

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Comments to the Bill**

**Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act (Time Zone Change)**

**March 11, 2021**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I just wanted to say that, in the last Assembly, there was a petition on changing the time, and there was some support for it. I don't think it was overwhelming, but the whole matter was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development in the last Assembly, and they did some work on this issue. At the end of the day, their recommendation was that we keep ourselves on Daylight Saving Time so that we would be in sync with Alberta. The bill, though, that we got from Cabinet did not really do that. It gave Cabinet a blank cheque to change time zones, get rid of Daylight Saving Time, without bothering to talk to anybody, and quite frankly, I wasn't prepared to give Cabinet a blank cheque like that. I want to thank the committee for the amendment that was made to the bill. Look, I love my colleagues opposite me, but I don't give them a blank cheque for anything.

In any event, I want to thank the committee for bringing forward an amendment. I know I sat in on their discussion about it, and I suggested that there be an amendment to try to circumscribe that ability to change things. I can accept what's here and the work that the committee did on this issue, but I guess 5(2), the way this reads now, it says that there be "an opportunity for public engagement with residents regarding the elimination of the time change and the setting of standard time." What does that really mean? The importance of this kind of discussion and debate is that, if this ever goes for interpretation somewhere, the courts are going to look back at what we say in this House right now. I want to get on the record: what does the Minister mean when he says "public engagement" before a time change is going to be made? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to be clear, I wouldn't change the time all willy-nilly with this "blank cheque," as the Member calls it. It's not like I want to leave work early, so I'm going to change the time so now it's time to go home. The only prudent thing to do, really, is to ensure that we are aligned with Alberta. That being said, there is a requirement in this bill for some sort of a public consultation. I envision that as an email address that the public can send their concerns to. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I am sure the Minister is being rather facetious, but seriously, I want to know what kind of public engagement Cabinet would intend to do before making such a change. Are you going to give people a reasonable amount of notice? Thirty, 60 days? Are you going to publish the proposed change in newspapers, on a website somewhere, allow for comments to be submitted? Will there be a summary of those comments, and then some reasons for why the change is going to be made or not? That's the kind of reasonable approach that I would expect.

Let's cut the humour here, and let's get serious. I would like to get a serious answer from the Minister about what's really meant here by public engagement. The courts will look back at this when residents in the future may want to know what was meant by public engagement. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. This was something put forward by committee. In my mind, it's something quite limited, given that it would make very little sense for us to go off on our own and have a different time than Alberta. It wouldn't make sense, and I don't think the public would be appreciative if we did that. It would cause havoc for flights. It would cause havoc for all sorts of things.

I am serious that we would have some sort of website, an email address, a place where comments can be submitted. I don't plan to travel around the territory seeking engagement. Of course, there are going to be advertisements; that's something completely different from engagement. There is going to be notice given. There is going to be extensive notice given. Everyone is going to know that the time is changing. It's going to be the talk of the town, and I can promise that. There won't be the type of widespread engagement like there might be on large piece of legislation or something like that. This is just not where I think that our resources need to go. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks. I think that was a little more helpful. Look, I'm not suggesting that there has to be public hearings and all of that. For the actual time change, yes, there would obviously be notice, but I would expect that there would be notice or at least an opportunity for the public to express their views about whether we should change to Daylight Saving Time, be consistent with Alberta if they make that change, that kind of thing. I am not expecting a big road show, but to say that there's just going to be an email address, I don't think that quite cuts it in terms of public engagement. I'm not sure what else I have to say on this topic right now, Madam Chair, but I do hope that the Minister would take this kind of responsibility seriously. Thanks, Madam Chair.