



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 4, 2015

Day 15

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

First Session

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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)	McKittrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND)
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Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Kleinstuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)	Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND)
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Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)	
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)	
Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (ND)	
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Party standings:

New Democrat: 53 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 9 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1 Independent: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 4, 2015

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Today I have a reflection that I was provided with from the Church of England, and I thought it might resonate with you and with us here in this Assembly.

Spirit of wisdom and grace, the power of truth and judgment, we pray for all those who are working for peace in the tangled conflict of Syria today. For international leaders holding a thread of control, for the politicians holding a thread of power, for the religious leaders holding a thread of authority, for the fighters holding a thread of influence and the citizens who are clinging to a thread of hope, bring unity through the untangled order of justice, bring reconciliation through truthful dialogue, and bring new life through patient diplomacy, determined mediation, and courageous peacemaking.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly His Excellency Daeshik Jo, ambassador of the Republic of Korea. The ambassador is accompanied by Mrs. Eunyoung Park, his spouse; Mr. Shin, third secretary and consul; Dr. Chung, senior researcher at the embassy. The ambassador joins us today to represent the valuable and productive relationship Alberta and Korea share.

Korea is one of Alberta's key international partners, our sixth-largest export market in 2014, with over \$530 million, and a significant source of goods and investment in both Alberta and Canada. Alberta has a long history of productive relations with Korea, having established a trade office in Seoul in 1988 and a sister province with the Korean province of Gangwon in 1974.

I had the opportunity to meet with His Excellency this morning. The ambassador and his delegation are seated in your gallery, and I'd ask that our honoured guests please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome, Your Excellency. I had the privilege of meeting His Excellency earlier this morning.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The Minister of Education and Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some students from the radio and television program at NAIT. In their commitment to student success NAIT continues to be a shining example of how we provide job-ready skills to the next generation of leaders. Of course, NAIT happens to be in my own constituency of Edmonton-Calder. I would ask all 32 of them to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there any school groups that members would wish to acknowledge today?

Hearing none, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, it's my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly this year's inductees into Alberta's 4-H Hall of Fame. Dorothy Carlson is a dedicated 4-H leader, enthusiastic community volunteer, and member of an active farm family in the community of Cherhill in my own constituency.

Sherry Howey of Valleyview is known as the 4-H voice of the Peace region. Sherry initially joined 4-H as a member and then later reconnected as a 4-H leader when her children became involved. I would like to personally thank both Dorothy and Sherry for their outstanding service to their communities.

Accompanying them are some of their family members as well as an employee of Agriculture and Forestry's 4-H branch, Stacy Murray. Mr. Speaker, I would ask them now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly three directors from the Mosaic Centre in my riding of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. Since 2009 the Mosaic Centre has positively impacted the lives of Albertans challenged by poverty, hunger, and homelessness who reside in northeast Edmonton. Through compassion, love, and acceptance the staff and volunteers work tirelessly to help those who are at risk. In the past six months the Mosaic Centre assisted more than 200 unique individuals to access housing and follow-up supports. I'd ask Megan Schuring, Kelly Hennig, and Linda Deveau to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having been, for 30 years, a real estate agent prior to being elected and also a member of the Alberta Real Estate Association, I'm especially honoured today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly members of the Alberta Real Estate Association, also known as AREA. AREA members are gathering today here in Edmonton for their government liaison days and are represented in the members' gallery by Brad Mitchell, director of government relations for AREA; Kerri Romanetz, government relations analyst for AREA; and 23 of their industry colleagues in the Alberta real estate business. I'd ask them all to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a friend of both of us from Medicine Hat, a very, very successful radio and media personality, a strong family person and a great mom, a great community person and a hard-working Wildrose candidate in the 2015 election, Val Olson. I would ask Val to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 21 professors from Shanghai, China. They are here today participating in a program through the English language school at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension through funding from

the China Scholarship Council. Through a program called the advanced professional program in English, these instructors, whose native language is not English, have the opportunity to teach courses in their subject areas and to come here, then, to enhance their English skills and interact with counterparts here in Alberta. I'd like to welcome them today and ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

1:40

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome three special, distinguished guests today. First, may I introduce Mr. Randy Cook, president of Permolex. Mr. Cook has 37 years' experience within agriculture with a strong focus on risk management, sales, and marketing. His tenure has supported the development of marketing plans for Alberta Wheat Pool, and he has spent considerable expertise advancing agriculture into various national, international, and global markets. Randy has occupied the position of president of Permolex for 12 years and has been successful at accomplishing corporate objectives.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce Bridgette Duniece, VP of Permolex. With an extensive background in engineering, human resources, and safety, her contributions support Permolex's vision of remaining an innovative and forward-thinking organization. Currently focused on working with the provincial and federal governments, the Alberta Bioenergy Producers Group, and other stakeholders, Ms Duniece continues to focus on community relations, the environment, and market-based commodity modelling.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome Mikyla Mifsud. Mikyla is a grade 7 student with a strong focus on her academics. Currently learning provincial government structure, Mikyla feels privileged to witness the history that is being made within this Chamber today.

Would the House please welcome my distinguished guests. If you could please rise. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly three very special guests today. My incredible constituency assistant is Kerri Johnston. Kerri supports me gracefully in my work every day and spends much of her time and energy ensuring that the people of the Stony Plain constituency know we are listening and that we will do our best to help. Her patience is also phenomenal, considering it is take your kid to work day in Parkland school division and Kerri brought two young people to observe our work today.

With her today is her son, Nick Johnston, who attends Blueberry school, and my daughter, Amina Babcock, who attends Meridian Heights school. Both are grade 9 students and exceptional people that I am incredibly proud of. I also have to mention that my daughter was chosen this week to be on her school council. She may not be the youngest guest in our House to be politically engaged recently; nevertheless, I am very proud of her engagement. I'd ask all three of them to stand and receive the warm greeting of this House.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A great honour and pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the House a friend and colleague, Shelley Wark-Martyn – Shelley, stand up so that people can get a good look at you – a 4-H'er and junior farmer in Ontario who went on from there to become a city

councillor and then a cabinet minister under Bob Rae and then a past president of the Alberta Liberal Party and candidate in the last election and now a consultant in cybersecurity internationally. Shelley Wark-Martyn has been a tireless volunteer and a great leader in our Liberal Party in Alberta, and I want her to receive the warm welcome of the Legislature.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly members of the Alberta Canola Producers Commission. I met with them this morning and learned a lot about canola. For those of you from urban areas it's that crop with the yellow flowers that we see on the roadside. It's my pleasure to introduce Lee Markert, chairman of the Alberta Canola Producers Commission; Renn Breitzkreuz, director; Greg Sears, council director; David Dzisiak, council director; Karla Bergstrom; and Marlene Caskey. Would you please rise to receive the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly quite a number of workers from the Culture and Tourism ministry. They've come here today to see what a fine, fine job we all do here in the Assembly, and I trust everyone will live up to their expectations. If they could rise, please, and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Are there any other guests? The Member for Lethbridge-East.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to our Assembly three realtors who are here from my home, Lethbridge. Cathy Maxwell is CEO of the Lethbridge Real Estate Board, and prior to that, she was a realtor for 11 years. She loves Lethbridge, and she's also a lover of organized real estate. Brad Cook is an honorary life member of the Lethbridge and District Association of Realtors. Stan Mills, with 35 years as a realtor in Lethbridge, area director, now joins the Real Estate Council of Alberta as a board member. If they would please rise for the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Provincial Long-term Fiscal Plan

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in estimates I had the opportunity to question the Minister of Finance about his budget plan. Unlike in question period, I had the opportunity to really follow up with the minister, but the minister and I ran into a few bumps on the road. You see, the minister gave us virtually no details for years 4 and 5 of his fiscal plan projections. There are no details, just one single number for expenditures and just one single number for revenues to conveniently project a barely balanced budget in 2020. The minister somehow projects a whopping 26 per cent increase in revenues over four years, and it is weighted towards the last two years of the plan, where no data is presented. Either the minister is planning on a second round of massive tax hikes, or he is just counting on the royalty roller coaster alone to bail out his big spending plan.

Here is the problem, Mr. Speaker. We have no idea because they won't show their work. The linchpin of the NDP's plan is to get us somewhere close to a balanced budget in 2019 without looking for any spending reductions. That means the revenues must soar over \$55 billion, far beyond what Alberta saw even at \$100-a-barrel oil. Now, I'm not saying that this is impossible. After all, it's Alberta, and oil could be at \$100 this time next year. But what I will say is that in looking at the economic situation that our province is in today, the Minister of Finance cannot base his plan on record revenues and not show Albertans how we will actually get there.

The Minister of Finance's budget is asking Albertans to just take the NDP's word for it that the old revenue roller coaster will bail them out and that the debt they are racking up in the meantime will only run to \$47 billion. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but Albertans deserve to see the math. The minister should do the right thing and produce the data underpinning his plan if Albertans are to have any faith in it.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Show Your 4-H Colours Day

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first Wednesday in November is Canada's national 4-H day, better known as Show Your 4-H Colours Day, and the kickoff of 4-H's monthlong national celebration. 4-H Canada invites you to break out your green clothing in November to support the show your colours celebration. Join the 32,000 volunteers and members across Canada this November and show your 4-H colours, which is green, by the way.

Set to celebrate its centennial in 2017, Alberta 4-H strengthens our communities' connection to agriculture and passes important life skills on to our youth. Members are offered opportunities to become leaders and to develop and thrive in a safe and fun learning environment. They are taught how to make a difference, one positive change at a time. 4-H'ers are working together as catalysts for change in their clubs, their community, and their country. Let's celebrate this by wearing green in November. 4-H Alberta is encouraging all clubs, members, families, and partners to show support by sharing their green photos via social media channels using the hash tag #showyour4Hcolours.

1:50

Agriculture doesn't look the same as it did back in the early 1900s, and neither does 4-H. However, the original goal of 4-H, to build strong rural communities and youth leaders, remains unchanged. 4-H clubs are evolving to remain relevant to the interests of today's youth and will always continue to do what they do best, inspiring and shaping young lives to positively impact their communities.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Jean: I'll take that, Mr. Speaker.

Energy Policies

Mr. Jean: If the NDP don't think their policies are doing real damage to our economy, they just aren't listening. Crushing new taxes, regulatory uncertainty, economic experiments: it's all adding up to mean fewer jobs and lower wages. The Petroleum Services Association of Canada actually said that there will be 3,700 fewer

wells in Alberta next year than in 2014, but the Premier insists that her government is not at fault. To the Premier: does she actually believe that a royalty review, higher taxes, and increased uncertainty aren't punishing our energy sector?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I believe is that it's really important to keep your promises to the people of Alberta when they elect you, and what we talked about was that we would do a royalty review. You know what, Mr. Speaker? A lot of people in industry have actually said: "You know what? It's overdue. There's a lot of modernization which will help the industry." That's what responsible government does when they are representing the people of the province, who elected them.

Mr. Jean: Here's a direct quote from those people of the Petroleum Services Association: "Ongoing market access issues, and an environment of regulatory and policy uncertainty . . . hasn't been able to make anything better out of a bad situation." Translation: NDP policies are kicking Albertans when they're down. The worst part is that the Premier seems completely unapologetic for the damage her risky agenda is doing to Alberta. To the Premier: will she today admit that her campaign against our most important job sector is hurting ordinary Alberta people?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition: I think he needs a new translator because I didn't get what he said from what they said.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the international price of oil has taken a walk off a very high cliff, and that's created a great deal of difficulty for the energy industry. But simply working with industry to look at our royalty structure does not in itself create the kind of problems that this party would like Albertans to think it does.

Mr. Jean: Sixty-five thousand jobs lost is a good translation.

When the oil services sector is down and investment is drying up, it impacts all of Alberta. Engineering companies in Calgary are closing shop – they're losing workers – gravel companies across Alberta are seeing layoffs, and manufacturing is slowing down dramatically. With higher taxes and fewer jobs, Albertans have less money to spend on their families and their priorities. Albertans are not asking for a miracle. They just want a government to stop kicking them when they're down. To the Premier: will she put ideology aside and start focusing on doing what's best for Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our Premier and government are taking direct action through the creation of my ministry. Now, you know, sadly, the opposition believes that the way to make the price of oil go up is to fire thousands of teachers and nurses. Well, that's not what we believe. We're not about to make problems worse, so we are working with the private sector with incentives and programs that we have to increase jobs and diversify our economy.

The Speaker: Second question.

Mr. Jean: Here's why fighting for our jobs, the economy, and our energy sector is important. Between September and October Alberta's unemployment rate went up. That's 14,000 more Albertans who are out of work. Fourteen thousand. So far this year Alberta has shed 65,000 jobs. That's close to matching the record set during

the Great Depression. Investment will not start coming back to Alberta until we have leaders who are serious about defending our industries. Why won't the Premier start sticking up for and standing up for Alberta instead of putting us down?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, our government does stick up for and stand up for Albertans. We stick up for and stand up for all Albertans. We have been working very collaboratively and very effectively with industry to talk about how we can improve our record on the environment with respect to climate change so that we can ensure greater access to markets for our product. That's what good government does.

Mr. Jean: The Premier has made it clear that Keystone is a threat to her agenda. In opposition she campaigned against it. She's interfering in the review process for the Kinder Morgan pipeline, and Energy East will only be viable if this Premier can convince the NDP Premier in Manitoba to stop trying to shut it down. We know these pipelines mean jobs for the 65,000 Albertans who have lost them under this government. To the Premier: when is she going to stop fighting against Alberta jobs and start fighting for pipelines?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, this summer I went to the first ministers' conference, and I took an approach of working collaboratively and respectfully with our colleagues across the country. In so doing, we got them to agree to the Canadian energy strategy. Temper tantrums were not a way to get our colleagues across the country to agree to the Canadian energy strategy. A collaborative effort was required, and that's what we did. That's the first thing that we did, and that kind of work continues each and every day in this government. We know that we need to build support by improving our record on the environment. We're also going to do that, and we're going to do that hand in hand with industry.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans do expect their leaders to be proud and to fight for our industries, not go on apology tours. They understand we need market access. Instead, our Premier has consistently campaigned against our pipelines and our oil sands. Albertans want stability. Instead, our Premier is increasing royalties and isn't done raising even more taxes. To the Premier: how are these economic experiments going to help any of the 65,000 Albertans who are without a paycheque at the end of this month?

The Speaker: The minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague across the way may have missed it, but our government created a new ministry to focus on economic diversification and trade. In case you've missed it, I'm the minister of this ministry. We are looking at creating new opportunities to get our product to market that will create jobs to support families, which is our government's focus even if the opposition opposes it.

The Speaker: Third question. The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Small-business Tax

Mr. Jean: Wildrose has spent a lot of time trying to be helpful and provide the NDP with practical solutions. We've put forward policies that we know won't be supported by all of the NDP MLAs, but our moderate approach is best for all Albertans. Albertans are worried. They are seriously worried. They want solutions that work, not more untested NDP experiments. Wildrose has proposed a tax cut for small businesses. It's a step that would benefit every single

Alberta small business today. To the Premier: why not for once try reducing taxes to help get our businesses moving again today, not in two years?

2:00

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, our government, as we have outlined several times already today, has put forward a responsible plan to get Alberta back to work and also to protect our education and our health care. Now, the opposition loves to talk about restraint and about cutting, but let's look at this leader's record. In 2009 that opposition leader voted for the biggest deficit in Canadian history, \$55 billion. [interjections] That same year he spent more taxpayer dollars than any other Member of Parliament at that time, \$116,000 on partisan mailing. [interjections] That doesn't . . .

The Speaker: Hon. members, you seem to have gained some more energy. The robustness has increased from yesterday to today.
The first supplemental.

Mr. Jean: Yes, Mr. Speaker. It's a little rowdy over on that side.

The reality is that the NDP's so-called jobs subsidy program is a boondoggle in the making. Businesses are very confused, timelines are simply all over the place, and it will do little for businesses fighting on the margins. Instead, reducing small-business taxes costs just as much as the NDP's subsidy program but will actually work today. It's permanent and benefits every business right now. Why won't the Premier scrap her risky job subsidy program and replace it with an actual small-business tax cut that will help Alberta businesses?

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to remind the members of the House that there was only one party during the election that had a job creation plan, and that was us. The second difference is that instead of just talking about it, our government is taking action to create jobs, so myself and . . . [interjections] I'd love to continue.

Myself and my colleague announced our government's job creation plan, which I, hopefully, will have an opportunity to explain . . .

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP plan lost 65,000 jobs so far and doesn't start giving any money back for two years. Here's the reality of the NDP plan for businesses in Alberta. They bulldozed ahead with a radical 50 per cent increase to the minimum wage, they've raised every single person's taxes, they've sent signals to the marketplace that are causing investments to flee, and now they're pushing forward with a risky job subsidy program when they have a much better solution right in front of them, right here today. To the Premier: why won't she just reduce the small-business tax instead of ramming ahead with more unproven economic experiments?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, everyone but the opposition knows that the government of Alberta cannot control the price of oil. But there are things that we can do, and our government is taking action. In the budget that the Finance minister tabled, we've got a robust capital plan to invest in infrastructure that's much needed in our province, which will create jobs. We've created this ministry, which is looking at enhancing our access to markets and diversifying our economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The leader of the Progressive Conservative opposition.

Government Policies

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Premier said, “It would be lovely to wave a magic wand and create 40,000 jobs,” when she admitted she has no plan to actually create a knowledge-based and lower carbon economy. Knowing that truth, let’s go back to the basics. My question is for the Premier: if you hope to see Albertans with good-paying jobs two years from now – and I hope you do – under your leadership and your governance, which industries will you support to provide these jobs? Which industries, Premier?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, government is not in the business of picking winners and losers. It’s in the business of creating an environment to ensure that we have a good investment climate and that Alberta is a good place for innovators and new business owners and people that want to grow their business to invest. So that is the climate that we are creating by offering up exactly what businesses talked to us about in terms of access to different types of capital that previously had been unavailable to them. That’s what we’re going to do, and that’s one of the parts of the work that the new minister of economic development will be doing over the course of the next few years.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier said in this House that when she goes “to Paris, [she’s] going to start by telling the truth.” Well, here’s some truth. Alberta has developed some world-class tailings pond technology, pipeline leak detection, carbon capture and storage, and a whole raft of world-best technologies and practices. When the Premier goes to Paris, is this the truth she’s going to tell, or is she going to trash our industry, that Albertans depend upon to make a living?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, when we go to Paris, we are going to talk about the meaningful action that the government of Alberta after 44 years is finally going to begin in order to ensure that we work as a partner with industry to enhance our environmental record and to ensure that we perform better. We’re going to tell them that there is a new sheriff in town. And you know what? We’re going to make sure that the government does its role, something it didn’t do for the last four decades, to ensure that we do our part on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Mr. McIver: Here’s another truth that I think the government might agree with, Mr. Speaker. The men and women of our Canadian military have sacrificed to provide the freedom, democracy, and quality of life that we all cherish so much. The truth is that the Legislature has inadvertently, I believe, scheduled budget estimates at the same time as the Speaker’s Remembrance Day ceremony tomorrow. To the Government House Leader and with my apologies for not bringing this to your attention sooner: is there any way that we can reschedule estimates away from Mr. Speaker’s Remembrance Day ceremony?

The Speaker: The Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, hon. member, for bringing that to our attention. Unfortunately, it’s pretty late in the day, but I will take it under advisement and see what changes we can make. I’m assuming that the House would

prefer to adjust the estimates schedule in order to be able to attend that.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Farm Worker Labour Protection and Safety

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government has been in power for 163 days after being elected on a platform of change, especially for vulnerable Albertans. Sadly, nothing has changed for paid farm workers in Alberta, who remain the most vulnerable group in Canada. After 163 days of government, paid farm workers, including children, lack basic occupational health and safety standards, any compensation for injury, and even the right to organize or refuse unsafe work conditions. Today, people who feed us are going to work without protection that . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, we must stay within the 35 seconds.

Is there someone who would like to answer? The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker. As you are aware, our minister has been talking about this issue, and we’ve been working on this issue. I believe the member will be pleased to know that this is an issue that this Assembly as a whole will be dealing with very seriously within this session. I thank the member for his advocacy on this issue over the last few years. I believe that he will feel a tremendous level of personal success by the time we’ve adjourned this session before Christmas.

Dr. Swann: I haven’t seen any indication of this on the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker, but last night in estimates the Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour refused to answer any straightforward questions about the plan to protect farm workers because, apparently, she didn’t want to spoil a future government announcement. Albertans expect their government to put the health and safety of people ahead of political timing. The Alberta Federation of Agriculture is fully supportive of workers’ compensation for all paid farm workers. What is so difficult about providing basic compensation for injured workers today in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Certainly, our government believes that every worker in Alberta deserves to have a safe, fair, and healthy workplace, and that is something that we’re going forward on. Myself and my colleague the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry have been meeting with stakeholders in this industry and are putting together a plan for this. We are very excited to create safety for all workers here in Alberta.

2:10

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, I guess many of us are puzzled about why it needs to be so secretive. If there is a plan, why not start talking about a plan? The minister last night said that there was never a commitment to workers’ compensation for paid farm workers, but in April of this year the Premier herself in a statement on the Day of Mourning said that it’s time for compensation for injury. The current Environment minister said, quote: there’s no excuse anymore. End of quote. So will the Premier or the minister or anybody on the front bench stand on the courage of their convictions and tell us when and how we’re going to get compensation for people with injury?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I just want to assure the member that we are absolutely moving forward as a government. We're meeting with stakeholders, making sure that we're hearing their concerns about the specifics of their industry. We're going to be moving forward in a very prudent manner, and I think the outcome will please him very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

School Nutrition Programs

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that students need to be active and have a healthy diet in order to be able to focus and learn in class. We also know that there are many schools offering breakfast and lunch programs to students. The previous government's lack of action on this issue led to a concerted effort by groups of hard-working parents and volunteers that were supported through donations to ensure that our kids have a full stomach to help them learn every day. To the Minister of Education: what are you doing to build on this good work and support our school nutrition programs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks very much for the question. Certainly, we've seen lots of good work in the community and from parent groups and volunteer organizations to provide school nutrition in our schools across the province, and my department is currently evaluating where those programs are so that we can bolster them and build a more coherent program for right across the province. What better job can we be employed in, all of us here, than looking after the health and good education of our K to 12 students?

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the member has met with all 61 school boards in the province, can he provide details on some specific nutrition programs already in place? Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we found lots of innovative programs across the province already. For example, E4C in Edmonton has an excellent nutrition program. They are active in 10 Catholic schools right here in Edmonton and provide about 2,000 hot lunches every single day. Northland school division offers hot lunches on request, free of charge, for every student in their school board. That's a high bar that we could perhaps emulate. These are the kinds of programs that we're looking at to build a coherent school lunch program across the province.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Mr. Speaker, given that the best way to ensure we get this right is to collaborate with the right partners across the spectrum, to the same minister: is the minister looking to other ministries to help in improving student nutrition?

Mr. Eggen: Well, yes, Mr. Speaker and hon. member. Certainly, we're looking for partnerships with the Ministry of Health and with Human Services as well to ensure that we are working on the widest possible range by which we can provide targeted school lunch programs across the province and build a strategy that is coherent,

that is long term, and that students and school boards can count on to have something in place for students that are most in need. Again, what better job can we employ all of our resources in than to help the unfortunate students in our province and to provide a school lunch program?

The Speaker: Now the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Grande Prairie Hospital

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Grande Prairie hospital was announced many times, including in 2012 prior to the election, when they actually started moving dirt around even though there was not even a plan for the hospital. Now that it's finally under construction, the Minister of Health announced yesterday that the Grande Prairie hospital will have its services cut, it will be delayed, and it is over budget. To the Minister of Health: can you explain to the people of Grande Prairie and the Peace Country, that will rely on the Grande Prairie hospital for their health care needs, why these changes have taken place?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. We all know that this is a problem that we've inherited from the past government. Of course, part of that has to do with the fact that announcements were made without doing due planning. Our government is really committed to making sure that we get it right moving forward. In terms of what the Official Opposition proposed during the election, let's just remind ourselves that they wanted to cut over 3,000 civil service jobs, and their leader said: we will cut lower priority infrastructure projects. I want to know: are those Lloydminster continuing care, Medicine Hat regional hospital, Taber health care, Grande Prairie health care? I don't think so. Our government is investing in infrastructure.

Mr. Loewen: I'm getting really tired of the fearmongering from that side and the mistruths.

Given that in a meeting with myself, the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti, and . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, preamble, and be careful of the choice of your words.

Mr. Loewen: Given that in a meeting with myself, the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti, and the mayor of Grande Prairie on September 9 the minister clearly stated that, rumours aside, the hospital was on time, on budget, and definitely not going to be scaled back and given that the minister suggested that it would be a good question for question period so that she could proudly proclaim in the House those same statements, Minister – here we are – as per your suggestion, can you explain why you made those promises that you have now renege on?

Ms Hoffman: I was really proud to tour the province this summer. The hon. member did not bring staff to that meeting, but I did, and we have very detailed minutes of what I said in that meeting. I'd be happy to share them with the hon. member. What I did ask was: what rumours are in the community, and how can we set them straight? The rumours that were in place included that the whole hospital was going to be shelved. We are not doing that. We've got a plan. I announced it very publicly yesterday. I reached out directly to the hon. member yesterday and to the mayor and to the Grande Prairie College and health advisory council. We're being very open

about what we're able to do and how we're moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Loewen: Given that during that meeting the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti supported your statements, Minister, showing that there is little or no difference between the previous government and this government in their commitments to infrastructure, how can the people in the Peace Country and, in fact, all Albertans have any confidence in anything this government promises, when rumours and coffee-shop talk have more credence than the minister's own promises?

Ms Hoffman: When I've been touring the province, I've been inviting local MLAs to join in the meetings I'm having with other local leaders, and if the hon. member doesn't want to be in those meetings and wants to make up untruths, I am very willing to take that into consideration. What the hon. member is saying . . .

Speaker's Ruling Intemperate Language

The Speaker: I simply want to advise both the hon. member with the question as well as the responding minister on my read of the discussion in the House. The use of the words by both of you on untruths is somewhat inappropriate, and I would ask that you reframe your statements not using the tone of those allegations.

Hon. minister, are you finished?

Grande Prairie Hospital (continued)

Ms Hoffman: Just to add to the response, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for the opportunity. I am happy to have meetings with local MLAs, and I will be very happy to share the information from those meetings with the MLAs. I'm glad to set the record straight, and I'm happy to update the House and to be open and transparent moving forward.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Member for Calgary-North West.

2:20 Youth Addiction Treatment Services

Ms Jansen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's crucial that government provides the supports necessary to address problems caused by drug addiction. One of the supports that was introduced to help support young people was the protection of children abusing drugs program created in 2006 by our government. PCHAD allows for youth to be mandated into a court-ordered 10-day detox and stabilization. It was a huge achievement. To the Minister of Health. After that initial 10-day period families are often left with little choice about ongoing addiction treatment. With the rising fentanyl crisis and increased cases of relapse, will you commit today to a meeting with stakeholders and affected parents on this issue?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the initiative she's shown in the past and continues to show today. We know how devastating addiction issues can be for families. I have met with a number of different stakeholders, and if the hon. member would like to propose a meeting with an additional group of stakeholders, I am certainly welcome to receive that invitation.

Ms Jansen: I would, and thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, after an initial 10-day detox many young people still don't have the ability to make sound decisions about their recovery path. To the Justice minister: would you be willing to re-evaluate PCHAD and examine whether a mandated longer term solution might be needed?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. This is of course a critical issue. Youth who are suffering from addictions are a tragedy in our province, and the number of young people we're losing is an absolute tragedy. I'm happy to review our programs to see what's necessary and to hear from people and make the best evidence-based decisions we can on what's best to support our young people.

Ms Jansen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, to the Minister of Infrastructure. We know now that you've taken away \$13 million in funding for addiction and detox beds, putting it into a \$4.4 billion slush fund. When will you decide if Alberta's addicted kids are important enough to put it back?

The Speaker: The Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question, hon. member. I don't think you've quite framed the question accurately. In fact, all of the detox centres that were specifically contained in the capital budget are still in the capital budget. There was uncommitted money for that purpose that we have now moved into the uncommitted fund that you're talking about. We'll make decisions in due course about the priorities, and that includes addictions, that includes making sure that the health of all Albertans is safe, among all other priorities that we have to deal with.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Job Creation

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about the numbers. Sixty-five thousand: that's how many jobs have been lost so far this year, and that number will unfortunately only climb from here. Now let's talk about government numbers. Twenty-seven thousand: that's the absolute cap for the job subsidies program created by this government, and it won't even pay until 2017. This program is not helping Albertans and businesses when they need it most, which is right now. To the minister of jobs: when will this government realize that their program is misguided and focus instead on creating the right business environment for our province?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the opposition uses the number 65,000 jobs that have been lost. The opposition would like government to cut thousands of more jobs from the public service: nurses, doctors, teachers. You know, quite frankly, our government has a plan and is putting that plan into action through initiatives that we rolled out throughout the week. There are more announcements coming. But, quite frankly, we're partnering with the private sector and those job creators to get Albertans back to work.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, once again, we have never, ever said what the member is saying that we've said. We've never said that, and we will continue to say that we will not cut those jobs. Front-line jobs will not be cut.

Now, given that this job subsidy program is like putting a Band-Aid on gaping wounds and that we need to address the root causes of the problems here in Alberta, not issue stopgaps, it is clear that this subsidy program is fundamentally flawed. Will the minister acknowledge that this subsidy program is the wrong way to restore the Alberta advantage?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, first of all, there are a few things that need to be clarified. First of all, under our government 93 per cent of Albertans will see no change to their personal income taxes and the majority of Albertans are actually paying fewer taxes than what the previous government proposed. Our government believes in supporting entrepreneurs, in providing initiatives, partnering with the private sector to diversify our economy and to strengthen our economy. Our solution is not to lay off thousands of more workers.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The more they say it doesn't make it right.

Given that you insist on going forward with this program, which incredibly is a key pillar of your budget, there must be some accountability to this program. One of the fatal flaws of the program is the lack of information surrounding disclosure of who exactly will receive the subsidies. To the minister of jobs: will you commit right here and right now to start your program properly and ensure that a monthly sunshine list is disclosed so we know where exactly these subsidies are going?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, first of all, the sectors that can apply for this grant are all sectors. When we talk about providing supports, this job-creation plan is available whether it's the energy sector, small businesses, and at the same time not-for-profits. We're working with the private sector and not-for-profits to provide incentives for them to hire Albertans and get more Albertans back to work.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

Royal Alexandra Hospital Renovation

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last month it was revealed that AHS was planning a massive renovation project for the Royal Alexandra hospital. Now, we in opposition have long called on the government to carry out the necessary and sensible maintenance, upgrade, and repair work on this facility, but we were floored to see the price tag under the NDP government come in at a whopping \$4.5 billion. To the Health minister: is this yet another case of incredibly poor value for Alberta taxpayers?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The document that ended up being leaked by somebody to the media was a document that was given from Alberta Health Services to my ministry staff. What it said was what they would like to see on the Royal Alex hospital site 15 years from now and the different projects that they would like to see invested in. So it was a planning document that was prepared by the service delivery operator, Alberta Health Services, for our consideration.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, given that our province's hospital costs have been spiralling out of control for years and seeing as the average cost for hospitalization in Alberta is a shocking 35 per cent higher than the national average, is pouring billions of Albertans' dollars into just one facility really the best plan that AHS can come up with?

Ms Hoffman: Alberta Health Services is looking at a lot of different sites and has a lot of desires that they'd like for sites throughout Alberta. Our government is focused on making sure that we have an evidence-based decision-making process. I just want to remind people. I know there has been a lot of discussion around what's actually been said. Here's what was actually said. The Leader of the Official Opposition in April said that he would be cutting at least 2,300 civil service positions and that lower priority infrastructure projects would be put on hold. So, hon. member, I think that \$9 billion worth of infrastructure cuts would only make it worse. We are going to be investing in infrastructure to provide stable health care.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We understand there are concerns with the state of the Royal Alex, and we have always been clear about the need for any deferred maintenance and upgrades to be completed in a timely and efficient manner, contrary to this government's fearmongering.

But given that the Royal Alex is far from the only facility needing renovation, how can the bureaucracy suggest that it's prudent to throw the lion's share of funding at just one facility?

Ms Hoffman: Just to remind ourselves, Mr. Speaker, that was a planning document that was submitted by Alberta Health Services for our consideration. We have not made any decisions about how we'll be investing in health care throughout Alberta. But I think it's important for us to know where the deferred maintenance is and what needs to be done in terms of moving forward. That is the long-term plan. What we have submitted is a four-year capital plan, which I will be very happy to go through with the hon. members. You can't talk out of both sides of your mouth. You can't say that you're going to cut \$9 billion and that you're going to invest at the same time. It just doesn't work.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Justices and Crown Prosecutors

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Chief Justice Neil Wittman has repeatedly said that we are 11 Queen's Bench justices short in Alberta. If we don't have enough justices in Alberta, victims of crime suffer anguish as does anyone trying to utilize the court system. To the Justice minister: given that the number of Queen's Bench justices is set by provincial regulation with federal authority and given that due to our high rate of population growth Alberta needs an appropriate number of justices just to keep our court systems functioning properly, will the Minister of Justice commit to passing a regulation to expand the number of Court of Queen's Bench justices by 11.

Thank you.

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. Well, just to clarify a few things, Alberta does create the positions, but it is the federal government that appoints Queen's

Bench justices. Currently there are five positions that Alberta has created that haven't been appointed by the federal government. We're hoping to work with our federal partners – and I will be speaking to my newly appointed counterpart – to get appointments made to those. We are looking at creating additional spaces once there's need because the other positions have been filled.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you. I did say that.

Again to the Justice minister. I appreciate your wanting to speak to the new federal Minister of Justice. Given that Alberta has the lowest number of Court of Queen's Bench justices per capita of any province, will the Minister of Justice commit today to demanding that the new federal government appoint the justices needed to bring Alberta up to par with all provinces?

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. The former federal government felt that population wasn't a driver that should determine how many Queen's Bench justices a province got. I feel quite differently, and I'm hoping that my federal counterpart will feel quite differently, too. I will be speaking to them at our earliest opportunity to advocate on this issue.

Thank you.

Mr. Ellis: To the same minister: given that Budget 2015 cuts 4.2 per cent from the Alberta Crown prosecutor service and given that reducing the number of already overworked Crown prosecutors slows down the justice system, will the Minister of Justice tell us how a \$4 million budget reduction for Crown prosecutors does anything but delay justice for victims and result in dropping charges against accused criminals due to long delays? What would the minister say to those victims?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. We're certainly aware that our Crown prosecutors in this province are working incredibly hard to keep things moving along. The government is moving forward on a number of initiatives to ensure that they're better able to move things forward and to ensure that we have an innovative justice system that takes into account new ideas so that we can stream some things out of the court systems. Currently we are committed to working with them to ensure that they can fulfill their function, and we're very proud of the job that they're doing.

Highway 63 Twinning

Mrs. Littlewood: Mr. Speaker, my proud constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville is home to Alberta's Industrial Heartland. The businesses and workers involved in this industry know how important highway 63 is to move people and goods throughout our province. It is a vital link in our eastern transportation corridor, supports and drives economic growth and diversification in Alberta. To the minister of Alberta: could the minister please update the House . . .

An Hon. Member: Minister of Alberta?

Mrs. Littlewood: Oh, sorry. To the Minister of Transportation: could the minister please update the House on the government's

progress on improving the safety of Alberta workers on highway 63?

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much for the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by thanking the hon. member and other members of our caucus for their advocacy on behalf of this highway. I'm pleased to announce that we've just opened another 16-kilometre section of highway 63. We've made great progress on improving safety this year, with 185 kilometres of twinned highway open to this vital economic corridor of this province. I'm very pleased with the progress so far.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the update. I'm pleased to hear that our government is making important and long-overdue progress on highway development. To the same minister: could you please update the Chamber on when we will see the twinning of highway 63 completed?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm pleased to tell the House that the twinning of highway 63 is now 99 per cent complete. There is only one three-kilometre section, where there's pipeline construction at the present time, that we were unable to get done this year, but it will be fully twinned and opened early in the spring construction season. [interjections]

The Speaker: Hon. members, do we want to have constructive dialogue? I can't hear either side of the House. Would you please tone it down?

Second supplemental.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am definitely interested in a constructive dialogue.

Given the history of that highway I'm sure many Albertans will be relieved to hear that this project is near completion. I would ask the minister if he could please provide an update on other transportation infrastructure projects taking place in the Fort McMurray area.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm pleased to tell the hon. member that Alberta Transportation is also working to open phase 1 of the Parsons Creek interchange in Fort McMurray to traffic this year, and we hope to have the project completed by 2016. I know that many residents of the Wood Buffalo municipality are looking forward to the completion of both of these projects.

Emergency Medical Services in Eastern Alberta

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, AHS staffs the Wainwright ambulance station 24 hours a day, ensuring fast response and quality service. On December 14 AHS will be downgrading this service by eliminating staff at the station from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Staff will have to respond from their homes to the station before heading out. To the Minister of Health: are you aware that AHS is using this cost-cutting measure to reduce front-line workers' hours in Wainwright and that response times will be dangerously increased?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's really important to us that Albertans can count on having the right care at the right time and the right place by the right health professional. If

the hon. member has any questions about that specific situation in Wainwright, I would be very happy to follow up afterwards and make sure that I liaise an appropriate response to the hon. member and all constituents who rely on the EMS services in the community.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Minister. Given that the town of Wainwright is very concerned that this will create longer response times during a time frame that commonly generates more severe accidents and given that there is only what is known as the golden hour, which is the time from when the accident occurred to the time that the patient needs to be on the operating table – that’s what you need for the best outcome. Minister, if this is in fact going to be implemented, can you ensure patient’s safety and that no lives will be at risk?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, hon. member, for the question and, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to answer it. I’d be very happy to sit down with the hon. member and go through the detailed concerns that he has and make sure that AHS has an opportunity to provide me with that confidence before I provide it to the members of the community. But, of course, their safety is our number one concern.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Minister. Given that AHS has a list for major cities and towns of EMS response times listed on their site yet there are no response times listed for the Battle River-Wainwright area in general, will the minister commit to tracking response times in the communities in eastern Alberta such as Killam, Wainwright, and Lloydminster so that we can see the effect that these changes are having on our rural ambulance service?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We are, of course, really committed to making sure that we have prompt, timely responses, and I know that Alberta Health Services is doing active monitoring by minute right now. They can look up and find out exactly what the response times are so they can deploy other EMS to the areas where they’re most needed in the province. I’d be happy to discuss this and other opportunities that the hon. member suggests. This is one of the reasons why, before session started, I asked for meetings with the critics from both of the official parties in the House, so that I could have an opportunity to work through some of these challenges. I’m happy to do so when the House isn’t sitting as well. So please be in touch with my office, and we’ll be happy to co-ordinate some increased information so we can have confidence and your citizens can have confidence as well.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

2:40 Northern Alberta Development Council

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, the Northern Alberta Development Council was created more than 50 years ago to support development and growth for Northern Alberta and all Albertans. NADC has contributed greatly to the development of programs and policy to ensure the viability of northern municipalities. With the recent dissolution of the Alberta Economic Development Authority there are concerns that NADC may be next. To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: can you assure northern Albertans that NADC will continue to be a vital component . . .

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question, a very good question. I have met with a couple of the members from that council, and I do intend to work collaboratively with them. I know that they do a lot of great work representing and advocating on behalf of Albertans that live in northern Alberta and looking for ways to continue to diversify our economy, our energy sector, and working with our job creators.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that NADC is made up of nine public members and the chair, who is a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, and given that NADC has been without a chair since the provincial election, can you advise when the NDP government will be appointing a northern MLA to the position of chair of the Northern Alberta Development Council?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. That board is currently housed in Aboriginal Relations. Our government, in attempting to make sure that we are making effective use of taxpayers’ dollars, is reviewing all of the agencies, boards, and commissions. Once that review is completed, we will be moving forward on a number of appointments that have been sort of waiting to happen. We just want to ensure that we’re making the best decisions in the best interests of all Albertans at prices they can afford.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe now that we have a new ministry is the time to move it, but I’ll stay out of that one.

Given that Alberta is still suffering from a downward spiral in oil prices and oil and gas development and given that northern Alberta needs a strong NADC to help address the rural economic challenges that our northern communities are all facing, can you advise northern Albertans what areas of economic development will be priorities for the NADC in the coming years?

The Speaker: The minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question, you know, very, very pertinent question, especially at this time. Again, I’ll reiterate that one of the largest reasons that the Premier decided to create this ministry is to look at working with the private sector and the job creators to provide them with the tools that they need to continue to develop our economy but also looking at ways to diversify. So to the hon. member’s question, I plan to work very closely with my colleagues here on the front bench, with Agriculture and Forestry, with Energy, with Advanced Education . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Members’ Statements (continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Job Creation Grant Program

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the opportunity to question the minister on her portfolio and on the new job subsidy program. In a perfect world this subsidy program would be

a good kick at the can, but this is not a perfect world, and our province is bleeding jobs. We have lost 65,000 jobs this year; 65,000 hard-working Albertans have come face to face with our economic troubles. That's like giving a pink slip to the entire city of Medicine Hat.

The government somehow believes that a handout will mitigate this problem, but let's face the facts. The subsidy program can't even be used to hire back those people who have lost their jobs like the hard-working hostesses and dishwashers from the restaurants that I have talked to. It can only be used for net new jobs. Unfortunately, this means that the hard-working Albertans that were laid off can't get their jobs back using this subsidy. This program is categorically flawed.

There's more. The money associated with this subsidy can't be accessed until 2017. That's correct. There will be no money until sometime in 2017. That means that when people are losing their jobs right now, there is no hope for them. There are at least 14 more months to go before one penny of this subsidy will reach the hands of employers. How many jobs need to be lost before the NDP stops their risky economic experiments and helps Albertans when they need it most?

This program sounds like an IOU rather than: I'll help you. Albertans are worried. I'm worried. Albertans need help now, not in 2017. We need to get back to the Alberta advantage, that made Alberta great. This new job subsidy program, their so-called Alberta way, is the wrong way.

The Speaker: Hon. members and the House leaders particularly, as members are exiting the Chamber, if you would please not intervene in the line of sight between the Speaker and the party speaking, I'd appreciate it very much.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

Permolex International Zero-waste Facility

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you. Mr. Speaker and my friends here today, I am privileged to introduce Permolex, a producer of ethanol and other biofuel products from Red Deer. Permolex has established itself as a unique, forward-thinking, and diverse organization. Permolex's exceptionally innovative and green operations utilize the waste products from one process as the raw materials for the next, resulting in a zero-waste facility. This is the only process of its kind in North America. Permolex's research and development team works with Alberta's higher learning facilities to support these state-of-the-art operations. This helps provide a structural basis for a clean-tech industry that is competitive and stable within the market.

Permolex strengthens the local agricultural community by using commodities from over 1,400 farmers within a 150-kilometre radius to manufacture high-value energy products. Its plant creates over 50 direct jobs and contributes to the steady economic development and sustainability of Alberta. The fuels produced at Permolex, the only ethanol-producing plant in Alberta, are 71 per cent less carbon intensive. As a result, this sustainable product advances Alberta's reputation as a responsible producer of energy.

As an environmental steward Permolex uses its zero-waste process and its greenhouse gas reduction targets to preserve the health and quality of life for all Albertans. Permolex is an exceptional example of how innovation, motivation, and diversification can positively impact the Alberta economy.

I am grateful for the opportunity to introduce this organization to the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Alberta Real Estate Association

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having previously worked as a realtor for nearly 30 years, I'm pleased to hereby give a member's statement celebrating the work of AREA, the Alberta Real Estate Association. AREA represents more than 10,000 realtors throughout the province and 10 real estate boards province-wide. AREA's vision is to provide world-class leadership that positively changes the Alberta real estate profession and shapes it to serve the population well. It enhances members' professionalism and reinforces the critical value realtors deliver to both buyers and sellers.

Today Alberta realtors from across the province are in Edmonton for government liaison days. Many of us members have met with our local real estate representatives today.

As a professional real estate association for Alberta realtors AREA is in a unique position to advocate with a singular voice on matters which have the potential to impact realtors' careers, their daily work lives, and their ability to effectively serve their clients. AREA provides a provincial perspective on real estate matters directly to the public, when appropriate, to help the public understand a realtor's expertise and the valuable role they play in the success of the industry. Having been a realtor myself, I know the incredible contribution of real estate to Alberta's economy and realtors to their communities. Realtors support Albertans in making the largest financial decision of many people's lives, that of buying a home. AREA also advocates for ideas to help make industry better in Alberta and to help ensure that consumers are protected.

I look forward to a continued dialogue with my former colleagues in AREA to help bring forward their ideas and concerns to the government and to ensure that all Albertans benefit from the best practices advocated by AREA.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

2:50

Charitable Donations

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I draw the Assembly's attention to the generosity of the Lacombe and area residents. Culture and Tourism, the ministry that oversees the voluntary and nonprofit sector, is responsible for reporting on donations made by Albertans. In its most recent annual report the ministry outlines the tremendous generosity of our province. Albertans donated well above the national average. Just over one-fifth of Albertans made donations to charities and not-for-profits, with the highest average amount donated. Truly this speaks to the spirit of generosity found across our great province. It is with great pride that I commend the people of Lacombe and area, who best demonstrate compassion and the willingness to lend a helping hand. The area had both the highest percentage of donors in Alberta, at 26.3 per cent, and had the highest median donation in Canada, at \$780 each.

Such generosity greatly enhances the richness and quality of life for all Albertans, and the ripples are felt around the world through the work of NGOs and charities. Contributions go to local food banks, housing initiatives, youth centres, rehab centres, palliative care, hospital equipment, arts and culture, sports, education, historical and heritage preservation, and a host of other things.

People can and will care for each other without the central and cumbersome control of big government. Albertans donate out of the goodness of their hearts, and it is important that we protect incentives for charitable contributions. The previous government proposed decreasing this incentive, and the reaction was swift and strong. It is also important, Mr. Speaker, that we provide responsible

stewardship of our economy so that Albertans have the disposable income needed for these valuable and life-enhancing contributions.

Thank you.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I get going, I'm going to ask, first of all, for unanimous consent of the House to waive Standing Order 7(7) in case our orders go past 3 o'clock.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Mr. Bilous: Once again thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first notice of motion I have – I have three today, and with your indulgence I will go through them one at a time – on behalf of the Minister of Infrastructure:

Be it resolved that Standing Order 52.01(1) is amended as follows:

1. in clause (a)
 - (i) by striking out “and Service Alberta” and substituting “, Service Alberta and Status of Women”;
2. in clause (b)
 - (i) by striking out “Agriculture and Rural Development” and substituting “Agriculture and Forestry”;
 - (ii) by striking out “International and Intergovernmental Relations, Innovation and”;
 - (iii) by striking out “and Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour” and substituting “Economic Development and Trade and Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour”;
3. in clause (c) by striking out “Environment and Sustainable Resource Development” and substituting “Environment and Parks.”

That is the first one.

With your indulgence I'll continue through all three, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation:

- A. Be it resolved that the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta effective November 18, 2014, be amended as follows:
 1. The heading preceding Standing Order 78.1 is amended by striking out “Legislative Policy.”
 2. The heading preceding Standing Order 78.3 and Standing Order 78.3(1) are struck out and the following is substituted:
Report of committee on a Bill
78.3(1) A standing or special committee to which a Bill has been referred by the Assembly after second reading shall be empowered to report the same with or without amendments or to report that the Bill not proceed.
 3. The heading preceding Standing Order 78.4 is amended by striking out “Legislative Policy.”

4. The following Standing Orders are amended by striking out “Legislative Policy Committee” wherever it occurs and substituting “standing or special committee”:
 - (a) 8(7)(c);
 - (b) 52.02;
 - (c) 74.1(1);
 - (d) 74.2(1);
 - (e) 78.1(1);
 - (f) 78.2(1).

- B. And be it further resolved that these amendments come into force on passage.

My third motion, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government House Leader:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly rescind its approval of amendment A1 to the motion for second reading of Bill 203, Election (Restrictions on Government Advertising) Amendment Act, 2015, so that the bill retains its place at second reading on the Order Paper with 62 minutes of time for debate remaining.

Those are the three motions, Mr. Speaker.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you. I'm quite pleased to rise. Earlier today, the Member for Calgary-Hays asked the Government House Leader about a Remembrance Day celebration that will be held, that you'll be hosting, Mr. Speaker, in the Legislature's rotunda. Here in front of me is the estimates schedule, where we have cleared the morning of November 5 of estimates so that all Members of the Legislative Assembly may attend that ceremony.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Yes. Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Two tablings relating to messages from the Premier regarding her commitment to protecting farm workers' occupational health and safety and compensation, as reported in the *Journal*, that I attach, and another statement from the *Western Producer* indicating that farm labour laws are going to be included in the Legislature.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to Standing Order 7(7) the daily Routine is now concluded. Pursuant to Standing Order 59.01 the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

Legislative policy committees will convene this afternoon for consideration of the main estimates. Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Education in the Foothills Room, and Alberta's Economic Future will consider the estimates for Infrastructure in the Grassland Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 2:58 p.m. to Thursday at 1:30 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]

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