



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, June 15, 2015

Day 1

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

First Session

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Party standings:

New Democrat: 53 Wildrose: 21 Progressive Conservative: 9 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1 Independent: 1 Vacant: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

3 p.m.

Monday, June 15, 2015

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]

Prayers

The Speaker: 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 of our judgments for the benefit of all Albertans. Amen.

Please be seated.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Mr. Robert Clark, accompanied by the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, to lead us in the singing of our national anthem.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Please rise.

Hon. Members and Guests:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
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.

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, prior to the arrival of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor the Royal Canadian Artillery Band will play music called Festmusik, festive music, by Richard Strauss. I'm proud to say that our RCA Band was originally founded in Quebec City in 1879. The RCA Band is Canada's first permanent military band. The RCA Band was active in both world wars and in the Korean conflict and has been in service in many parts of the world as well as throughout Canada. On December 4, 1997, St. Barbara's Day, the patron saint of the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, the band officially moved from Montreal and today is stationed under the direction of Captain Patrice Arseneault, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

[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 Mitchell, CM, AOE, and Mr. Mitchell, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

Her Honour: Please be seated.

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

Ms Ganley (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 their proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temper, and prudence, she grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow their constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the Assembly shall have ready access to Her Honour upon all seasonable occasions and that their proceedings as well as your words and actions will constantly receive from her the most favourable construction.

Speech from the Throne

Her Honour: Friends, Alberta is a province of indigenous peoples whose roots in this land go back thousands of years and who will be stewards of this land for thousands of years to come. Together we are learning to respect that.

We are also a province built by wave after wave of pioneers and settlers, farmers and oil workers, researchers and students, job seekers and job creators. We are people from around the world who share a dream of a better life and who have found it here in Alberta. We are optimistic, hopeful, entrepreneurial, remarkably diverse, and community-minded people. We are people who dream no little dreams and live them. We are people who get things done.

In this province what we wish for ourselves, we desire for all, like freedom from poverty, freedom from violence, and freedom from discrimination because of whom you love. We believe in looking after our children and making sure they are safe, healthy, and have access to excellent education. We believe in looking after our seniors and making sure they are safe, healthy, and have a dignified place to live. We believe in respecting women, including our sisters who have disappeared or who have been murdered and whose families are looking for answers and for justice.

Albertans are working together to build a prosperous, entrepreneurial, diversified economy full of opportunity for us all, we are working together to build a lifelong learning system that brings out the potential in us all, and we are working together to build a health system that is there when it is needed, for us all.

We haven't always got it right. As I speak, we face another oil price challenge, that is having a more profound effect on our families and on our public finances than it might have had because we have not always made the right choices in this Legislature. But as has been proven, the Legislature can change.

There are 70 new MLAs in this House as a result of the recent election. The people of Alberta decided it was time for a change, and they didn't get there through half measures. And so we can begin again.

We can work together. We can disagree without being disagreeable. We can talk about what unites us as well as what divides us. We can listen to each other and build on each other's best ideas, just as Albertans have been doing with their neighbours since the founding of this province.

It is in this spirit that this government begins its new mandate and takes up the tasks given to it by the people of Alberta. The government begins its work mindful that it is building on the achievements of governments who have come before.

Alberta's first government was led by the Liberal Party. As is remembered in a small but important memorial just outside of this building, that was when democracy and responsible government were brought to Alberta.

Today our political and party system cries out for renewal, so we will take a first important step towards renewing our democracy as the first piece of business our new government puts before you.

Alberta's next government was led by the United Farmers of Alberta. The UFA was an alliance of farmers and workers determined to put the interests of Alberta families at the heart of the work of this House.

Alberta's new government will reintroduce a fair and progressive tax system and restore stable support for health and education in order to do exactly that. We will put the interests of Alberta families at the heart of the work of this Legislature.

Elected in the depths of the Depression, our province's next government was led by Social Credit. The Socreds were men and women who believed that Alberta could overcome adversity and return to prosperity by working together in the common interest. The Social Credit government was a strong supporter of job creators and entrepreneurs. It also equipped our province with important tools to build prosperity such as Alberta Treasury Branches, which still contribute to prosperity in Alberta's communities, large and small, today.

Alberta's new government will also be a good partner with job creators, with entrepreneurs, with small business, with credit unions and co-ops, and with the great enterprises we have built together.

Finally, the Progressive Conservative government elected in 1971 fought a ferocious battle with Ottawa to ensure, beyond debate, that our energy resources were owned and controlled by the people of Alberta. The PCs then set out a plan for a successful and sustainable energy industry, managed in both our people's short- and long-term interests. Their plan recognized that our resources are a trust. Those are principles to which Alberta's new government will now return.

And so, to the work of this session. As its first act our new government will introduce Bill 1, An Act to Renew Democracy in Alberta. At long last this act, if passed, will ban corporate and union donations to political parties in this province.

There is much more that needs to be done to renew our democracy. Alberta's new government will work closely with all members in this House and will take careful account of your views and those of all Albertans before taking the necessary additional steps.

As its second act our new government will introduce Bill 2, An Act to Restore Fairness to Public Revenue. This bill will ask those who have benefited the most from the boom times in Alberta to now contribute a little more so that our schools and health care can be spared from chaos and reckless cutbacks. Corporate taxes on the largest and most profitable corporations in Alberta will be increased from 10 per cent to 12 per cent; small-business taxes will remain at the current rate, 3 per cent; and progressive income taxes will be

reintroduced in Alberta for those earning more than \$125,000 a year. When these changes are implemented, each and every citizen of Alberta will still be contributing by far the lowest provincial taxes in Canada.

As its third act Alberta's new government will propose Bill 3 to restore stability to Alberta's education, health care, and human services. This is an interim supply bill which will maintain stability in essential public services while Alberta's new government reviews our province's economic situation, its finances, and its budget priorities.

We will invest in stable and predictable funding for our schools and postsecondary institutions because our children are worth it, because our communities are worth it, and because investing in skills and education is the single best investment our province can make to ensure our future prosperity. We will invest in stable and predictable funding for our health system because universal, accessible, high-quality health care must be there when Alberta families need it and because the time has come to meet our society's growing need for community services like long-term care and home care. And we will invest in stable and predictable funding for human services because the people who have suffered the most in the recent economic downturn should not be the first in line to be cut.

With this agreed, our new government will then work on a new budget and a new legislative program and will present these to you in the fall.

Alberta's new government knows well that these are only a few first steps. There is a great deal that needs to be done. This province needs to work with steady determination to create the conditions for a sustainable, diversified, and prosperous economy, an economy that will provide Albertans with good jobs. Alberta needs a stable, long-term plan for health care and education. This province needs to demonstrate real leadership on the environment and on climate change.

Concurrently, we must forge a much stronger partnership with our fellow provinces and with the federal government in order to build a Canadian energy strategy that ensures that a sustainable, responsible Canadian energy industry can reach markets all around the world. We need to review how the people of Alberta, including our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren many years from now, will be rewarded for the development of their own energy resources.

We need to return to a respectful relationship with this land's indigenous peoples.

We need to make sure all Albertans are paid fairly at work, including those on the minimum wage.

We need to ensure this province's rural and resource communities have the tools they need to keep contributing to the prosperity of Alberta.

There are parks to tend, public transit and roads to build, hospitals to build and renovate, schools to plan and open, people living on our streets to help. It won't all happen at once, but we will start. We will start today with these first steps, and we will do more in the fall, when my new government presents its first budget and its first full legislative program.

Thank you, friends.

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 invite Mr. Robert Clark, accompanied by the Royal Canadian Artillery Band,

to lead us in the singing of *God Save The Queen*. 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!

[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: Ladies and gentlemen, as an add-on, today I was told as I came into this room that we are at, truly, a historic moment. Today, by the very date and time, is the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215.

I wanted to share some information about the members of this House, which the public and our electorate in Alberta may well be pleased to hear about. On May 5, 2015, over 1,488,000 votes were cast in 87 constituencies throughout our province of Alberta. Eighty-seven individuals were elected with a shared hope for a more constructive culture in this Assembly. In addition, a number of new individuals have commenced this service as members of this Assembly. Including myself, 70 new members have joined the ranks of those before us who have served Albertans as members of this Assembly. This is not the greatest percentage of new members as that distinction belongs to the eighth Legislature in 1935, with 92 per cent of the members being new.

I'd like to take a few minutes to introduce the members of this 29th Legislature collectively to Albertans. As mentioned, 70 members are in their first term of office; nine members are in their second term of office; four members are in their third term of office; two members are in their fourth term of office; and one member is in his sixth term of office.

While generally we may be new to the Legislature, we bring a variety of education and experience from other realms to our work on behalf of Albertans. Based on the information received to date from members themselves, 20 members have had direct involvement in education, including eight postsecondary instructors, two professors, two principals, nine teachers, and five students. Fifteen members have experience in business, two in finance, and eight have acted as consultants. Nine members have worked in labour relations. Twelve members have worked in the civil service and eight in nonprofits. Nine members come from the health care fields, and four have experience as first responders. Six members are registered as social workers, and I'm proud to say that I am one of those six.

We have seven members who are farmers or ranchers. Six have worked in transportation and six in the sciences. There are five lawyers. Ten members have worked in media, communications, or in information technology. Eleven members have worked as researchers, managers, analysts, or support staff. Three members have worked in real estate, and three are musicians. Members have also held the following occupations: sports and fitness instructor, sales representative, psychologist, carpenter, clergy, insurance agent, mediator, and veterinarian.

We have one member who has served as a Member of Parliament, who is now the Leader of the Official Opposition. Eight members have served as councillors or aldermen, and two members have been school trustees.

Among us we have 62 bachelor's degrees, 22 master's degrees, six law degrees, two doctors of medicine, one doctor of veterinary medicine, and over 40 other diplomas, certificates, and professional designations.

Members are reflecting the changing characteristics of the Albertans we serve. While the majority of members were born in Alberta, we have a number who were born in other Canadian provinces as well as in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, France, Nicaragua, and Pakistan. In addition to English, members can communicate in French, German, Spanish, Punjabi, Cantonese, Chinese or Mandarin, Dutch, Italian, Korean, Pahari, Thai, and Urdu.

Twenty-nine members are women. To date this is the largest number of women ever elected in Alberta. As a father of four daughters, with five granddaughters, I am particularly proud of this accomplishment.

Based on the information available, our average age at the time of our election on May 5 was almost 46 years old. This is five years younger than the 28th Legislature. The youngest average age of a Legislature was back from 1909 to 1913, during the Second Legislature, when the average age of the 41 members was 42 years of age.

We are proud to have two of the youngest members ever elected to the Alberta Legislative Assembly in our midst. At the ages of 20 and 21 these members will reflect the views and perspectives of the young people of this province as we conduct our business. Additionally, we have members whose life experience will guide our debates and inform our decision-making. At the time of the election we had nine members in their 20s, 22 members in their 30s, 16 in their 40s, 24 in their 50s, and 15 members in their 60s.

Members go into this 29th Legislature pledging to listen and act on behalf of all Albertans in a meaningful and respectful way. As elected representatives we will strive to make the best decisions for the short- and long-term future of this wonderful province.

From my discussions with all members there is a shared optimism for the 29th Legislature, a desire and a commitment to work better together, to recognize our differences of opinion as a strength and not a weakness. There is a desire to make this place not a theatre but a forum for democracy.

Thank you.

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

Tablings

The Speaker: I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 1

An Act to Renew Democracy in Alberta

Ms Ganley: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to rise today to request leave to introduce this government's first bill, An Act to Renew Democracy in Alberta.

During the election we promised to reform the electoral process in this province. Bill 1 is the first step in our efforts to help ensure that Albertans have the strongest voice in our democracy. Mr. Speaker, An Act to Renew Democracy in Alberta will amend the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act so that,

effective today, corporations and unions will be banned from making political contributions in this province. From now on only residents of Alberta will be allowed to do so. This includes political donations to political parties, constituency associations, candidates for election in senatorial elections, and leadership contestants.

The Chief Electoral Officer has been consulted, and his advice has been taken into account in the development of the amendments. These amendments will bring equity and fairness to election financing and represent just the beginning of our efforts to renew democracy in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

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 the results of the general election conducted on the 5th day of May, 2015, 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

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration on June 16, 2015.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to all. I move that the House do now adjourn until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:44 p.m. to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]

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