

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Thursday, February 10, 1994 3:00 p.m.**

Date: 94/02/10

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated January 19, 1994, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

CLERK: Please be seated.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! Order! Mr. Speaker.

[The Speaker, accompanied by the officers of the Assembly, entered the Chamber and took the Chair]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

head: Prayers

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Dear God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Thy guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all our judgments.

Amen.

head: Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times]

MR. SPEAKER: Open the doors, please.

[The Associate Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

MR. SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Gordon Towers, and Mrs. Towers, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

head: Speech from the Throne

HIS HONOUR: Please be seated.

Fellow Albertans, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the Second Session of the 23rd Alberta Legislature. In the last Speech from the Throne my government laid out its mandate for change and called on Albertans to build on our Alberta advantage and join in the journey to a secure and debt free future.

Since then, we have seen a lot of healthy discussion and debate about where we are heading as a province.

As we begin a new session, the government knows that every step it takes is for one reason, and that reason is to build a brighter future. This government understands that redefining and recreating government is an enormous task and a difficult one, that all of us must make some sacrifices, and that we are not changing just for the sake of change. We are changing so all Albertans can benefit in the long term.

The government will continue with its plan to balance the provincial budget in four years, to create the climate for jobs in the private sector, and to provide better and more efficient government, and throughout, this government will continue to listen to Albertans, to put people first, and to stay true to their traditional values.

Over the next year we will work together through the most critical and challenging part of our journey. As we approach our destination, we can be confident that we are preserving the quality of life that we cherish and building the kind of future that we want for our province and our children.

Today I will describe what the government aims to achieve in the next year. The first step in this government's four-year plan is to stop spending money that we do not have. Under the Deficit Elimination Act the government will balance its budget by 1996-97. With interest payments on the provincial debt accounting for more than 10 percent of our spending and the cost of servicing the debt more than quadrupling from 1988 to 1993, we have to change, because we no longer have any choice. The government cannot ignore the problem, nor can the government solve it simply by raising taxes, which would thwart the very economic growth that we seek. Reducing government spending offers the challenge to find new and better ways to provide government services and get the maximum value for our tax dollars.

As we enter the second year of the plan, we will have a clear and specific map for our journey. Last month the Premier announced the four-year targets for the government's four largest spending areas: health, education, advanced education, and social services. Shortly, the Provincial Treasurer will present Albertans with a budget containing the spending targets for the remaining areas of government as well as the three-year business plans for every government department. Those plans are a first for any government in Canada. They will lay out more details on the route to balancing the provincial budget.

Although balancing the budget is important to Albertans, so is creating new jobs. This government knows that employment is the greatest concern for Albertans today. This government shares that concern and will pursue its strategy of encouraging job creation in the private sector.

Eliminating the deficit and holding the line on taxes are two of the most effective actions government can take to foster economic growth and sustain the Alberta advantage. However, government also has a role to play in helping private industry identify and pursue new opportunities, especially in the international market. This government's strategy for job creation is based on the understanding that Alberta is a trading province. The only way we will create the long-term jobs of tomorrow is by improving our performance in the global market.

This government will work closely with industry to encourage more international trade and investment. The Uruguay round of the general agreement on tariffs and trade, GATT, and the North American free trade agreement, NAFTA, have created many opportunities. To seize these opportunities, we need to change our

domestic policies. In particular, the government will work with the province's agriculture and food industry and with the federal government to adjust domestic laws and policies like the Western Grain Transportation Act and Canada's agricultural safety net programs to take full advantage of the improved market access under GATT and NAFTA.

So many of the emerging needs in newly developing countries like Mexico, China, and Korea coincide with Alberta's strengths in agriculture, processed foods, oil and gas, petrochemicals, waste management, construction, building products, and computer software, among other sectors. This government will work hard to inform Albertans of the new opportunities and to strengthen the pro-business climate needed to pursue them.

Within the next year the government will announce

- a global business plan that will set new trade and investment targets and identify new opportunities in 19 sectors of the Alberta economy,
- an Asia-Pacific business strategy to help Alberta businesses follow up on opportunities identified by the Premier on his recent mission to Asia,
- a Mexico trade and tourism strategy which will help our exporters enter that market, and
- a hot-lead investor program to promote the Alberta advantage to prospective investors around the world.

Here at home the government will continue negotiating with Ottawa and the other provinces to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers by 1995. This government will participate in the national infrastructure program, which will create jobs throughout Alberta. This government will continue to withdraw from direct investment in business. It will redouble efforts to make Alberta more attractive to investment, it will carefully consider the recommendations of the Tax Reform Commission report, and it will ask Albertans to review its draft plans for regulatory reform.

In the energy sector the government will implement phase 3 of its royalty simplification program. It will improve the climate for business through a major restructuring in the Energy ministry, including

- amalgamating the Energy Resources Conservation Board and the Public Utilities Board into a new Alberta energy and utilities board,
- consolidating the Alberta Oil Sands Technology Research Authority, Alberta Oil Sands Equity, and the Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission into the Department of Energy, and
- authorizing the private sector to market the Crown's royalty share for oil as it does now for natural gas.

As well, this government will vigorously uphold Alberta's right to own and manage its natural resources.

This government's approach to the economy is working. Alberta's economy is getting stronger. Our gross domestic product is expected to show a 3 percent increase for 1993. Exports in the first half of last year grew by 10 percent over the same period in 1992. Manufacturing shipments, retail sales, and tourism receipts also posted major gains. Most importantly the Alberta economy generated 35,400 new jobs in 1993. Alberta's economic prosperity depends on having an open, accountable government that provides quality, affordable services.

This government is committed to excellence and renewal. It understands the need to adjust to new economic realities, as the private sector has experienced. The government will continue to seek the most value for every tax dollar, it will continue to eliminate waste and duplication, and it will continue to find new ways of providing essential services at a cost that Albertans can afford.

The government has made progress in reducing the number of government departments, in reducing staff positions through attrition, consolidation, and a severance program, and in seeking to reduce overall employee compensation by 5 percent. Over the next few months the government will take steps to reduce the size and cost of administration in our health and education sectors. It will consolidate both health boards and education boards, change the way education is funded, and create an access fund for advanced education.

This government knows we cannot continue to do things in the same old ways. It is time for everyone involved in the public sector to come together in a new spirit of co-operation and put the customer first. With this in mind, the government will establish the Premier's forum, which will include representatives from Alberta's public service, municipalities, postsecondary institutions, and health and other sectors. They will meet twice a year to discuss how to work together to do things better.

As well, the government will renew its commitment to its employees, understanding that government restructuring has meant significant adjustments not only for departments but for individuals and their families. The government will endeavour to continue to provide a fair severance program, counseling, and training for employees, people who lose their jobs during this four-year transition period.

As for the many employees who remain in public service, this government will make new efforts to recognize and reward their valuable contributions. This government knows that it needs to work in partnership with its employees. It will introduce productivity incentives and programs to recognize excellence and innovation. It will continue to keep employees informed and to seek their ideas.

The government will work closely with its federal counterpart to improve the quality and affordability of all programs and services. This government is participating in the Canada/Alberta overlap and duplication initiative to find new ways of co-operating and eliminating duplication. Already the Alberta and federal governments have agreed to simplify the environmental assessment process and are looking at opening joint offices to provide one-window service to individuals and businesses.

The Alberta government will work with the rest of Canada to restructure federalism. This will involve redesigning the transfer payment system and national social programs such as unemployment insurance.

A tremendous amount of change lies ahead of us, and this government will continue to work with Albertans every step of the way. To date, the Alberta government has consulted with Albertans through roundtables and commissions. Thousands of Albertans have called the government's phone-in lines. This government will hold public discussions on deregulation, a new Water Resources Act, and a new forest conservation strategy. The government will complete its public review of the Human Rights Commission, and it will seek Albertans' views on the future of the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. This government is deeply committed to consultation, believing that open, honest discussion is how we restore credibility and trust between Albertans and their government and appreciating that government cannot face today's challenges alone. It needs the understanding, support, involvement, and commitment of Albertans.

The business of this session will continue to reflect the views and values of Albertans. In keeping with this government's mandate for change, the Order Paper will focus on deregulating and streamlining government operations to encourage efficiency and innovation in the public service and on removing barriers to freedom in the private sector. All legislative activity will reflect

the view of government as a service, with the focus on Albertans as customers.

The access to information and protection of privacy Act has been redrafted to reflect the government's consultations with Albertans. The new Act will ensure a free flow of government information while protecting individual privacy.

In education, which Albertans have identified as our greatest priority, the government will amend the School Act as follows:

- to establish full provincial funding to ensure students throughout Alberta have equal access to a quality basic education,
- to reduce the number of school boards and shift decision-making to schools, communities, and parents,
- to streamline administration to allow for a more direct flow of resources to the classroom,
- to provide for and evaluate a pilot program for chartered schools, and
- to provide education to students in accordance with Canadian constitutional guarantees.

As well, there will be more assessments of students and better reporting to students, parents, and the public. School boards will be asked to prepare three-year business plans and will report publicly on salaries and administrative costs.

In advanced education this government will introduce a new system of grants to Alberta's universities, colleges, and technical schools to increase access for students and reward performance by the institutions.

In health the government will introduce legislation reducing the number of health boards and authorizing the development of community-based management for a full range of health services. All Albertans will continue to have access to the services they need in accordance with the Canada Health Act.

In municipal affairs the government will consolidate 21 statutes and their regulations into a new Municipal Government Act. As well, the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and the Senior Citizens Housing Act will be consolidated into a single statute, which will reflect Albertans' belief that our social housing policy should allow for self-reliance and self-determination.

In this Assembly members will be called on to continue to streamline its operations and make its procedures more effective and efficient.

In the first year of my government's four-year plan my government listened to Albertans and took action, laying the groundwork for the journey to a secure and debt free Alberta. In the second year, in this session, Albertans will turn an important corner as we work towards our new spending targets and find new and better ways to conduct the business of government together. By the end of year four Albertans will have a province where government lives within its means, where people are unencumbered by red tape and excessive taxes, where our education, health, and social services programs are efficient, cost-effective, and responsive and accountable to the needs of our communities, where business creates good jobs and attracts investment and tourism from all over the world, and where all citizens can build on the Alberta advantage to provide a great future for our province and our children.

Let all Albertans join together to share ideas for adjustment and renewal and work together to break new ground, to change the way we define government in today's economic realities. Let all of us accept this mighty challenge and deal with its struggles in the selfless, pioneering spirit of those that came before us, the spirit that has made Alberta the volunteer capital of Canada, and let all the people of this province remain united in the urgent need to build a better future for those that come after us. No responsibility can be more formidable, more exciting, or more worth while. As this government indicated recently, this journey will not be an

easy one. But this isn't about 1994 or 1995. This is about our tomorrows. This is about leaving to the next generation the kind of Alberta that was left to us.

At this time my government would like to express its congratulations and best wishes to the Albertans who have been chosen to compete for our country at the 1994 Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway, starting in two days. As well, my government extends best wishes to the 2,000 young Albertans who will compete at the 10th Alberta Winter Games next month.

Now I leave you to the business of this session, confident that as elected representatives you will in every way fulfill your responsibilities to Albertans.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, I pray that the blessing of God may rest on your deliberations.

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours, their party, and the Premier left the Chamber as a fanfare of trumpets sounded]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

[Mr. Speaker took his place in the Chair, and the Mace was uncovered]

(The Premier returned to the Chamber)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 1

Labour Boards Amalgamation Act

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Bill 1, being the Labour Boards Amalgamation Act.

This Bill amalgamates the functions of the Public Service Employee Relations Board with those of the Labour Relations Board. One year ago the government combined these two boards administratively under one chair, resulting in substantial savings. This Bill gives the Labour Relations Board the authority to administer both the Labour Relations Code and the Public Service Employee Relations Act. The Bill simplifies procedures under these two Acts while preserving the distinctive features of our public- and private-sector labour laws. It is an example of the government's intention to reduce administration and streamline our statutory requirements wherever possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Leave granted; Bill 1 read a first time]

head: **Tablings**

MR. SPEAKER: I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

head: **Motions**

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration on Monday next.

[Motion carried]

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Votes and Proceedings of this Assembly be printed after first having been perused by Mr. Speaker and that he do appoint the printing thereof and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

[Motion carried]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 38(1)(a).

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Member for Calgary-Cross, those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the interim report of the Select Special Committee on Parliamentary Reform, filed with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly December 1, 1993, and distributed to all members of this Assembly, be now received and concurred in.

[Motion carried]

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I move that the select standing committees for the present session of the Legislative Assembly be appointed for the following purposes:

1. Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing,
2. Public Accounts,
3. Private Bills,
4. Law and Regulations,
5. Public Affairs,
6. the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act, and
7. Legislative Offices.

[Motion carried]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 49(1).

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Minister of Labour, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 38(1)(a).

MR. SPEAKER: Having heard the motion by the hon. Minister of Labour, all those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SPEAKER: Those opposed to the motion, please say no. So ordered.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's seven standing committees.

1. Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing Committee: Mr. Coutts, chairman; Mr. Pham, deputy chairman; Dr. L. Taylor; Mr. Jacques; Mr. Clegg, Mrs. Forsyth; Mrs. Gordon; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Friedel; Dr. Oberg; Mr. Renner; Mr. Smith; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Dickson; Mr. Mitchell; Mr. Collingwood; Mr. Germain; Dr. Nicol; Mr. Bracko; Ms Carlson; and Mr. Langevin.
2. Public Accounts Committee: Mrs. Abdurahman, chairman; Mr. Friedel, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mrs. Burgener; Ms Calahasen; Mr. Coutts; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. McFarland; Mr. Lund; Mr. Magnus; Dr. L. Taylor; Mr. Sohal; Dr. Percy; Mr. Chadi; Ms Carlson; Mr. Vasseur; and Ms Hanson.
3. Private Bills Committee: Mr. Renner, chairman; Mr. Amery, deputy chairman; Mrs. Gordon; Mr. Fischer; Mrs. Fritz; Mrs. Laing; Mr. Herard; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Jacques; Mr. Smith; Dr. Oberg; Mr. Pham; Dr. L. Taylor; Mr. Wickman; Mr. Sekulic; Mr. Kirkland; Mr. Van Binsbergen; Mr. Beniuk; Mrs. Soetaert; Mr. Yankowsky; and Ms Leibovici.
4. Law and Regulations Committee: Mr. Havelock, chairman; Mr. Doerksen, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mr. Brassard; Mr. Fischer; Mr. Dunford; Mrs. Burgener; Mr. Severtson; Mr. Jacques; Mr. Coutts; Mr. Smith; Dr. Oberg; Mr. Renner; Mr. Dickson; Mr. Zariwny; Mr. Collingwood; Mr. Germain; Ms Leibovici; Mr. Sapers; Mr. Zwozdesky; and Mr. Langevin.
5. Public Affairs Committee: Mrs. Gordon, chairman; Mrs. Forsyth, deputy chairman; and all members of the Assembly.
6. Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act Committee: Mr. Dunford, chairman; Mr. Herard, deputy chairman; Mr. Stelmach; Mrs. Laing; Mr. Doerksen; Mrs. Forsyth; Ms Haley; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Sohal; Dr. Percy; Mr. Chadi; Dr. Massey; Mr. Dalla-Longa; Mr. Mitchell; and Mr. White.
7. Legislative Offices Committee: Mr. Hierath, chairman; Mr. Sohal, deputy chairman; Mr. Brassard; Mr. Doerksen; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. Friedel; Mr. Bruseker; Mr. Dickson; and Dr. Massey.

[Motion carried]

head: Notices of Motions

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give oral notice of the following three motions:

Be it resolved that the Assembly do resolve itself into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supplementary supply estimates to be granted to Her Majesty.

Be it resolved that the messages of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 1993-94 supplementary supply estimates, and all matters connected therewith be referred to the Committee of Supply.

Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 58(6) the number of days that the Committee of Supply will be called to consider the 1993-94 supplementary supply estimates shall be two days.

[Motion carried]

[At 3:47 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]