

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

**Title:** Monday, February 10, 1997 3:00 p.m.  
**Date:** 97/02/10  
**THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Order! All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated January 15, 1997, 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.

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.

Please be seated.

### 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. 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 Lieutenant Governor awaits.

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

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, H.A. "Bud" Olson, and Mrs. Olson, 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: Pray be seated.

Fellow Albertans, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the fifth session of the 23rd Alberta Legislature.

In the first session of this Legislature, in 1993, my government laid out the four cornerstones of its mandate: exercise fiscal responsibility, create a climate for jobs, streamline government, and listen to Albertans. Today, on the eve of this fifth session, my government thanks Albertans for moving successfully through

change and, in so doing, setting the standard for the rest of our great nation. In 1997 the government's overall goal is to continue to adapt to change and to build on those four cornerstones to achieve an even better Alberta for our children and our grandchildren.

Having laid a solid foundation with balanced budgets and diminishing debt, our government will remain fiscally responsible. It will continue to spend no more than it earns, to pay down the provincial debt, and to apply any excess revenues to the debt as required by law. The government is on track to eliminate its net debt excluding pension liabilities by the year 2005, some 16 years ahead of the originally legislated target.

Such progress is not a licence to return to the free-spending ways of the past, but it does allow our government to reinvest funds which would otherwise have gone to pay interest on the debt, to reinvest them in Albertans' priority areas. Today almost 75 cents of every dollar spent by the Alberta government is in the priority areas of health, education, and social services compared to 69 cents in 1992-93, and this time none of it is funded with borrowed money, tax increases, or debt burden. Shortly the Provincial Treasurer will present a detailed fiscal plan in the government's new budget.

Our government's second cornerstone is based on jobs. It will continue with policies which help create the environment for Albertans to generate wealth, investment, and good jobs.

Alberta's economic engines are firing on all cylinders. From December of 1992 to December of 1996 Albertans created 157,000 new jobs in a wide variety of areas, a significant number of them in high-technology, knowledge-based industries. Of these new jobs, 80 percent are full-time, and almost all of them are in the private sector.

Our gross domestic product grew by 16 percent in four years. Today Alberta has its lowest unemployment since 1982 as well as the lowest youth unemployment in Canada. We are expected to lead the nation in economic growth, and the announcement of the \$25 billion investments in the oil sands, among the largest investments in Canadian history, is a dramatic example of the ongoing and projected inflow of people, business, and capital to our province.

The government's new economic development strategy, Building on the Alberta Advantage, provides a framework for further growth in key sectors of our economy, growth which is expected to result in 155,000 new jobs by the year 2000, and its new human resources strategy, People and Prosperity, will help Albertans get the skills and training they need to compete and stay ahead in the marketplace.

Our government will ensure that Albertans continue to enjoy the lowest overall taxes in Canada. As well, it will extend its family tax credit, which began this year for low-income Albertans, to middle-income Albertans in 1998.

The government will continue to invest in research and development in Alberta's areas of strength, such as energy, forestry, and agriculture, and apply the results to help firms develop and acquire new technologies. It will work with business and technology developers on directories and databases in sectors like advanced materials and biotechnology.

Our government will support our export-driven economy by reinvesting strategically in highway projects like the north/south trade corridor and our resource road programs, by playing a prominent role in Canada's year of Asia/Pacific and following up on Team Canada's recent trade mission to the Asia/Pacific, and by informing Alberta businesses about international trade and investment opportunities.

It will increase certainty for developers of the oil sands by entrenching the major features of the new generic royalty regime in legislation, and amendments to the rules governing the tenure of minerals will give industry more clarity and flexibility.

Our government will promote value-added agricultural products through efforts like the industry-led agrifood and fibre value-added fund. This will encourage advances in areas such as food processing and agricultural products used in medicine and health science. As well, the government will restructure its crop insurance program to increase its share of support at lower levels of coverage, broaden the base of coverage, and reduce both producers' premiums by an average of 25 percent and the demand for unbudgeted assistance in the future.

The third cornerstone of the government's mandate is to continue to provide efficient, affordable, and deregulated programs and services focusing on its core businesses: people, prosperity, and preservation. In fact, about one-quarter of the government's legislative agenda will focus on streamlining and removing duplication in and barriers to the delivery of public services.

Having made the necessary shift from a health system based on acute care to one based on community care, our government will keep working to ensure high-quality, accessible, and sustainable health care with stable and predictable funding. It will address current and future pressure points and proceed with reforms aimed at preventing illness and injury. These efforts will reduce waiting times for emergencies and surgeries, allow for more nurses and other frontline staff, and improve community health and home care.

In education the government will focus on improving the quality of education and on preparing Albertans for the growing demand for skilled jobs in our province. In primary and secondary education it will work to improve high school completion rates, students' achievement in math, and students' access to information through technology. Strategies to these ends include expanding distance learning programs; changing guidance counseling programs to raise students' awareness of career options; establishing curriculum standards in technology for students and technical standards and certification requirements for teachers; making career and technical studies a permanent part of the high school curriculum, replacing home economics and industrial arts; and changing the curriculum in the earlier grades to emphasize problem solving, which helps students relate math to actual situations.

In adult education our government will budget funds to reward excellence in learning and research, to encourage the use of technology in learning, to modernize equipment and upgrade facilities, and to increase financial help to students faced with rising tuition and other costs. It will contribute funds to the new Careers: the Next Generation Foundation, led by the private sector, to give high school students meaningful work experience, particularly in trades and technologies, and a new initiative will combine career information and consulting programs with job placement services for young people who have left high school without the skills and credentials they need for sustained employment.

The government is committed to supporting people who truly need it, thereby ensuring a better quality of life for all Albertans. Reforms have allowed the government to redirect funds to areas with the greatest need. Increased decision-making at the local level will continue with the children's service initiative, a community-planned, government-supported program to serve the

needs of children and families involving more than 10,000 Albertans from diverse avenues, disciplines, and government departments. The early intervention program aims to keep children from requiring crisis services later on. Other efforts include developing a co-ordinated national strategy to help needy children, introducing legislation to co-ordinate the delivery of services at the community level to persons with developmental disabilities, and implementing legislation to protect against the physical, emotional, or financial abuse of elders.

Our government will work further to integrate services and eliminate overlap at the federal/provincial level. It will do this by clarifying and rebalancing administrative roles and responsibilities, especially in the area of social policy reform, by harmonizing systems of environmental management and the promotion of sustainable development, and by reducing trade barriers at home and abroad.

The government will focus on further reducing serious and violent crime. It will work towards implementing enhanced consolidated legislation to help victims of crime.

The final cornerstone of our government's agenda is to be more open, responsive, and accountable. Accordingly, it will continue to listen to Albertans and respond to their concerns.

The government will canvass leaders of government, labour, and business in an Alberta Growth Summit on how the public service can respond to the pressures of growth and increasing demand for its services while continuing to live within its means.

It will keep providing Canada's first governmentwide business plans and performance measures as well as financial reporting that is clear, timely, and comprehensive, and public discussion will remain a vital part of the policy-making.

Our government will consult with the energy industry on ensuring the future competitiveness of its royalty system and on maintaining Alberta's pre-eminence in energy-related research and technology.

It will seek the advice of engineers, geophysicists, geologists, and architects on reforming their regulatory environments to ensure both competitiveness and public safety.

It will work with environmental, aboriginal, scientific, and recreational groups, industry, and the public on defining a common vision and a conservation strategy for Alberta's forests.

It will consult Albertans to determine the apprenticeship and industrial training needed to meet the challenges of globalization, technological change, and the rising demand for skilled labour.

Finally, the government will phase in the application of freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation to local public bodies like municipal governments, school boards, and regional health authorities.

Thus my government will continue to carry through its mandate of fiscal responsibility, a climate for jobs, streamlined government, and listening to Albertans and to monitor and fine-tune its practices, programs, and services as required.

My government is privileged to serve the people of this province. It looks forward to working further with Albertans to build Alberta together as we approach a new century and a new millennium.

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.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: 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]

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

[The Mace was uncovered]

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

THE SPEAKER: Order please, ladies and gentlemen.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

**Bill 1  
School Amendment Act, 1997**

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 1, the School Amendment Act.

The School Amendment Act, 1997, is about managing change. It accommodates the increased emphasis on high school completion, enables year-round schooling, bases teacher certification on competency, and helps boards recruit highly qualified superintendents by extending contracts from three to five years.

[Leave granted; Bill 1 read a first time]

**Tablings**

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

head: **Government Motions**

1. Mr. Klein moved:

Be it resolved that the speech of His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration Tuesday.

[Motion carried]

2. Mrs. Black moved:

Be it resolved 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]

3. Mr. Evans moved:

Be it resolved that the select standing committees for the present session of the Legislative Assembly be appointed for the following purposes:

- (1) the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund,
- (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), providing for the establishment of a 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 by the hon. Government House Leader, those in favour of this motion, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

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

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

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no. So ordered.

4. Mr. Day moved:

Be it resolved that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's seven select standing committees.

- (1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee: Mr. Dunford, chairman; Mr. Doerksen, deputy chairman; Ms. Carlson; Mrs. Forsyth; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Langevin; Dr. Percy; Mr. Sekulic; and Mr. Shariff.
- (2) Law and Regulations Committee: Mr. Havelock, chairman; Mr. Doerksen, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mrs. Balsillie; 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; and Mr. Yankowsky.
- (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. Amery, chairman; Mr. Herard, deputy chairman; Mrs. Balsillie; Mr. Beniuk; Mr. Bracko; Mrs. Fritz; Mrs. Gordon; Ms. Hanson; Mr. Jacques; Mr. Kowalski; Mrs. Laing; Mr. Langevin; Ms. Leibovici; Dr. Nicol; Mrs. Soetaert; Mr. Stelmach; Mr. Tannas; Mr. Trynchy; Mr. Vasseur; 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; Dr. Nicol; Dr. Oberg; Mr. Renner; Mr. Shariff; Mr. Stelmach; Dr. Taylor; Mr. Van Binsbergen; and Mr. Zariwny.
- (6) Public Accounts Committee: Mrs. Abdurahman,

chairman; Mr. Coutts, deputy chairman; Mr. Amery; Mr. Bracko; Mrs. Burgener; Ms Carlson; Ms Haley; Mr. Havelock; Mr. Kirkland; Mr. Magnus; Dr. Nicol; Dr. Oberg; Dr. Percy; Mr. Pham; Mr. Renner; Dr. Taylor; and Mr. Yankowsky.

- (7) Public Affairs Committee: Mrs. Gordon, chairman; Mrs. Forsyth, deputy chairman; and all members of the Assembly.

[Motion carried]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that unanimous consent be granted to waive Standing Order 38(1)(a) in order to move the motion changing the membership on the Assembly's Special Standing Committee on Members' Services.

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

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. The motion is carried.

5. Mr. Day moved:

Be it resolved that the following change be made to the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services: Mr. White to replace Mr. Henry.

[Motion carried]

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, as I move to adjourn until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow, I can advise the Assembly that under government business at 4:30 p.m. tomorrow the hon. Provincial Treasurer will present the government's budget.

[At 3:40 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]