

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

**Title:** Tuesday, February 13, 1996 **3:00 p.m.**  
Date: 96/02/13

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

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated February 12, 1996, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

THE CLERK: Please be seated.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber]

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

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker, accompanied by the officers of the Assembly, entered the Chamber and took the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

Father, on this day of a new beginning, we ask for Your guidance in the responsibility we have undertaken and Your help in fulfilling our duties.

As Members of this Legislative Assembly may we faithfully serve all Albertans and, in serving them, serve You.

Amen.

Please be seated.

### Entrance of the Administrator

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

[The Mace was draped]

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Associate Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

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

Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Administrator awaits.

THE SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Honourable the Administrator.

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Administrator of Alberta, the Hon. Mr. Justice J.W. McClung, his party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. The Administrator took his place upon the throne]

head: **Speech from the Throne**

MR. JUSTICE McCLUNG: Pray be seated.

Fellow Albertans, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the Fourth Session of the 23rd Alberta Legislature. This is the year that my government will achieve its major financial objectives: to balance the budget, to reduce spending to a level

that Albertans can afford in good times and in bad, and to move ahead on its plan to pay down the debt. As well, 1996 will be a year of transition. Now that spending is in line with revenues, the government will focus on monitoring and fine-tuning to maintain and improve the quality of its essential programs and services.

The government will remain fiscally responsible. In keeping with its obligation to pay down the provincial debt, all surpluses must go to reduce the debt. The benefits of this approach are clear. Surpluses in the past two years have seen \$1.5 billion paid directly against Alberta's mortgage. Alberta is the first province to reduce its debt, and its net debt will be eliminated five years sooner than planned.

As the government meets its legislated obligations to balance the budget and pay down its debt, Albertans are being asked for their views on how to invest any extra remaining revenue. They may choose to move more quickly to pay down the debt, reduce their tax burden, or target spending to areas in which we will see an increase in the quality of program or service be it a better educated student, a healthier Albertan, or stronger infrastructure.

On these and other issues our government will continue to listen to Albertans, to evaluate the effect of the changes of the last three years, and to ensure that its programs and services meet Albertans' needs. Reflecting the advice of Albertans, work in the coming session will focus on six areas:

- quality and accessible health care,
- effective and equitable education,
- more economic growth and jobs,
- responsible financial and program management,
- secure and self-reliant communities, and
- a strong Alberta in a strong and united Canada.

Albertans have said that their top priority for government is health. Our government will work to improve the quality, accessibility, and accountability of the health care system. Initiatives to improve patient care and ensure an efficient system will include a pilot project using health smart cards and a plan for a new information network. The system will be more accountable through regular performance measurement and reporting by the regional health authorities and an independent report card on the system from the Provincial Health Council.

The government will focus on accessibility by maintaining all seniors' health benefits at current levels and freezing health care premiums for all Albertans at current levels. Having canceled the planned reductions in base funding to the regional health authorities for 1996-97, the government will allocate new funds to enhance community health services. Half of these funds will be invested in an innovation fund to stimulate further development of programs in the area of community health services.

Alberta's education system has turned the corner. The coming year will be a time of financial stability and investment. Initiatives will focus on improving learning and teaching through the use of technology in schools, meeting the demand for schools in high-growth areas of the province, and providing consistent programming in early childhood services for all children in Alberta.

In adult learning the government will pilot a new funding mechanism for postsecondary institutions, encouraging them to provide quality, accessible, and relevant programs at the lowest possible cost. It will invest uncommitted money from the access fund in new technology to support classroom instruction and distance education and in matching funds raised by universities to invest in infrastructure to attract new faculty in areas of research excellence. As well, the government will launch a program to

match funds committed by institutions to update equipment used in a learning environment.

Other initiatives, like the health workforce education program, will provide education and training to help workers respond to changes in the workplace.

A major priority for Albertans is jobs. Albertans are close to a year ahead of the four-year goal of the private sector's creation of 110,000 new jobs, a goal set in early 1993. From December of 1992 to December of 1995 employment in Alberta grew by 103,000 jobs, 95 percent of them in the private sector.

Nevertheless, one of our government's primary responsibilities is to continue to create the climate for prosperity and private-sector jobs for Albertans and to build on the Alberta advantage that attracts business, investment, and jobs to our province. The government will consult and work with the Alberta Economic Development Authority, businesses, associations, and communities to create a contemporary economic development strategy for our province. This effort will aim to keep business costs like taxation, workers' compensation rates, and regulation the most competitive in Canada. As well, the government will refine Alberta's international export strategy, create one-stop business information services, and continue with its plan to deregulate across government.

In energy the government will prepare to implement Alberta's new royalty regime for new oil sands projects. This should clear the way for some \$2 billion in new projects and thousands of new jobs. A streamlined regulatory framework will reduce the regulatory burden on industry while enhancing the ability of the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board to encourage responsible companies and to prevent unacceptable practices like the abandonment of facilities. Our government will ensure a smooth transition as the province takes the lead in moving from a regulated monopoly over electricity to an open, competitive market.

In agriculture and rural development it will seek business investment for growing market opportunities in food products like meats, potatoes, pasta, and horticulture as well as nonfood products like ethanol and fibreboard. It will pursue marketing options for Alberta's wheat and barley given our farmers' vote to change the federal grain marketing regime, and it will introduce legislation to implement the farm income stability program.

In scientific research and development our government will consult with Albertans to develop a new provincial science and research strategy.

My government will continue to seek more effective and more efficient ways to conduct its business. In terms of financial management the government will bring in legislation to limit its authority to provide loans, guarantees, and investments to businesses, and it will create a new, independent management structure as well as new goals and responsibilities to manage the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. The Provincial Treasurer will provide a detailed report on Alberta's finances in his Budget Address on February 22.

In the coming year Alberta faces a 22 percent reduction in transfer payments from the federal government. Having taken action to balance our budget, our government commits to protecting Alberta's health, social services, and postsecondary educational programs from this \$342 million reduction.

In terms of program management the government will continue to provide streamlined programs which are essential to Albertans while assessing other programs that may be delivered best by the private sector or community agencies. The government will amalgamate road safety programs to offer one-window service

regarding drivers, vehicles, and roads. It will consolidate its agencies responsible for fairness and equity into an Alberta human rights and citizenship commission. It will simplify and modernize employment standards and filing procedures at Alberta registries, and it will continue to consult with Albertans about other programs which could be delivered by communities.

Central to all of the government's efforts is its commitment to provide services that reflect Albertans' desire to take more responsibility for their lives in the workplace, in the marketplace, and in the community. To that end, the government will work with regional health authorities to ensure that community health councils are in place to involve Albertans in determining health priorities and developing strategies to achieve them. Through consultation with Albertans it will develop a new way of choosing people to serve on the boards of the regional health authorities.

It will introduce legislation to help communities take a greater role in planning as well as delivering services throughout the province to Albertans with disabilities. The Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities has provided insights on the importance of an integrated approach to serving the needs of Albertans in this area.

The government will introduce legislation to integrate children's services at the community level, it will expand regional access to government services for seniors and develop a provincial strategy to educate Albertans about the abuse of elders, including a 1-800 reporting line, and it will promote safer communities by focusing on serious and violent offenders.

Reflecting the importance of information in our society, the government will increase Albertans' access to the information they need through an electronic library network and the Internet. In fact, this Speech from the Throne is available on the government's newly redesigned home page on the Internet.

Responding to Albertans' concern and responsibility for maintaining a healthy natural environment, the government will proceed with Special Places as part of the province's integrated resource plan and in keeping with Alberta's contribution to the World Wildlife Fund's endangered spaces program. It will reintroduce legislation governing the management and conservation of our precious water resources, and it will work with Albertans to define a common vision and a conservation strategy for our forests.

Albertans want a strong Alberta in a strong and united Canada. As the host of the 37th annual Premiers' Conference this year, our government will work to renew a country worth keeping through open and transparent constitutional negotiations based on respect and equality among all provinces, and it will keep striving to reduce trade barriers between provinces and administrative overlap among the federal and provincial levels.

We can all be proud of our province and our people. We have remained focused on controlling our finances and on developing and maintaining the highest possible quality of programs and services. My government thanks the people of Alberta and the men and women of the public service for their hard work and sacrifice over the last year. It will continue to listen to Albertans and to follow their lead in laying the foundation for a thriving and exciting future for our province and our children.

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.  
 And if I may be permitted, God bless the Hon. Gordon Towers.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please.

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

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

[The Mace was uncovered]

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

head: **Introduction of Bills**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

**Bill 1  
 Agent-General Act Repeal Act**

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 1, the Agent-General Act Repeal Act.

Mr. Speaker, as Bill 1 this reflects the twin government priorities of increasing efficiency in government and repealing legislation whenever and wherever possible.

[Leave granted; Bill 1 read a first time]

head: **Tablings**

THE SPEAKER: I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by His Honour the Honourable the Administrator.

head: **Motions**

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Administrator to this Assembly be taken into consideration Wednesday.

[Motion carried]

MRS. BLACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Votes and Proceedings of this Assembly be printed after first being 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. 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. Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act,
2. Law and Regulations,
3. Legislative Offices,
4. Private Bills,
5. Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing,
6. Public Accounts, and
7. Public Affairs.

[Motion carried]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 49(1), which provides for the establishment of a striking committee to prepare, recommend, and report a list of the members, chairmen, and deputy chairmen to comprise the Assembly's seven standing committees.

THE SPEAKER: Having heard the motion proposed by the hon. Government House Leader, would those in favour please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. So ordered.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I would move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 38(1)(a) in order to move a motion appointing the members, chairmen, and deputy chairmen to comprise the Assembly's seven standing committees.

THE SPEAKER: Would those members in favour of the motion proposed by the hon. Government House Leader please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried.

MR. DAY: The Assembly having agreed to dispense with the striking committee, it is required that the committee list and members be submitted verbally in one motion at this time. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's seven standing committees:

1. Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act Committee: Mr. Dunford, chairman; Mr. Doerksen, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mr. Beniuk; Ms Carlson; Mr. Dalla-Longa; Mrs. Forsyth; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Langevin; Dr. Percy; Mr. Sapers; Mr. Sekulic; and Mr. Shariff.
2. Law and Regulations Committee: Mr. Havelock, chairman; Mr. Doerksen, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mr. Brassard; Mrs. Burgener; Mr. Chadi; Mr. Collingwood; Mr. Coutts; Mr. Decore; Mr. Dickson; Mr. Dunford; Mr. Germain; Mrs. Hewes; Mr. Jacques; Dr. Oberg; Mr. Renner; Mr. Severtson; Mr. Trynchy; Mr. White; Mr. Yankowsky; and Mr. Zariwny.
3. Legislative Offices Committee: Mr. Hierath, chairman; Mr. Brassard, deputy chairman; Mr. Bruseker; Mr. Dickson; Mr. Friedel; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. Kowalski; Dr. Massey; and Mr. Severtson.
4. Private Bills Committee: Mr. Renner, chairman; Mr. Amery, deputy chairman; Mr. Bracko; Mrs. Fritz; Mrs. Gordon; Ms Hanson; Mr. Herard; Mr. Jacques; Mr. Kowalski; Mrs. Laing; Mr. Langevin; Ms Leibovici; Mrs. Soetaert; Mr. Stelmach; Mr. Tannas; Mr. N. Taylor; Mr. Trynchy; Mr. Vasseur; Mr. White; Mr. Yankowsky; and Mr. Zariwny.
5. Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing Committee: Mr. Coutts, chairman; Mr. Pham, deputy chairman; Mr. Beniuk; Mr. Clegg; Mr. Decore; Mr. Dickson; Mrs. Forsyth; Mr. Friedel; Mr. Germain; Mrs. Gordon; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Henry; Mr. Hlady; Mrs. Mirosh; Dr. Nicol; Dr. Oberg; Mr. Renner; Dr. L. Taylor; Mr. Van Binsbergen; Mr. Woloshyn; and Mr. Zariwny.

6. Public Accounts Committee: Mrs. Abdurahman, chairman; Mr. Coutts, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mrs. Burgener; Ms Calahasen; Ms Carlson; Mr. Chadi; Ms Haley; Mr. Kirkland; Mr. Magnus; Mr. McFarland; Dr. Oberg; Dr. Percy; Mr. Pham; Mr. Sekulic; Dr. L. Taylor; and Mr. Yankowsky.
7. Public Affairs Committee: Mrs. Gordon, chairman; Mrs. Forsyth, deputy chairman; and all members of the Assembly.

[Motion carried]

[At 3:37 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]