnostic medical sonographers (ultrasound technicians) and physician assistants to the regulated health profession, it allows the health minister to direct the College of Physicians and Surgeons to accredit gov't health facilities. Previously the college accredited only private and not-for-profit facilities. The act also allows the College of Opticians to become the College & Association of Opticians, and the College of Physical Therapists to become the Physiotherapy College & Association.
15	<i>An Act to End Predatory Lending (McLean)</i> ; Royal Assent; comes into force on various dates.	This legislation targets the payday loan companies and other high-interest lenders who currently can charge up to \$23 in borrowing fees per \$100 loaned, which can add up to an annualized rate of 600%. The new limit will be \$15 per \$100, the lowest in Canada, and borrowers will be allowed to pay back the loans in installments over two months.
16	<i>Traffic Safety Amendment Act (Mason)</i> ; Royal Assent; came into force May 27 with exceptions.	The act makes a number of changes including toughening the impaired driving regulations concerning ignition interlock use (breathalyzers that disable the ignition), removes the penalty for having outdated insurance pink slips in the car along with the up-to-date ones, but, more notably, addresses transportation network companies (TNCs) such as the ride-sharing service Uber, making it mandatory for the companies to ensure their drivers have the appropriate insurance and a class 4 license.
17	<i>Appropriation Act, 2016 (Ceci)</i> ; Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	The budget bill authorizes the spending of the amounts outlined for each ministry and department in the estimates that the standing committees debated for a month. The budget also outlines the disbursement of the carbon tax monies (starting in Jan. 2017), tax breaks for investors in petrochemical refineries and green projects, a record \$8.5B in infrastructure spending, a \$10.42B operational deficit, and an increase in the debt to \$30.51B this year.
18	<i>An Act to Ensure Independent Environmental Monitoring (Phillips)</i> ; Royal Assent; comes into force June 30.	This bill dismantles the arms-length Alberta Environmental Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Agency (AEMERA). Set up three years ago to dispel suspicions that the existing in-house monitoring was too closely tied to a PC gov't in bed with Big Oil, the agency was chaired by former PC Environment Minister Dr. Lorne Taylor. The agency had done little work, and was expensive. Thus Minister Shannon Phillips is bringing the monitoring department, including AEMERA's head scientist (but not Taylor), back into Environment and under her control.
19	<i>Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Compensation Act (Ceci)</i> ; Royal Assent; comes into force May 27.	This legislation, part of the gov't's plans to prune back the number and cost of the ABCs, seeks to bring the widely varying salaries of their executives into what the finance ministers call, "a rational and consistent framework for executive compensation across the ABCs." Through the summer the gov't will be consulting with a professional benchmarking compensation firm and with Albertans online to come up with a framework. The Treasury Board will also issue directives to the ABCs to provide up-to-date compensation info.
20	<i>Climate Leadership Implementation Act (\$)</i> (Phillips); awaits Royal Assent	The long and convoluted legislation that outlines how the carbon tax will be collected, policed, and redistributed. It also establishes a crown corporation, Energy Efficiency Alberta, that will provide grants, promote conservation, and partner with companies developing small, renewable energy projects.
23	<i>Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2016 (Mason)</i> ; awaits Royal Assent	Makes a number of what Minister Brian Mason called "non-contentious" wording changes to acts including the <i>Chartered Professional Accountants Act</i> , the <i>Condominium Property Amendment Act</i> , the <i>Lobbyist Act</i> , and the <i>Residential Tenancies Act</i> . The bill was passed without debate.
205	<i>Pharmacy and Drug (Pharmaceutical Equipment Control) Amendment Act, 2016 (Ellis)</i> ; Royal Assent; comes into force Jan. 1, 2017.	This private members' bill proposed by PC MLA Mike Ellis (Calgary-West), a former Calgary Police sergeant, will prohibit the possession of equipment used to manufacture problem drugs like fentanyl and W-18, specifically "a pill or tablet press, tablet machine, capsule filling machine or pharmaceutical mixer" by anyone but a pharmacist. One of the few bills that received universal approval in the House this sitting.
206	<i>Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Day Act (Goehring)</i> ; awaits Royal Assent; came into force May 27.	Another bill that brought plaudits from both sides of the House—along with testimonials from members who had encountered post-traumatic stress disorder either indirectly or personally, including sponsor Nicole Goehring (Edmonton-Castle Downs), a social worker. This legislation designates June 27 as national PTSD day—the same as in the US. Alberta becomes the first Canadian jurisdiction to designate an awareness day for the condition that began its semantic life in WWI as shell shock.

BILLS PUT OVER TO THE FALL SITTING (Scheduled start: Oct. 31)

Bill 21, *Modernized Municipal Government Act* (Larivee); passed 1st reading. Bill 202, *Alberta Affordable Housing Review Committee Act, 2016* (Luff); passed 2nd reading. Bill 22, *An Act to Provide for the Repatriation of Indigenous Peoples' Sacred Ceremonial Objects* (Miranda); passed 1st reading. Bill 203, *Fair Trading (Motor Vehicle Repair Pricing Protection for Consumers) Amendment Act, 2016* (Carson); passed 1st reading & referred to the Standing Committee on Families & Communities. Bill 204, *Alberta Tourism Week Act* (Dang); passed 2nd reading.

People ...

Appointed...

On Thursday at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers training centre in Edmonton, against a backdrop of solar panels and electrical conduits, Environment & Parks Minister **Shannon Phillips**, announced the appointment of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel. This group will consult with various interested parties over the next six months and produce recommendations for Energy Efficiency Alberta, the agency created by Bill 20 that will administer programs and hand out cash to energy conservation and renewable resource businesses and individuals. The following individuals were appointed to the advisory panel:

● **Dr. David Wheeler**, Chairman: a microbiologist and president and vice-chancellor of Cape Breton University, NS. A British national, Wheeler has been a green energy adviser to gov'ts and institutions in the UK and Canada and was the driving force behind Nova Scotia's 2009 strategy to produce 25% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2015—which included the controversial recommendation of clear-cutting 100 sq km of trees a year to produce 70MW of biomass energy. His resumé includes three years as executive dean of business at the University of Plymouth (UK), and a stint in the private sector as the executive director of social & environmental policy for The Body Shop.

● **Michele Aasgard**, executive director of the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association, which provides management and coordination of the numerous co-ops found mostly in the rural areas of Alberta, including the rural electrification associations.

● **Desmond Bull**, a band council member with the Louis Bull tribe of Maskwacis Nation (formerly Hobbema), has headed and fund-raised for solar energy projects on the reserve.

● **Tanya Doran**, is “senior sustainability lead” for Stantec engineering's Alberta operations, and an advocate of green building certification for new structures.

● **Jesse Row**, a professional engineer and the Founder and Executive Director of the Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance, a diverse group of stakeholders actively working to maximize energy efficiency in the province.

● **Marc Huot**, a professional engineer and manager of the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC), which helps Alberta municipalities reduce their GHC emissions by providing educational resources, building energy benchmarking, and funding through the MCCAC's energy efficiency and solar energy programs. He was formerly a technical and policy analyst with the Pembina Institute.

Talk ...

... in the Corridors

Jaw-jaw, war-war & Mr. In-between...

● How do you solve a problem like Gregor? Especially if you're a western Canadian leader for whom oil is the mother's milk of politics, and pipelines to tidewater are the nipple? (Too much of a stretch?)

Rachel Notley, pace her regular lectures, favours the honeyed approach when it comes to tackling pipeline foes such as Vancouver mayor and organic fruit juice tycoon **Gregor Robertson**, who on Tuesday went to Ottawa with several coastal tribe chiefs to urge the Trudeau gov't's review panel to nix Kinder-Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Montreal Mayor **Denis Coderre** and a coterie of area mayors are also dead-set against the Energy East pipeline.

At her session's end presser this week Notley assured us that she would spend her summer chatting with the Trudeau panel and others about the jobs the pipeline would create in Alberta and BC, and, of course, about her fabulous Climate Leadership Strategy that, according to NDP catechism, will provide the “social license” to send our oil for combustion elsewhere.

Saskatchewan Premier **Brad Wall**, who was in Calgary this week speaking to the Explorers and Producers Association of Canada at the Petroleum Club, favours a more confrontational approach. “We're in the middle of a battle and, frankly we haven't been winning too many battles,” said Bradley. “By we, I mean this sector and the resource importance of Western Canada.”

Wall criticized the idea of a national carbon tax on top of Notley's (which he didn't criticize) and slammed the US gov't for rejecting the Keystone XL, other provinces for blocking pipelines, and the Leap Manifesto proponents within the NDP and their environmental allies who want the oil left in the ground.

Robertson has said a major spill in Burrard Inlet from tankers leaving an expanded Kinder Morgan terminal in Burnaby could put “hundreds of thousands” of jobs at risk. There is no local support for the pipeline, he claims, and pointed out that the Liberals' 15 seats in the Lower Mainland will “absolutely” be in play in 2019 if the feds don't kill the expansion.

Calgary Mayor **Naheed Nenshi**, who usually reclines on the comfy pillow midway between Rachel's soft-diplomacy and Wall's bellicosity, called Gregor's position “overblown,” advising him to abide by the National Energy Board's decision. (The NEB approved the Trans Mountain on May 19, with 127 conditions, but it still must be approved by cabinet, which the prime minister says will happen by Dec. 31; *Insight* May 20).

“Mayor Robertson has been quoted as saying that no risk is worth it,” Nenshi told the *Calgary Herald*. “I wonder if he's forgetting that the Port of Vancouver is the third largest port in North America and every single day it transports caustic soda, ethylene glycol, sulphur, coal... there are dangerous goods being transported every day there.”

A good point, but one that is unlikely to carry much weight among those living a province whose motto is “splendor without diminishment.” For them, it appears, any diminishment puts them on the path to Mordor, and there are mayors threatening to stand in front of bulldozers should the TM project ever get the green light.

Happier days are here again...

● The 8 pm cut-off on happy hours, set in 2008, has been lifted, allowing bars to reduce the price on drinks at any time during business hours. The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission believes that this will reduce the incidence of “pre-drinking,” whereby (mostly) young imbibers arriving later than 8 pm get sloshed at home to save money on the bar tab.

The other two measures instigated in 2008—limiting purchases to one drink at a time after 1 a.m., and minimum prices on drinks (\$2.75 for a 1-oz shot or a bottle of beer)—remain in place. There is, after all, only so much happiness a state can allow.

The week ahead ...

June 10-12—NDP AGM at the Hyatt Regency hotel in Calgary. Their first conclave since the election win should be a celebratory time. Registration is \$200. The \$200 Saturday night banquet is sold out. Resolution debates 10:30 a.m. Saturday and Sunday; leader's speech at 11:30 a.m. Saturday; VP elections, 9:50 a.m. Sunday. For info and registration: <http://www.albertandp.ca/convention2016>

June 11—The NDP's “LGBTQ+ caucus”—i.e. **Estefania Cortes Vargas** (Strathcona-Sherwood Park), **Michael Connolly** (Calgary-Hawkwood), & Culture & Tourism Minister **Ricardo Miranda** (Calgary-Currie)—host a “LCBTQ+ Extravaganza” fundraiser at Calgary's Backlot gay bar (209 10 Ave. SW), complete with drag show; 9 p.m. - 2 a.m., tickets \$20 at door.

June 15—Many happy returns to Justice Minister **Kathleen Ganley**, born 38 years ago in Edmonton.