

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, February 17, 2004**

3:00 p.m.

Date: 04/02/17

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated February 4, 2004, summoning all 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: Good afternoon.

Almighty God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Your blessings on all here present. We ask Your guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all our judgments for the benefit of all Albertans. Amen.

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

Hon. Members and Guests:

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: What a wonderful choir. Please be seated.

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 Speaker: Ladies and gentlemen and hon. members, prior to the arrival of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor the Royal Canadian Artillery Band will play a brief musical interlude.

The RCA Band, Canada's oldest regular army band, was formed in Quebec City in 1879. It was subsequently stationed in Montreal and Halifax. It has seen service in both world wars and in Korea, and it has travelled across Canada and beyond our borders. Reconstituted in the city of Edmonton in 1997, the band is today under the direction of Captain Gerry Heslip, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

The band will now play a piece written by English composer Gustav Holst, the details of which are in your program.

[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, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Lois E. Hole, CM, AOE, her party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

Her Honour: Please be seated.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I start the Speech from the Throne, I would very much like to thank the Premier for the lovely letter he sent to the Prime Minister on my behalf. [applause]

Also, I would like to thank all the rest of you because I know I have your support. So I thank all the hon. members. I thank the ladies and gentlemen who are here today. Thank you very much.

I also would just like to say that every one of you should have the opportunity to ride escorted by the police. It is truly magical. I know that the people are wondering: what is going on? I just wish it were an open car and I could stand up and wave. But it's exciting, and it really is truly magical.

Lastly, may I say that the rotunda looks absolutely beautiful. To Ruth, who made sure that she got all the flowers: well, I noticed. They're lovely.

head: **Speech from the Throne**

Heading toward Alberta's Second Century A Proud History, A Promising Future

Her Honour: Fellow Albertans, I am pleased to welcome you to the Fourth Session of the 25th Alberta Legislature. It is once again my distinct honour to mark the opening of the Legislature with the Speech from the Throne. While I am always honoured to fulfill this aspect of my duties as Lieutenant Governor, I am particularly pleased to be addressing my fellow Albertans this year as it gives me the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to you all.

Thank you to everyone here in this Chamber and across the province who offered hugs and kind words of encouragement over the past year. Thank you to those who sent messages of hope and understanding and kept me in their thoughts and prayers throughout what has been a challenging time for me and for my family. Your messages and other expressions of support helped me gather the strength and energy I needed to overcome the obstacles I faced, and overcome them I have.

Your words and actions over the past year have reminded me of the many qualities that are so fundamental to the Alberta spirit, qualities like generosity, strength, compassion, and above all optimism. This is a province of people who never shy away from a challenge and who look to the future with boundless confidence, enthusiasm, and hope.

Albertans will soon have an opportunity to appreciate and to celebrate everything that sense of optimism has achieved. The year 2005 will mark this province's 100th birthday. It will mark a century that allowed Albertans to forge a unique identity. That identity is one of confidence in our ability to work hard and achieve great things, pride in the prosperity and growth we have accomplished together as Albertans, and gratitude for the many strengths, privileges, and responsibilities we enjoy as Canadians.

This government shares Albertans' sense of optimism for the future. It has developed a 20-year plan to help the people of this province build on the many successes of the past 100 years and create even greater success in the century to come. The plan identifies four key areas, or pillars, that will be crucial to Alberta's continued success and sets out specific goals for Albertans to achieve in those four areas. The pillars of the plan are unleashing innovation, leading in learning, competing in a global marketplace, and making Alberta the best place to live, work, and visit.

While the 20-year plan contains long-range goals that will require the co-operative efforts of many individuals and sectors and over many years, there are a number of steps the government is taking now to begin building on the successes of the past and create an even brighter future for all Albertans.

Unleashing Innovation

An important key to building that brighter future is the ability to unleash the full potential of Albertans' innovation. As the global economy continues to shift toward knowledge-based industries and technologies, so will the government's focus on expanding the province's capacity for innovation.

Our province's wealth of natural resources has long been a source of pride for Albertans. While Alberta has traditionally gained much of its prosperity from the rich resources that grace the province, some of the opportunities that lie before us will hinge on what Albertans are able to do with those resources, on the ability to create new economic opportunities out of traditional strengths. That includes finding new and innovative ways to turn Alberta's raw resources into manufactured products for export markets, which is why the government will unveil a strategy to develop a diversified and competitive manufacturing, tourism, and business services sector for the province.

Building a culture of innovation also takes new ideas and new processes, and that means research. In 2004 government will expand on the work already taking place through the Alberta energy innovation strategy to ensure that Alberta continues to lead the way in energy innovation and research.

The energy industry has been a key factor in creating Alberta's prosperity. The industry's positive impact on this province is clearly felt through the royalties it contributes to government revenues that help fund front-line services for Albertans, and its impact is clearly demonstrated by the hundreds of thousands of jobs the industry creates and by its tremendous contributions to the growth and well-being of Alberta communities. The new strategy will help to build on those contributions. It links public- and private-sector partners from across Canada to work together on research to further oil sands technology, develop cleaner coal technology, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, manage water resources, improve conventional oil and gas recovery, and explore alternative energy sources.

The government will also encourage innovation in the way Alberta's resources are developed through its water strategy for the province. This spring a provincial water council will be established to help manage this resource for future generations of Albertans.

Other promising opportunities for new innovations can be found in developing sectors such as information and communications technologies and life sciences. To encourage Alberta's expertise in information and communications technology, or ICT, the government will create an ICT institute to guide research and innovation in this emerging sector. Work will also continue this year in the area of research and technology commercialization, which focuses on providing opportunities for Alberta-grown innovative products and services to be developed.

The life sciences sector is another area where Albertans are showing their innovation and where their research and development are showing even greater promise. The government will assist in this area with the creation of a life sciences institute to co-ordinate research taking place across the province in areas such as agriculture, environment, forestry, health, bioenergy, and water research.

Co-operative research will be further considered with a new prior research program with an initial focus on BSE. This past year Albertans have found themselves at the centre of debate over this disease, and the province will also be at the centre of work to find solutions.

The government understands that building a culture of innovation goes well beyond supporting technical research and scientific development. That is why this government is also committed to building a future where Albertans can continue leading in learning.

Leading in Learning

The process of learning begins as soon as a child is born and continues throughout that child's life. The government recognizes this fact through a full spectrum of programs that covers every aspect of child and adult education.

This year the government's commitment to lifelong learning in Alberta will be further strengthened with the introduction of a bill to establish the new Alberta centennial education savings plan. Under the plan, beginning in 2005, every child born in Alberta will receive a \$500 contribution toward an established registered education savings plan. This program will provide a foundation for children born in Alberta's centennial year and those born in the years following to plan for and pursue whatever postsecondary education opportunities they choose.

The program represents more than an investment in individual children. It is an investment in our shared future as Albertans, in the generations who will inherit all that Albertans have worked hard to create and who will lead the province in the century to come.

While this investment will have an important impact on future students, improvements must also be made now to ensure that young Albertans already in the kindergarten to grade 12 system enjoy every possible advantage. This year increased funding for learning will work in combination with a new funding framework to give school boards increased flexibility to meet the unique needs and circumstances of each Alberta community. Under the new framework government will not dictate to school boards how to allocate the dollars they receive, leaving it to each board to address priority areas and account to parents in each community on their decisions and outcomes.

These investments come on top of other improvements to the basic learning system in response to recommendations from Alberta's Commission on Learning. Some of those improvements are already underway including implementing new guidelines to ensure that class sizes are manageable. Work has also begun to create a new school wellness program that recognizes that a strong mind is nurtured by a healthy body. That includes phasing in a mandatory program of daily physical activity for all students. The change will help set all young Albertans on a path toward lifelong health and fitness.

While the Alberta Learning Commission has generated increased awareness and debate over the kindergarten to grade 12 system, the province's postsecondary education system is of equal importance to Alberta's future. Postsecondary education and lifelong learning experiences are important, and they should be accessible to all Albertans. These experiences offer much more than simply a path to a new career or a better job. They also offer one way for Alber-

tans to achieve their dreams and realize their full potential. Nothing could be more important.

This year new funding for postsecondary learning will include an increase in base operating grants for all postsecondary institutions as well as additional dollars for new spaces in high-demand programs. That initial investment will come with a commitment to create a total of 2,000 new spaces over the next four years.

Access to lifelong learning opportunities will also increase this year with the implementation of the new postsecondary learning act. The legislation gives more postsecondary institutions in the province the opportunity to offer degree-granting programs. Each student's ability to access a quality education will be further enhanced through the creation of the Campus Alberta quality council. The council will review all new degree program proposals to ensure that each program is of the highest possible quality.

As well, government will strengthen and enhance apprenticeship programs. While Alberta leads the country in apprenticeship training, the province's economic growth continues to create a shortage of skilled workers in many key economic sectors. In addition to helping Albertans get the training they need to find and keep jobs, the Alberta government will also work with the federal government to attract highly skilled immigrants to the Alberta workforce. These initiatives will help employers find the skilled workers they need in this growing economy.

Competing in a Global Marketplace

Alberta is poised to enter its second century from a position of economic strength, but that position offers no guarantees for the future. Just as they have throughout the province's history, Albertans will need to continue working hard and looking ahead to future challenges and opportunities in order to secure long-term security and prosperity for the province.

Potential threats to Alberta's economic prosperity and security were made abundantly clear this year, when the challenge of prolonged drought was compounded by a single case of BSE, bringing the province's beef industry to a virtual standstill. As steps were being taken to restore the industry, a single case in the United States connected to Alberta only served to deepen the crisis. Albertans were quick to rally around affected producers and communities, offering their support and showing their confidence in the quality of Alberta beef, but more work needs to be done to restore international confidence in Alberta's beef industry and open borders to live cattle.

The recent BSE situation served as a sharp reminder of the interconnected nature of today's global economy. More than ever the policies and decisions of other jurisdictions can have a direct effect on Alberta's economic health. That is why the Alberta government will redouble its substantial efforts to strengthen its ties with the province's largest trade and investment partner, the United States.

To that end, the government will open an Alberta office in Washington, D.C., to advance the province's economic and policy interests and to help expand Alberta's contacts with top American decision-makers. Alberta is consulting with the federal government on this matter. Alberta will also continue to work with the government of Canada on key trade and policy areas of importance to all Canadians including improving and enhancing common border practices and trade policies and regulations.

While the Alberta government is committed to working with the other provinces and the federal government on areas of mutual concern, it will also continue to use opportunities such as the newly established Council of the Federation to ensure that Alberta's unique

needs and perspectives are heard and respected. Alberta will also pursue other avenues as required to represent the interests of Albertans. That includes aggressively pursuing options to create grain marketing choice for wheat and barley producers so their operations can realize full market potential.

The people of this province are fiercely proud of their Canadian identity, but they are also proud of all they have achieved as Albertans. The government will continue its efforts to ensure that national policies and decisions do not take away from those accomplishments or affect Alberta's ability to make the most of future opportunities. Those opportunities may be national and even global in scope, but their effects will be felt much closer to home. Economic growth and prosperity help to ensure a high quality of life for all Albertans. They are key factors in what makes our province the best place to live, work, and visit.

Making Alberta the Best Place To Live, Work, and Visit

This year the government will continue building on the programs already in place to ensure that all Albertans enjoy the highest possible quality of life with a particular focus on the most vulnerable members of Alberta's communities. This focus includes all children. There can be no greater accomplishment for Albertans than to raise healthy and strong children who are confident in their knowledge and their abilities, optimistic about their future, and compassionate in the way they interact with their peers, their community, and the world at large. Our goal is simple: to ensure that Albertans, especially children, feel safe and protected.

A first step toward creating that kind of environment for all children will be the upcoming Round-table on Family Violence and Bullying. The round-table will be held in May and will be preceded by province-wide workshops. These efforts will help communities and government partners find ways to break the cycle of violence that can have a devastating and lasting effect on individual families and on the fabric of Alberta communities.

Alberta's most vulnerable citizens will also be protected through a new plan to prevent sexual crimes that target children, such as Internet crimes, Internet luring, child pornography, and child prostitution. Alberta already has unique legislation to protect children involved in prostitution. This new plan will bring all crimes that sexually exploit children together under one initiative, strengthening the way in which young Albertans are protected from exploitation and abuse.

The safety of all Albertans will be enhanced through changes to the way the government funds policing. This year the government will begin implementing a new funding formula for policing which will significantly increase the dollars to deliver this important service. This initiative comes about in part as a result of this government's ongoing consultation with municipalities on their concerns in this area.

More effective and better co-ordinated services are also the goal of the Alberta disability strategy. It calls for the creation of an office for disability issues which will work with the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities and government ministries to encourage greater cross-government co-ordination and more effective delivery of programs for disabled Albertans, promote positive attitudes toward the disabled, and raise awareness of disability issues.

A third area where the government will be looking to create greater co-ordination is in its response to the diverse and changing needs of Alberta's seniors. A plan will be developed to help the province's health system, workplaces, and other institutions prepare

for Alberta's aging population. The focus will be on initiatives and approaches that contribute to the well-being and independence of seniors. The upcoming budget will provide sufficient dollars to meet the current program needs of Alberta's growing seniors' population and ensure that services continue to be available to those in need.

To better serve those Albertans who can no longer live independently and have moved to a long-term care facility, the government will establish a new process to ensure that facilities are accountable for the accommodation services they provide. The government recognizes the many contributions of seniors and will work to ensure that they receive quality accommodations at an important time in their lives.

For Albertans who need support meeting their basic needs or finding a job, the government will introduce a new program called Alberta Works. The program will help clients assess their strengths and needs, whether it's job-search assistance and training, income support, health benefits, or child support services. For the first time financial assistance will also be available for people fleeing family violence, to help them establish a new household and make a fresh start.

This year will also see improved programs and services for aboriginal Albertans. The government will continue to work together with its aboriginal partners in key areas such as economic development, joint relationship building, consultation on resource development, learning, and health care to meet the specific needs of aboriginal communities. Upcoming initiatives for this year include an expansion of the mobile diabetes screening program to include off-reserve communities and the creation of new programs dealing with HIV, tobacco use, and community-based care for aboriginal citizens.

Good health care for all citizens is also a vital component of preparing for Alberta's second century. For most Albertans the measure of a strong health system is its ability to provide front-line service and response to their everyday health needs. Toward this goal, the government will continue to work with the Alberta Medical Association and regional health authorities to implement a new primary care initiative. Under the initiative Albertans will have access to a team of health care providers that can offer primary care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Greater access will also be provided through greater choice of where and how Albertans receive the care they need. That includes increased government support for community-based care options for seniors, persons with disabilities, and mental health clients looking for alternatives to acute care in a hospital setting.

Quality of patient care will be further strengthened through a new mandate for the Health Services Utilization and Outcomes Commission. This year the commission, which will be renamed the health quality council of Alberta, will take on an expanded mandate for patient safety. This builds on its current role of monitoring and reporting on the performance of Alberta's health system.

Alberta needs to continue pursuing meaningful health reform so the system remains affordable and accessible to future Albertans. There has been great progress in Alberta in health reform in recent years, and the government pledges to continue that work. The goal of reform is not to weaken the system but to strengthen it. Alberta also pledges to work with other provinces and the federal government on a program of national health reform because every government, regardless of ideology or party, has acknowledged that the system is not sustainable unless meaningful reform is made.

Ensuring the safety and health of individual Albertans is important, but so is the health of Alberta communities, of the traditions, institutions, and infrastructure that form the backbone of our

province. For rural Albertans that structure has been challenged through the recent years of drought, the BSE crisis, and the migration of certain jobs and opportunities to larger urban centres. In response to those pressures, the government will introduce a new rural development strategy to help ensure that the people and businesses in rural Alberta enjoy every opportunity to reach their full potential.

The approach of Alberta's 100th birthday will also be marked by continued investment in the centennial capital plan, announced last year. Year 2 of this infrastructure plan will see continued investment in new health facilities, schools, postsecondary institutions, government facilities, and centennial projects. As well, in the upcoming budget the capital plan will be extended out another year to keep infrastructure work rolling into 2007. In the coming year Alberta municipalities will also continue to benefit from ongoing centennial capital plan investment in municipal roads and water infrastructure.

As always, all new government spending will be carefully measured to ensure that new programs and services don't jeopardize the financial security Albertans have worked so hard to create for themselves and for the province as a whole. The principles of the sustainability fund will be respected, and the fiscal discipline that carried Alberta successfully through the past decade will continue to move the province forward into its second century.

To ensure that future generations of Albertans are no longer burdened with the debts of the past, the government remains committed to paying off Alberta's debt as it comes due until that debt is zero.

Conclusion

The many new projects and initiatives to be launched in the coming year are much more than the result of careful fiscal planning. They are also a testament to the remarkable energy, dedication, and forward-looking spirit of Albertans.

Albertans are keenly aware of the privileges and obligations they hold as citizens of this province and this country. They are confident in their ability to take on the challenges of the future and are anxious to make Alberta's approaching second century even more successful than the province's first hundred years. The government stands ready to support all Albertans in that goal. Albertans have achieved remarkable things together since 1905, and the coming years will show that those achievements were but an introduction to an even brighter history yet to be made.

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

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

The Speaker: Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of *God Save The Queen*. Would you please remain standing at the conclusion.

Hon. Members and Guests:

God save our gracious Queen,

long live our noble Queen,

God save The Queen!

Send her victorious,

happy and glorious,

long to reign over us:

God save The Queen!

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order!

Her Honour: May I just say lastly, before I leave, that this could be, you know, the last throne speech. I hope not, but I just want to say that I look around and I see people who have put on wonderful concerts, done wonderful things. I've attended wonderful community events and enjoyed everything that I have done and have met so very many wonderful, amazing people. So I thank all of you.

To the hon. members, all of you, from all parts, thank you very much for your support.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Her Honour, her party, and the Premier left the Chamber as a fanfare 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

Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan Act

Mr. Klein: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I request leave to introduce Bill 1, the Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan Act. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 1, the Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan Act. Next year Alberta will celebrate its 100th birthday, and it's fitting that this milestone be recognized with a commitment to the province's children and to Alberta's continued success for years to come.

In keeping with this government's promise to be a leader in learning, Bill 1 will establish the Alberta centennial education savings plan. Under the plan the government will contribute \$500 to a registered education savings plan for every child born or adopted to an Alberta family beginning in 2005, provided that the parents open a registered education savings plan in the child's name. In other words, there is some parental responsibility. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to provide an incentive for parents to plan and save for their children's future education.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

head: **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.

head: **Motions**

Mr. Klein: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration Wednesday, February 18.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that pursuant to Standing Order 49(1) 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) Legislative Offices,
- (3) Private Bills,
- (4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, and
- (5) Public Accounts.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the following persons be appointed to the Assembly's five standing committees:

- (1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee: Mr. Hutton, chair; Mr. Magnus, deputy chair; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Broda; Ms Carlson; Mr. Knight; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Marz; and Mr. VanderBurg.
- (2) Legislative Offices Committee: Mrs. Tarchuk, chair; Mr. Ducharme, deputy chair; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Friedel; Mrs. Fritz; Ms Graham; Mr. Hlady; Mrs. O'Neill; Dr. Pannu; Dr. Taft; and Mr. Tannas.
- (3) Private Bills Committee: Ms Graham, chair; Ms Kryczka, deputy chair; Rev. Abbott; 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; and Mr. Vandermeer.
- (4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing Committee: Mr. Klapstein, chair; Mr. Johnson, deputy chair; Rev. Abbott; Mr. Amery; Mr. Cao; Ms Carlson; Mr. Danyluk; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. Graydon; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Jacobs; Mr. Knight; Mr. Lord; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Masyk; Mr. McClelland; Dr. Pannu; Mr. Renner; and Mr. Zwozdesky.
- (5) Public Accounts Committee: 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. Masyk; Mr. Ouellette; and Dr. Taft.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd move that the Assembly stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; at 4 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

