

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, April 10, 2001** **3:00 p.m.**
Date: 01/04/10

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: Welcome.

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.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of our national anthem. Please join us in the language of your choice.

HON. MEMBERS:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

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

[The Mace was draped]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, while awaiting the arrival of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I'd like to share some information about the 83 members that make up the 25th Legislature of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. These 83 members, 23 of whom were first elected on March 12, bring a vast wealth of experience and expertise to this Chamber. Many have had experience in more than one occupation.

Sixty-eight have a business and entrepreneurial history. Twenty-four were educators for a period of time. Sixteen are or were involved in the farming and agricultural industry. Thirteen have accounting/financial management experience. Eight have oil field experience. Five have experience in computer technology. Five are lawyers. Five have experience in the real estate field. Four have experience in the construction field. Four are professional authors. We have two members each with experience in police force services, nursing, and the forest industry. We have a single member in each of the medical, floral, television and radio reporting, and social services fields. One is a pastor with the Faith Covenant Church, one is a deacon and elder with the Christian Reformed Church, and one is a bishop with the Church of Latter Day Saints.

Public service by your MLAs can be summarized as follows: 24 are past councillors and/or Reeves, 12 are former councillors and/or aldermen, seven are former mayors, and five are former school trustees.

This great province of ours is a fascinating mosaic of nationalities and cultures as well, and it's indeed gratifying that this diversity is

reflected in the makeup of the current Legislature. Based on the information provided, 56 MLAs were born in Alberta and 19 were born outside of this province, representing eight different provinces and territories in Canada. Another eight members were born outside of Canada in the countries of Lebanon, Vietnam, Scotland, Poland, India, Tanzania, and the United States.

Fifty-one years is the average age of our members, and there is an age span of 35 years between our youngest member and our most senior.

For at least two of our members politics seems to run in the family. We have with us in the current Legislature the son of the distinguished former Member for Lac Ste. Anne and Barrhead from 1967 to 1979. We also have the daughter-in-law of the also distinguished former Member for Cardston and Cardston-Chief Mountain from 1986 to 1997.

I would not want to forget to mention that a former executive assistant to a former cabinet minister of the early 1980s has returned to the Legislature Building as one of the 23 recently elected MLAs.

We are indeed fortunate to have members, men and women of integrity, character, and dignity, who will serve the province of Alberta with distinction.

Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor

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

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

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

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

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Lois E. Hole, CM, and Mr. Hole, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

HER HONOUR: Would everyone please be seated.

THE SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly have elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfill the important duties thus assigned to me. If in the performance of those duties I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not the Assembly, whose servant I am and who through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duties to their Queen and province, hereby claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they may have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all reasonable times, and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favourable construction.

MR. HANCOCK (Provincial Secretary): Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that she freely confides in the duty and attachment of this Assembly to Her Majesty's person and government, and not doubting that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temperance, and prudence, she grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow the Assembly's constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the Assembly shall have

ready access to Her Honour upon all suitable occasions and that all proceedings as well as your words and actions will constantly receive from her the most favourable construction.

HER HONOUR: Mr. Premier, ministers, very distinguished guests, many friends, lots of friends, great friends, to the loyal opposition, to all of you, this is a great time. To you our Speaker, I can think only that you are to be congratulated and that you will do a very, very great job.

May I say before I start the Speech from the Throne that Ted and I were extremely fortunate to get invited to a very special Mass. It was a Mass that was held at St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church. It was called the Red Mass. Many of you who are Roman Catholic may know what I am speaking of. For those of you that are Roman Catholic and don't know, I will tell you. For the Protestants who really don't know, I will tell you.

We were very fortunate to be invited to this Red Mass. It was very lovely. If any of you ever get that opportunity, don't miss it. It was a beautiful event, but we did not know what it was all about. We discovered that lawyers and judges come to the Mass wearing red robes, and the rest of us pray for them. We prayed quite hard.

It was a beautiful time. His Grace Archbishop MacNeil, who had just retired, was there, a very, very special gentleman, a very nice man, I might add. I just enjoyed him so much. Very Scottish and very proud of his Scottish heritage. He told us a story, and the story goes like this. A woman's son went to college, and this woman decided that she'd better go and see her son, so she went to the college to see her son. He'd been there about three months. She asked him how everything was going. He said, "Fine." She said, "How is it with your two roommates?" He said: "Well, it's not so good at night. The one that sleeps in the cot to the left of me screams half the night. The one that sleeps in the cot to the right of me bangs his head up against the wall half the night." The mother said, "And what do you do?" He said, "I just keep playing my bagpipes." You must remember that His Grace is Scottish. He told the story, and I thought it was very interesting.

head: **Speech from the Throne**

HER HONOUR: Fellow Albertans, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the First Session of the 25th Alberta Legislature. Once again I have the privilege of delivering the Speech from the Throne.

Today begins a new legislative session with a new group of legislators who have been chosen by Albertans to represent them in this Chamber. Some are returning members; others are new. All have been given a solemn responsibility and a duty to honour the trust that has been placed upon them. As the business of this Assembly is conducted, I urge all members to respect the charge that has been placed upon them, to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the importance of their undertaking, and to remember that they are here in service to the people of this province.

It was only two months ago that I laid out the government's vision for Alberta's future. It was a vision of low taxes, no provincial debt, a strong economy, new jobs for our young people, sound infrastructure, good health care and education systems, stable agricultural communities, safe streets, and reliable social programs. During the course of the provincial election campaign Albertans learned more about that vision and the government's plan to achieve it. They talked about it with others, they thought about it, and on March 12 they endorsed it with their votes.

That plan still stands. I'm not going to repeat it today because Albertans already know what the plan is. It's the plan they voted for, and it's the plan the government will now carry out, aided by a

new configuration of ministries to address priority areas. Today this Assembly begins the work of making that vision a reality.

A Strong Economy

That work begins with maintaining and building on a strong economic base. This government recognizes that a strong economy is not an end in itself. Rather it is a means to achieve the things that matter most to Albertans. A growing and diversified economy supports investments to make our health and education systems the best they can be. It creates good jobs that allow people to provide for their families. It sustains the arts and cultural communities that add so much to our quality of life.

A strong economy begins with a solid fiscal plan. The government pledges that it will stay the course of its fiscal plan, a plan that has brought Alberta away from deficit and debt and into the security and prosperity the province now enjoys. It's a plan to keep taxes the lowest in Canada, ensure that spending is responsible and affordable, and eliminate the debt. It's a plan that will give Alberta's children a gift we all hope to be able to bestow: a future with limitless possibilities.

A foundation of Alberta's economy will continue to be its modern transportation infrastructure. The government will make strategic investments to improve the safety and efficiency of Alberta's roads and highways. This year an additional 35 kilometres of the north/south trade corridor will be twinned, bringing the total number of twinned kilometres to 860 of the 1,200 that will in time make up the corridor. When completed in 2007, the corridor will link Alberta to a continental trade and tourism route through the western United States and Mexico.

The government will continue to provide business and investment programs, especially in conjunction with the 2001 World Championships in Athletics. These programs will focus on the strategic benefits of investing in Alberta and demonstrate the province's diverse and world-class energy, petrochemical, forest and building products, agriculture and food, tourism, and information and communications technology sectors.

Alberta benefits tremendously from its participation in a free energy market. At the same time, the government will take steps to ensure a reliable, ample, and affordable energy supply within the province. Legislation will be introduced this session to put into law a commitment to help protect Albertans from high natural gas prices. This bill will ensure that Alberta consumers have a competitive natural gas service that maintains the Alberta advantage.

The government will work to reduce and stabilize electricity prices by streamlining the approval process to bring new generation projects onstream. The government will continue to address electricity price concerns and other consumer issues with the advice of the newly created government Advisory Council on Electricity.

Stable Agricultural Communities

Maintaining the viability of farms and rural communities continues to be a priority for this government. Recent events like outbreaks of disease and severe weather serve as reminders that safe, affordable food production cannot be taken for granted. Efforts to develop a long-term strategy for the health, sustainability, and growth of Alberta's agriculture industry will be accelerated based on the insights of Ag Summit 2000. Key among those efforts will be the introduction of a new policy dealing with intensive livestock operations and a renewal of efforts to provide Alberta farmers with marketing choice for their wheat and barley. The government stands by its commitment to support Alberta farmers in times of need.

A Clean Environment

Albertans recognize that a high quality of life also depends on a healthy environment. Our province is blessed with clear air, clean water, and a breathtaking landscape that supports a rich abundance of plants and wildlife. The government of Alberta will strengthen its reputation as a leader in environmental issues with a number of new initiatives to enhance environmental stewardship and ensure that economic growth is responsible and sustainable.

A Responsive Health Care System

As important as a clean environment in maintaining human health is a responsive health care system. Albertans are strongly committed to the publicly funded health care system, and the government of Alberta shares this commitment. The government's priorities for health care in the next year will focus on access to health services, illness prevention, and effective regional governance. The government will provide Albertans with a stronger voice in health system management. This fall Albertans will elect two-thirds of the board members of the 17 regional health authorities.

A Lifelong Learning System

Like health care, education continues to be a top priority of this government. Albertans need and deserve a lifelong learning system that provides the best possible start in the early grades, an accessible postsecondary system, and opportunities for job training and retraining throughout one's career.

The government will increase funding to school boards to help improve student learning. Boards may use these dollars to reduce class sizes, enhance literacy programs, or introduce other initiatives so that learning, particularly at the earliest grade levels, can be enhanced. There will also be more dollars for teacher salaries to ensure that Alberta can continue to attract and retain Canada's best teachers. Work will continue on the government's \$1 billion, three-year commitment to build new schools and modernize existing ones so our students have a safe, healthy environment in which to learn.

Supports for postsecondary students will be augmented. The number of heritage scholarships will be increased to meet the demand, athletic scholarships will be boosted, the Jason Lang scholarship will be expanded to students in their third and fourth years, and a new scholarship will be introduced for graduate students. Automatic student loan forgiveness and a more user-focused student finance system will also be introduced to make the postsecondary learning system more affordable.

Safe, Strong Communities

Another priority of the government will be to make Alberta communities as safe, strong, and self-reliant as they can be. The fight against crime remains a top priority for this government. This year community groups will receive more than \$550,000 in grants for crime prevention initiatives. The Victims of Crime Act will be amended to better support and serve victims of crime by ensuring equitable award decisions and simplifying the appeal process.

Albertans value a caring society where children, seniors, and others who are vulnerable receive the support they need. The government is committed to providing this support, beginning with giving children a strong start in life, particularly those that are most at risk. This year a new pilot program will be implemented in which mobile community teams respond to crisis situations involving children, youth, and families in government care or at risk of coming into care. Another new program will be introduced to provide mentoring to youth leaving child welfare to ease their transition to adulthood.

Support for low-income Albertans will continue to be provided. The government will review income support programs to determine whether they continue to meet clients' needs.

Arts and culture play a vital role in sustaining the high quality of life Albertans enjoy. Recognizing this, the government will extend the Alberta film development grant program to encourage the continued development of film arts in the province.

A Pledge

The government's plan for Alberta's future reflects the values of Albertans themselves, values of community and family, hard work and caring for others, creativity, confidence and innovation, and excellence in all endeavours. These are the values that have guided Albertans throughout the province's history, and they are the values that will continue to guide this government.

These values will shape Alberta's future, beginning with a Future Summit being held this fall where Albertans will help chart a course for the province's debt-free future. The summit will give all Albertans a voice in crafting the vision that will carry this province forward into the future.

The government will ask the Alberta Economic Development Authority to work with the ministers of Economic Development, Finance, and Revenue to plan and facilitate this event. The Community Development minister will also be part of the leadership team in recognition of the fact that the opportunities created by freedom from debt are not only about simple economics. Rather they are about quality of life. They are about the kind of province we want to live in and the kind of province we want for our children and grandchildren.

It is to our children and grandchildren that the government pledges to honour the trust that has been placed in it by Albertans. It will stay the course of debt reduction, fiscal accountability, and continued tax reform. It vows to build an Alberta that provides opportunities for all citizens to share in the province's prosperity and optimism, opportunities that will become limitless once the province becomes free of debt. This goal, once only a tiny pinpoint of light far in the distance, is now firmly in view thanks to the sacrifice and hard work of all Albertans.

It promises to maintain a strong economy and stable agricultural communities, foster science and research, keep our environment clean, support excellent health and education systems that meet all Albertans' needs, and help build caring, safe, strong communities.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and God bless you all.

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 SPEAKER: Hon. members, we're honoured today to have in our presence the mother of a current member whose father once served in this Assembly. The current member is the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert, and from 1967 to 1979 this hon. member's father served as the MLA for the constituency of Lac

Ste. Anne and the constituency of Barrhead. In the Speaker's gallery today is the widow of the former member, Hugh Macarthur Horner, and mother of the current Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert. I would like this lady to rise and receive the warm welcome: Mrs. Jean Horner.

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

head: **Introduction of Bills**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

Bill 1 Natural Gas Price Protection Act

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg leave to introduce Bill 1, the Natural Gas Price Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Natural Gas Price Protection Act would put into law our government's commitment to protect Albertans from unexpected spikes in the volatile price of natural gas. On February 6 I announced that the government would offer price protection if needed beyond April 30, when current natural gas rebate programs end. Designating this bill as Bill 1 emphasizes the importance our government places on delivering on its commitments to Albertans. Further details of this made-in-Alberta protection program will be made public in the days and weeks ahead after a thorough analysis of gas prices expected for 2001 has been completed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; 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 Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

Certificates of Election

THE CLERK: Mr. Speaker, I have received from the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta pursuant to the Election Act a report containing results of the general election conducted on the 12th day of March 2001, which states that an election was conducted in the following electoral divisions, and the said report further shows that the following members were duly elected.

[The Clerk read the election returns]

Motions

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the speech of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration tomorrow.

[Motion carried]

MR. ZWOZDESKY: 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. HANCOCK: 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,
- (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.

In addition thereto, I move that there be appointed for the duration of the present Legislature a Special Standing Committee on Members' Services.

[Motion carried]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request the Assembly's unanimous consent to waive Standing Orders 49(1) and (3), providing for the establishment of a striking committee to prepare, recommend, and report a list of members, chairs, and deputy chairs to comprise the Assembly's seven standing committees and one special standing committee.

[Unanimous consent granted]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request the Assembly's unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 38(1)(a) in order to move the motion appointing the chairs, deputy chairs, and members to comprise the Assembly's seven standing committees and one special standing committee.

[Unanimous consent granted]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Government House Leader.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's seven standing committees and one special standing committee:

- (1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund: Mr. Hutton, chair; Mr. Magnus, deputy chair; Mr. Bonner; Ms. Carlson; Mr. Fischer; Mr. Knight; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Marz; and Mr. VanderBurg.
- (2) Law and Regulations: Mr. Friedel, chair; Mr. Herard, deputy chair; Rev. Abbott; Mrs. Ady; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Cenaiko; Mr. Danyluk; Ms. DeLong; Mrs. Gordon; Mr. Horner; Mr. Klapstein; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Maskell; Mr. Mason; Mr. Masyk; Mr. Rathgeber; Mr. Renner; Mr. Snelgrove; Mr. Vandermeer; and Mr. Yankowsky.
- (3) Legislative Offices: Mrs. Tarchuk, chair; Mr. Ducharme, deputy chair; Ms. Blakeman; Mr. Friedel; Mrs. Fritz; Ms. Graham; Mr. Hlady; Mrs. O'Neill; and Mr. Tannas.
- (4) Private Bills: Ms. Graham, chair; Ms. Kryczka, deputy chair; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Goudreau; Mr. Graydon; Mr. Jacobs; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Lord; Mr. Magnus; Mr. Maskell; Dr. Massey; Mr. McClelland; Mr. McFarland; Mr. Ouellette; Dr. Pannu; Mr. Pham; Mr. Rathgeber; Mr. Snelgrove; Mr. VanderBurg; Mr. Vandermeer; and Mr. Yankowsky.
- (5) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Mr. Klapstein, chair; Mr. Johnson, deputy chair; Rev. Abbott; Mr. Amery; Mr. Cao; Ms. Carlson; Mr. Danyluk; Mr. Fischer; Mrs.

- Fritz; Mr. Graydon; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Jacobs; Mr. Knight; Mr. Lord; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Masyk; Mr. McClelland; Dr. Pannu; and Mr. Zwozdesky.
- (6) Public Accounts: Mr. MacDonald, chair; Mr. Shariff, deputy chair; Mrs. Ady; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Broda; Mr. Cao; Mr. Cenaiko; Ms DeLong; Mr. Goudreau; Mr. Hutton; Mrs. Jablonski; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. Marz; Mr. Mason; Mr. Ouellette; Dr. Taft; and Mrs. Tarchuk.
- (7) Public Affairs: Mr. Strang, chair; Mr. Pham, deputy chair; and all members of the Assembly.
- (8) Members' Services: Mr. Kowalski, chair; Ms Haley, deputy chair; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Broda; Mr. Ducharme; Mr. Horner; Mrs. Jablonski; Mr. Mason; Dr. Massey; Mr. McFarland; and Mr. Woloshyn.

[Motion carried]

[At 3:48 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

