



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 18, 2015

Day 19

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

First Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Feehan, Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (W)	Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)
Anderson, Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)	Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Government House Leader
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)	McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret, Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (ND)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)	McIver, Ric, Calgary-Hays (PC), Leader of the Progressive Conservative Opposition
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)	McKittrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND)
Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Greenway (PC)	McLean, Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND), Deputy Government Whip
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND), Deputy Government House Leader	McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (ND)
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND)	Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)	Miranda, Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (ND)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)	Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)	Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W), Official Opposition Whip
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)	Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), Premier
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (ND)	Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (W)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W), Official Opposition House Leader	Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W)
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND)	Payne, Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND)
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W), Official Opposition Deputy Whip	Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (ND), Deputy Government House Leader
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)	Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (ND)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)	Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (Ind)	Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition Whip	Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (ND)	Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)	Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND)
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W)	Schmidt, Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (ND), Government Whip
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND)	Schneider, David A., Little Bow (W)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)	Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (ND)
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Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (ND)	Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (ND)
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)	Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)
Gray, Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND)	Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W), Official Opposition Deputy House Leader	Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
Hinkley, Bruce, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (ND)	Strankman, Rick, Drumheller-Stettler (W)
Hoffman, Hon. Sarah, Edmonton-Glenora (ND)	Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (ND)
Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (ND)	Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (W)	Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND)
Jansen, Sandra, Calgary-North West (PC)	Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (W), Leader of the Official Opposition	Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Kleinstuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)	Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND)
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)	Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
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)	
MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)	

Party standings:

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

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		Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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Oneil Carlier	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Joe Ceci	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
David Eggen	Minister of Education, Minister of Culture and Tourism
Kathleen T. Ganley	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, Minister of Aboriginal Relations
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Brian Mason	Minister of Transportation, Minister of Infrastructure
Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Human Services
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Advanced Education, Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour

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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Carson	Hunter
Connolly	Jansen
Coolahan	Piquette
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Clark	Nielsen
Cortes-Vargas	Nixon
Cyr	Renaud
Jansen	Starke
Loyola	Swann
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Kazim	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 18, 2015

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us reflect. Help us to be mindful shepherds of this great province in a manner that protects and preserves it for generations ahead of us, represented by the schoolchildren who are in this Assembly this day, as was done by those generations and the first keepers of this land who preceded us.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you a group of 23 very bright young students, who are joining us here today, from Beacon Heights school. I had the pleasure of reading to the class this fall, about a month ago, and of course I'm always very excited to go back into the classroom, where I once came from. These bright young students are here today with their teacher, Ms Meryl Roberts, as well as three parent helpers, Mr. Karl Hammermeister, Mr. Scott Gudbranson, and Mrs. Catherine Roberts. I ask all of them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly an honoured guest seated in your gallery. Mr. Don Tannas is the former Member for Highwood, and he served in this Assembly from 1989 until his retirement, in 2004. For three of his four consecutive terms Mr. Tannas also served as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees, so we have a lot in common. Mr. Tannas is heavily involved in the Alberta Association of Former MLAs, being on the board of directors since its inception in 2006. Please give Mr. Tannas the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise on behalf of the hon. Premier to introduce to you and through you 28 students from Garneau elementary school. They are accompanied by their teachers, Ms Jesse Mackay and Miss Kristina Kuchta, along with parent helpers Mr. Bruce New, Ms Tracy Craig, Ms Lisa Lilycrop, and Mrs. Joan Emard-Wanner. I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, it seems to be my week for lows and highs. The highs are that yesterday you recognized my aunt; today you see the other end of the generation. I'm pleased to say that my grandson is in that group, so it's a special day for me.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, is there another introduction that you need to make, under visitors?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, it's my great honour to introduce, again on behalf of the hon. Premier, the ambassador of the republic of Ecuador, His Excellency Nicolás Fabián Trujillo. I would ask that he please now stand and receive the warm traditional welcome of our Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

The Speaker: The Minister of Advanced Education and Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly a group from Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women. Changing Together operates a place for immigrant women to meet and work together in solving their problems and helping one another fully participate in Canadian life. The centre also assists immigrant women to acquire employment skills and work experience through their volunteer program.

They are accompanied by my mother, Dorothy Sigurdson, who teaches level 4 English as a second language, and my father, Barney Sigurdson. It was certainly in their home where I first learned about social justice, and to them I am very grateful.

Also attending today is the executive director of Changing Together, Sonia Bitar. They are seated in the public gallery this afternoon, and I ask that they all rise as I call their names, and I apologize ahead of time because some of them are hard to say: Dorothy Sigurdson, Barney Sigurdson, Sonia Bitar, Dilara Yegani, Taeko Kawasaki, Semsi Develioglu, Liam Yang, Coultoum Maaz, Noella Iriho, Viviane Rodrigues Mestre Ruiz, Rosalia Iopez Bastos, and Zoila Sifuentes. Please join me in giving them all the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Very good job, hon. Minister.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislature a long-term friend of mine, Joan Cowling. Joan's roots extend deep into this community. She was born, raised, and educated in Edmonton. Her father's family were pioneers in the area in 1880. She's a graduate of the University of Alberta and Queen's University. Joan has served four terms as board chairman and trustee of the Edmonton public school board, the best school board in the world. She was an advocate for the development of French immersion programs and was on the school board during times of significant change.

Joan is here today as chairman of the board of the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights. She's joined by Norm McLeod, who is on the board of directors. The John Humphrey Centre is organizing a human rights award on December 13, and it will be awarded to Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a pioneer in human rights globally. I would ask both Joan Cowling and Norm McLeod to rise and receive the usual warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a distinct honour today to introduce to you and through you to the other members of the Assembly a band that is truly a cultural icon in this province, the Emeralds. Many of my constituents in Edmonton-Decore are fans, but one of the biggest fans is sitting right here in this Assembly, right in front of me, the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, a fellow accordion player himself and a pretty good one at that, too.

Joining us today in the gallery are Allan Broder, Wallis Petruk, Don Remeika, Terry Kole, Reiner Piehl, and Jason Broder. I would ask that they please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: This House could use an accordion player. Possibly the Opposition House Leader could sing along with him.

Are there any other guests, hon. members? The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Ms Sigurdson: Yes. I'm introducing on behalf of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Service Alberta. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 12 members from the Association of Alberta Registry Agents. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I ask that they rise as I call their names: Dave McNeill, Greg Lemay, Matt Toonders, Steve Cutting, Harry Woo, Robyn Young, Craig Couillard, Pam Wilson, and Michelle Collins. Please join me in giving them the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: I have the hon. minister of agriculture.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a couple of officials from the Alberta Institute of Agrologists. David Lloyd is the CEO and registrar of the Alberta Institute of Agrologists, and Dr. Ty Faechner is the director of the board. As a group the Alberta Institute of Agrologists is at the forefront of many critical issues such as food production, food safety, bioresource health, and environmental quality, matters that are of great interest to Albertans. This organization strives to assure the public of continued professional competence among agrologists in our province. I now ask our guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know how important safety is on family farms and how the loss of just one life or any injury can be one too many. I know that all farmers and ranchers would agree with me that our livelihood is one that goes beyond 9 to 5. Farming isn't a job; it's a way of life. Farmers and ranchers put the food on the table that Albertans and indeed Canadians eat each and every day. I am proud of that. There is no farmer in Alberta who doesn't want their operation to be as safe as possible. No one cares more about farm safety than the moms and dads who operate those farms.

Where I see the gap between the NDP's proposed farm safety legislation and common-sense Alberta farmers is in this bill's legislating first then consulting with those actually impacted later. Agriculture is a vital part of Alberta's economy. It's shocking that the government decided to introduce legislation this comprehensive without in-depth consultation from ranchers and farmers. Mr. Speaker, this government is also trying to implement this bill, with its wide-reaching impacts, in less than 45 days. This is making up rules on the fly, rules that impact peoples' livelihoods, rules that may have serious unintended consequences. At the very least this bill needs to go to a committee so that we can hear from actual producers and industry members, not just what bureaucrats in

Edmonton think should happen. We simply can't afford to put the cart before the horse.

This government needs to recognize the difference between a small family farm at Esther and a large commercial farm or operation in Spruce Grove. Our provincial neighbours have working models that make clear distinctions between large operators and family farms. Were these models even considered?

Mr. Speaker, what we need is time to make sure that we get this legislation right.

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

The Emeralds Show and Dance Band

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to actually ask the assistance of all Members of the Legislative Assembly in helping to nominate the Emeralds Show and Dance Band to Canada's Walk of Fame for the 2016 ceremony. In the 45 years that the Emeralds have been entertaining fans world-wide, they have celebrated many achievements but have yet to be inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame. This needs to change.

Mr. Speaker, the Emeralds are truly a Canadian treasure. We're proud of the fact that they call the province of Alberta their home. They have recorded over 30 albums, resulting in six gold, two platinum, and one double platinum award. Their international hit *The Bird Dance*, also sometimes known as the chicken dance, is widely recognizable and has appeared on several movie soundtracks, one about to come out. In 1997 the Emeralds were inducted into the city of Edmonton's cultural hall of fame. It's astonishing that they have yet to be honoured with the induction into Canada's Walk of Fame based on their numerous accomplishments, successes, contributions to Canadian culture and Canadian music. My office will be e-mailing every member later today, so I would ask each of the hon. Members of the Legislative Assembly to sign that letter, have it sent back to me. We will then forward it to Canada's Walk of Fame with the hope that the Emeralds Show and Dance Band will finally be inducted in 2016.

Thank you for all you have done for Canadian music and Canadian culture. You have made us very, very proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Provincial Election Six-month Anniversary

Dr. Starke: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month Alberta marked the six-month anniversary of the historic election of the NDP as government. [some applause] Go ahead and pound away because you're not going to like the rest of this. Now, our PC Party caucus was relegated here to the corner, and I'm fine with that too, because, after all, I spent a good chunk of grade school in this same spot. The election result was a surprise to most Albertans. It was hard, in fact, to find people that even admitted to having voted NDP, and those few that eventually did admit to it said: well, we voted NDP only because we wanted the PCs to win a minority government. Now, there's some voting strategy that can only be described as baffling, but let's remember that these folks did vote NDP.

Over the summer Albertans witnessed the spectacle of a Premier campaigning against our environmental record for the federal NDP, who wanted to lock the oil sands in the ground, and telling out-of-work Albertans to settle down because we're just embarrassing cousins and expressing concern that she wouldn't have fun at the climate change conference. Well, Mr. Speaker, Albertans aren't

settling down, we're not embarrassed, and – I'm sorry – we couldn't care less if you have fun at the climate change conference.

Albertans are finding that while the last 44 years weren't perfect, things were a whole lot better than the last six months. Every day we hear this government complain about how hard it is to fix the last 44 years. Well, maybe you should quit trying to fix stuff that isn't broken. I'm a veterinarian, and I fix things, too, and when I'm done, the things I fix have certain key parts in deficit and are no longer able to pass things of great value on to the next generation. That sounds like the same approach the NDP is taking to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, most Albertans are holding their breath and hoping this government doesn't totally destroy the province in the three and a half years they have left in their mandate. Our party learned many lessons . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Edmonton-Whitemud Community Activities

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now for something more positive. It's an honour to be the representative of Edmonton-Whitemud, elected by a majority of the citizens, who voted NDP in the last election. Edmonton-Whitemud is historically significant and now epitomizes all the best characteristics of modern Alberta. Whitemud Creek, which is in Treaty 6 territory, was depicted over 200 years ago in David Thompson's journals and maps. It was key to the development of the Edmonton region as a trading centre as it provided ready access to the river valley from the south. David Thompson was one of several hundred new and old Canadians moving here from far and wide then. Nowadays it's home to Fort Edmonton, a re-creation of the history of the indigenous and settler activity. It's also home to over 40,000 people from all over the world.

1:50

Our residents have been attracted to the natural beauty of the North Saskatchewan and Whitemud Creek areas as well as the excellent public schools, recreational facilities, many fine churches, and the vibrant community league structure, led by the Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council. Edmonton-Whitemud has become a megahub of the multicultural fabric of Edmonton.

I want to highlight two initiatives in my riding. Firstly, I'd like to commend the St. Thomas More Catholic parish. Several months ago they fund raised with the goal of resettling 14 Syrian families in Edmonton. They've already welcomed one family and are expecting the rest shortly. They are being helped in the resettlement by Catholic Social Services as well as all of our community.

The other is Brander Gardens ROCKS, a collaborative effort by the public school Brander Gardens and many churches, community leagues, and the city of Edmonton. Brander Gardens ROCKS provides a community hub where new immigrant families and Riverbenders share meals, education, and recreation together. We learn about each other's cultures and support youth empowerment.

Edmonton began as a meeting place, and we continue to flourish as a multicultural dynamic mosaic.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Energy Policies

Mr. Jean: No one blames the NDP for the low price of oil, but people are pointing fingers at NDP policies that are making things

worse for Albertans. Today the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors announced that next year's drilling will drop by 58 per cent. Here is why, and I quote: an increase in taxes and an uncertain competitive landscape with respect to royalties and new environmental taxes have left a big question mark on the attractiveness of operating in Alberta. End quote. To the Premier. The evidence is piling up. Why doesn't she see the damage the NDP plan is doing to Alberta's economy?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The job losses in the energy sector are serious and challenging to many Alberta families, and we share their frustrations. That's why we're doing things differently in Alberta. We will continue to improve the reputation by opening up new markets, and part of that means acknowledging that we have work to do on environmental protection.

We've also created a job incentive program which will encourage employers to create up to 27,000 jobs in each of the next two years, Mr. Speaker. That's progress. Albertans are confident that we're going to keep moving forward on this strategy, and we're grateful.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jean: Here's what the president of Oilwell Drilling Contractors . . .

The Speaker: Hon. leader, until I recognize you, please be seated.

Mr. Jean: Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Please proceed. Thank you.

Mr. Jean: Here's what the president of Oilwell Drilling Contractors said on the depth of the current downturn, and I quote: the oil and gas services industry is facing one of the most difficult economic times in a generation, one of the worst periods in our history. Unquote. And it couldn't be clearer. NDP policies are making everything worse for the blue-collar working families who depend on this work. What does the Premier have to say to these Albertans who are hurting because of risky NDP economics?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite couldn't be more wrong about what's causing this downturn. We all know that the international price of oil is what's causing it. If he wants to pretend that by simply having a Conservative government, that wouldn't be the case, what does he have to say for those in Saskatchewan, who were down 50 per cent from their drilling at this same time last year? They have a Conservative government. What about North Dakota, in a similar situation? They have a Republican government. This has nothing to do with policy; it has to do with fearmongering. The price of oil will one day recover, and we're going to make sure that we're incenting jobs in the meantime.

Mr. Jean: Albertans see what the NDP are doing, and they're very worried. They feel like they can't trust the NDP to look after their best interests, and who can blame them? Companies are leaving the province, drilling is down, investment is fleeing, and everyone is pointing the finger to NDP policies as making a bad situation worse: risky royalty and climate change reviews, higher taxes on everyone and everything in Alberta, campaigning against pipelines. And the NDP are just getting started. How can the 65,000 out-of-work Albertans ever trust this government to look after their interests?

Ms Hoffman: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is so far off the mark that he has no clue.

Mr. Eggen: How far off is he?

Ms Hoffman: He is so far off that when half of the drills in the United States are sitting idle right now, he blames Alberta for that. This is something that's happening across North America. We're working in a thoughtful way with industry to build jobs. The member opposite is doing nothing but fearmongering. When will the opposition stop beating up on Alberta? Albertans want a government that believes in them, and they have that.

Mr. Jean: The NDP can't continue to ignore Albertans. Albertans understand the devastating impact the NDP's high-tax, anti-jobs plan is having on the economy. Albertans are living it right now and are very worried. Today 30 municipalities wrote an open letter to the Premier on shutting down our coal industry saying that it "will have significant consequences for the economy, jobs, communities and all of the citizens of Alberta." I couldn't agree more. Higher power bills, fewer jobs, higher taxes: these municipalities are seeing the impact of risky NDP economics. Why can't the Premier see that?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What the government of Alberta is doing is working to make sure that we have 27,000 jobs in Alberta created over the next two years through our job incentive program. We are the only party that in the last election actually had a job creation strategy. Members opposite want to pretend they can keep doing what was done over the last 44 years and that, magically, there will be different results. We're in this situation because previous governments ignored the realities. We're working to ensure we have a diversified economy, and that means Albertans will have jobs.

Mr. Jean: The Premier seems more interested in impressing eastern elites than doing what's best for Alberta. The NDP plan is to raise a new carbon tax and shut down our coal plants. That will hit Albertans very, very hard. Municipalities get it. Their letter says, "It is inevitable that consumers will be immeasurably impacted through higher electricity rates." When Albertans are losing their jobs or seeing their wages cut, this Premier wants to raise their power bills. To the Premier: why, when so many Albertans are hurting, does she insist on making it worse for all Alberta?

Ms Hoffman: I think all members of this House can agree that one of the ways we're going to have good, long-term jobs is if we have a good, long-term international reputation, and the only way to make that happen is to take meaningful action so that Albertans can actually be earning an income so that they can pay their power bills, Mr. Speaker. We're working to make sure we have a strong international reputation. We're going to be taking a measured approach, working with industry, working with Albertans, to ensure that we can sell our products and that we can actually build the pipelines that the member opposite failed to do when he was in Ottawa.

Mr. Jean: A new report from Canada's Ecofiscal Commission makes it abundantly clear that a new carbon tax will hit Alberta the hardest out of all of Canada. Does the Premier care? No. Despite Canada having the best environmental record of all oil-producing countries, the Premier thinks that Alberta is an embarrassing cousin. For families around the kitchen table, they know the NDP plan

means higher power bills. For seniors on a fixed income it means lower quality of life. Premier, why are you determined to ram through these policies that will make every Alberta family poorer?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to making sure that we have a prosperous, sustainable economy that benefits Albertans, and part of that is ensuring that we have a strong environmental record and real results while protecting our economy. I know that some members may not believe that climate change is really a problem, but the world knows it is. They're looking to us for leadership, and we are going to bring it.

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

Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation

Mr. Jean: Since the NDP formed government, they have attacked our number one industry, energy. Everything they have done has made the problems of our energy sector much worse. Not happy with that, of course, the NDP have now turned their attention on our number two industry in Alberta, agriculture. Under the guise of safety Bill 6 opens up farms and ranches to all sorts of new regulations. This bill will raise costs and regulations on each and every one of Alberta's farms and ranches. Will the Premier stand up today and tell Alberta farmers what it will cost them to meet the requirement of this new, terrible bill?

2:00

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know he can't ask about a bill that's before the House.

Ms Hoffman: The point of order has been noted. I'm happy to answer it.

The Speaker: The point of order is noted.
The response?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, 60,000 Albertans have waited far too long to have the rights that they deserve. The Workers' Compensation Board introduced legislation in 1918, nearly a century ago, and labour relations legislation was introduced in 1938, just before the Second World War. Albertans have waited long enough to have the protections that have rightfully been owed to them, and we're going to move on those.

Mr. Jean: This government is politicizing farm safety for ideological reasons. This bill treats small family farms and ranches like any other commercial enterprise. Some of the aims of this bill are laudable, but it has major flaws. Other provinces recognize the uniqueness of family farms and ranches. This government does not. If ever a bill needed consultation and study, this bill does need it. Will the Premier commit to sending this bill to committee so that the government can hear the informed opinions of Alberta's farmers and ranchers?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, it is clear . . .

Mr. Cooper: Point of order.

Mr. Mason: . . . they may not . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Are you making a point of order?

Mr. Mason: Normally they're dealt with at the end of question period.

The Speaker: That's exactly what I intend to do. I thought you were . . . [interjections] I understood your statement to be a point of order. I was incorrect in that respect, hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Farm and ranch workers should have the right to return home safe each and every day, and that's what this government is working toward. Just to reinforce that, here are some of the comments that we've been hearing about this: "This is encouraging. It proves Alberta can fix a glaring, unfair and probably unconstitutional social inequality in less than a century." Mr. Speaker, 98 years. We won't wait 98 more. [interjections] That's Don Braid in the *Calgary Herald*, and I'll be happy to table it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jean: The other side seems a little rowdy today, Mr. Speaker.

I can't help but notice that there is no one on the government side who makes their living from farming or ranching, not even the agriculture minister. The NDP don't have a clue. Farming and ranching aren't jobs; they are a way of life. The Premier has told municipalities that the MGA will be sent to committee for consultation and study when it gets introduced. Why won't the Premier show farmers the same courtesy it is showing to cities and towns and send this far-reaching bill to committee for study?

Ms Hoffman: The members opposite are so out of touch with Albertans that they have no idea how important it is for them to have rights to be safe at work and for them to have rights to have confidence that they can move forward. I want to thank some members of the House for saying so. They've said that finally we're bringing Alberta into the 21st century. [interjections] Thank you to the Member for Calgary-Mountain View for acknowledging that. I wish members opposite cared as much about farm safety and the safety of workers.

The Speaker: I wonder if the hon. minister would please repeat her answer. I could not hear it. Would you please repeat your answer?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of Alberta deserve to come home safe each and every night, and the Member for Calgary-Mountain View acknowledges that. This isn't about one side of the House or the other. This is about working together to ensure the safety of farm workers. They deserve it. This is good for rural Alberta. This is bringing Alberta into the 21st century, said the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, and I thank him for sharing that view. Our government is working to make sure that we protect workers, and this bill is going to be good for Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member of the third party.

Vision Loss Services

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, nearly 53,000 Albertans live with blindness or partial sight. Of the \$4 million required by CNIB last year, a million and a half was provided by government. The environment minister is quoted as saying that these services ought to be brought under the umbrella of medicare. The Member for Calgary-Shaw introduced in this House advocate Phil Bobawsky, a friend of both of ours, who is a champion for the blind. To the Premier: will you keep your party's campaign promise to fund vision loss services for Albertans since this is one of the very few positive promises made?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to providing services that Albertans need. I know how

important it is for visually impaired Albertans to maintain their independence and quality of life, and that's one of the reasons why we've worked to make sure that medications that can help with that are more readily available. That's why I'm so proud of the RAPID program, which took out the copay as well as having to pay \$1,500 for each injection to having a fully funded government program for \$50 an injection for people who are suffering from macular degeneration. This is being supported by organizations like the CNIB, and I'm really proud of our record on this.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, CNIB will be not that happy to know that the government's answer is to provide unapproved drugs to the blind.

Given that the rehabilitation coverage for hearing loss is delivered through Alberta Health Services and, by contrast, that Albertans with sight loss say that they are unfairly treated, when will you address this discrepancy in support of the 53,000 Albertans who are blind or sight impaired?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We currently provide the CNIB with, actually, \$2.2 million every year. As the Minister of Health I've met with the CNIB to discuss their concerns. I understand that they're proposing a phased approach to introduce new funding for new services, and we are certainly looking at that proposal. But I have to say that it's a lot easier to consider proposals when you're not cutting billions of dollars from the budget, which is what members opposite have been proposing. I'm really confident that we're going to work in collaboration to make life better for those who are visually impaired.

Mr. McIver: Well, Mr. Speaker, once again the government is demonstrating that they're not listening. The CNIB has asked for \$4 million.

I will try it again. To the Health minister this time since the Premier won't answer: given that CNIB Alberta has asked this NDP government to take steps towards fully funded rehabilitative care and has even provided a phase-by-phase solution to do it, can you commit today to say yes to this very reasonable request by the CNIB?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find the irony of the member, who was part of a government that for 44 years failed to act and then all of a sudden expects us within six months to move swiftly, so over the top.

In my last answer I talked about how the CNIB is proposing a phased-in approach, which the member mentions. We are certainly considering that. We're going to do it in a reasonable way, and we're going to make sure that we have evidence to guide those decisions. I thank the CNIB for the services they provide to Albertans, and I'm proud of the fact that we are currently contributing \$2.2 million.

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

Climate Change and Royalty Reviews

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This morning I released the Alberta Party climate change strategy called Alberta's Contribution. We believe our province's contribution to the fight against global climate change comes from creating technologies

that will help diversify our economy, reduce emissions, and allow Alberta to continue to grow our energy industry. Now, the Alberta Party believes that our job is not just to oppose but to propose clear alternatives to government policy, and I challenge my opposition colleagues to release their climate change plans as well. To the Premier. Our plan calls for a modest, truly revenue neutral consumer carbon tax. If your government implements a carbon tax, will it be revenue neutral?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question and also for his interventions in this matter. I was very grateful to read his interventions this morning, and I thank him for his contributions to these efforts. Of course, the panel is considering these matters. We are looking at the way that we currently price carbon and ensuring that it's the most effective way that we can. We are looking at how we phase in renewables, how we retire our coal fleet in a way that is fair for workers, for communities, and for the companies. We're also looking at the ways that we can bring in energy efficiency. I think that the hon. member will . . .

2:10

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, our plan taps into Alberta's greatest natural resource, the entrepreneurial spirit of our people. It creates opportunities for Alberta companies to drive innovation and develop technologies that allow Alberta to become a world leader in carbon reduction while continuing to grow energy production. To the Premier: will you continue to fund the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation, and will you use some of those funds to create a living lab, using Alberta carbon sources, to test innovative ideas for emissions reduction, and will you use the results of these policies to stand up for Alberta's energy sector to gain badly needed market access for our oil?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. member for the question. Certainly, the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation is a large part of our technology and innovation investments that we make as a province, and those investments will continue. We are continuing to receive advice from the panel on this matter of research and development, technology and innovation and how we move towards a more carbon competitive economy. Those details will be shared with the House in the coming days and weeks.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the minister for that answer.

Now, on Monday evening I asked the Minister of Energy if she would release all of the advice given to her by the royalty review panel. Now, transparency is very important. Albertans deserve to know that the royalty review and climate panels were worth while and not just cover for doing what the government wanted to do all along. To the Premier: will you commit to releasing all advice or recommendations made by the royalty and climate panels so Albertans have confidence you're not just picking and choosing the ideas that you like?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. I think, as I mentioned the other night in estimates when you asked that question, there will be documents released along with the report and the findings in due time.

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

Legal Aid

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a family and criminal lawyer I know just how important legal aid is for all Albertans, and I know from the calls that my office has received just how important subsidized public legal services are for my constituents, especially for those involved in family dispute litigation. Constituents that need it are pleased with the continued responsible funding for legal aid in this year's budget. To the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General: what will this additional legal aid funding be used for?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for this absolutely critical question. Well, of course, we as a government are committed to ensuring that services are available, particularly for the most vulnerable Albertans, and that includes legal aid. This funding was initially put through in the last budget and has been continued in this budget because it will provide an increase in the financial eligibility guidelines. In addition, we will be working with Legal Aid to ensure that going forward they are able to meet the needs of Albertans.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Legal Aid's federal funding has not changed since 2005 and that we've had 785,000 more people come into our province, back to the Minister of Justice: with the new federal government in power what actions are being taken to secure adequate federal funding for Legal Aid in this province?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again to the member for the question. I actually have had the opportunity to have a conversation with my federal counterpart on this issue, and we will be discussing it when the Justice ministers for the provinces, territories meet together. The province has significantly increased its contribution to Legal Aid whereas the federal funding has remained stagnant, and we are hoping – I am optimistic – that there will be some more help coming from the federal government so that we can make sure that we're protecting vulnerable Albertans.

Ms McLean: Mr. Speaker, given that thousands of Albertans in need depend upon Legal Aid's subsidized services, to the same minister: how are you ensuring Legal Aid can continue to operate in an effective manner in the future?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again to the member for the question. Well, of course, this is a really important issue because it protects the rights of the most vulnerable Albertans. We've been working with Legal Aid on some short-term solutions, and we hope to have some announcements on that front very shortly. We're also moving forward looking at the overall service delivery of legal aid

to ensure that we're able to provide services that protect vulnerable Albertans in a sustainable way going forward.

Government Revenue Forecasts

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, last week the Parliamentary Budget Officer in Ottawa released his economic forecast, projecting oil to be \$11.60 lower a year than the NDP's projections. Every \$3 drop in the price of oil equals a half a billion dollar shortfall in our revenues. That means an \$8 billion difference from the budget by 2018. Does the minister still believe that Albertans can trust his government's revenue projections, or will he revise them with more realistic projections before we vote on the budget?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The budget that was put before this House is a prudent, realistic budget. We believe that always, going forward, we'll take into account what the private-sector forecasters are saying about WTI and other commodities, and we will revise when necessary at the quarterly and at the annual updates. The annual update for the next budget is going to be coming shortly. That's in the spring of this year, and the next quarterly will be in February.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, right now is the time for realistic numbers. Given the seriousness of this issue, it shouldn't be brushed aside by the government for another day. So I have to reiterate a point, which is these romanticized numbers for oil. The government will have \$8 billion more in debt than they were already projecting by 2018. This is a serious issue that deserves more than talking points from the minister. Does the minister have a plan to fill this \$8 billion hole with higher taxes or even higher debt?

Mr. Ceci: The plan we've put before this House will bring us back to balance in 2020. So that's realistic. We plan to support jobs and the creation of jobs in this community so that the diversified economy can better take us off the oil and gas roller coaster. We're going to do that. We're going to balance in 2020.

Mr. Fildebrandt: The PBO doesn't believe this is a realistic plan, and Moody's doesn't think this is a realistic plan.

Given that the NDP could put lipstick on a pig or any numbers they like in the budget, it still doesn't change the facts, Mr. Speaker. Since beyond the first three years of the budget plan the minister has provided no data whatsoever to show how he expects to increase revenues by 16 per cent to balance the budget in year 5 and since during the estimates the minister refused to table his economic assumptions for those years, will the minister be honest with Albertans and table the data for years 4 and 5 of the budget now?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you. The member opposite can look in the overview section of the budget to see what we have built these budget assumptions on.

Mr. Strankman: Point of order.

Mr. Ceci: They're all there. We'll stick with this one as opposed to the pig.

The Speaker: A point of order is noted by the Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Hon. Minister of Finance, you have 15 seconds left.

Mr. Ceci: Sure. To conclude without holding this up, I will say that we built realistic assumptions into the overview section. It's all there if the member opposite wants to read it.

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

Minister of the Status of Women

Ms Jansen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 5 of this year only two women were re-elected to the Legislature in this province: myself and the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, the Premier, which I guess makes us the veterans in a group of outstanding, new women legislators. Our opportunity to create change has never been better, and I applaud the government's efforts for making a gender-balanced cabinet. I applaud the introduction of a separate Ministry of the Status of Women and had high hopes for it, but the new minister has already been faced with apologizing to me for an unprofessional outburst yesterday in estimates, where she became aggressive and abusive. To the Premier: does she condone this kind of behaviour?

2:20

The Speaker: The minister of environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, emotions run high in estimates, and that went both ways. I certainly apologize to the member if she took my comments as impugning her record as associate minister. However, the fact of the matter is that we have a record from the previous government on women's issues, and we know we need to do better.

Ms Jansen: Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't apologize for the content of her diatribe, just for the fact that it hurt my feelings. So way to go for the bronze here on the apology.

Yesterday I was shocked to hear, Mr. Speaker, that the work of dedicated civil servants that I served with in women's equality and advancement was described as deplorable, lackadaisical, and disgusting. These hard-working individuals are part of the minister's current staff. To the Premier: will she apologize now for the minister's characterization of their work?

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, it's very unfortunate that the hon. member cannot accept an apology when it is offered. It seems that she wants her pound of flesh, too.

It's very clear that we have many hard-working officials throughout the public service, working in many departments under the political direction of the government of the day. They are, of course, bound by the policy direction set by the government of the day, and from time to time the people of this province decide that it's important to change that direction. That is what they have done.

Ms Jansen: Mr. Speaker, given that the minister has insulted her peers and denigrated her staff, it's clear that she has lost the moral authority to govern on this file. To the Premier: will you ask her to step down?

Mr. Mason: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that the tone of the question is really unfortunate in this place. It seems to me that this hon. member is attempting to exploit a difficult situation. I read the *Hansard* transcript of that, and this hon. member contributed as well to, I think, a sense of antagonism that shouldn't necessarily be there.

I believe the question was with respect to the Premier, but I know – I know – that all of us on this side have the utmost confidence in the minister of the environment and women.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Tax Policy

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday in estimates I noted in the business plan created by this government the statement: “Alberta’s government is moving forward with action to cushion the impact of the downturn on Albertans.” Perhaps, instead of our economy taking body blows, they should focus on making everyday life better for Albertans losing their jobs. To the Premier: do you think that increasing taxes on everything Albertans do, from getting married to going camping to enjoying a glass of wine to driving their cars, is a cushion, or is it a steel-toed boot in the rear?

The Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I’ll thank the member for the question. Our government is taking action on the current situation with low prices of oil internationally. We were the only party during the election that had a plan that looked at partnering with the private sector to create jobs as opposed to the opposition parties, that only talked about it. Our party is acting on it. The creation of my ministry focuses on partnering with the private sector to look at ways to enhance our market exports, our access to market, and jobs in this province.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the same document states that the government’s intent is to “develop a fairer, more balanced revenue base that will bring stability to public programs” and since the government’s plan seems to be implementing taxes on everyday Albertans while also proposing to pile on even more through a carbon tax, to the Premier: when will this government realize that their budget is anything but fair and balanced and that Albertans are downright worried?

Mr. Ceci: Actually, the truth of the matter is that 93 per cent of tax filers will not see a change in their taxes as a result of this budget.

Mr. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, given that “fairer” is banded about liberally by the government when talking about taxes and that to this government fairer seems to be equated with better conditions for bureaucrats, not the 1,500 Albertans a week that are losing their jobs, how can the Premier say with a straight face that Albertans should trust this government when protecting the bloated bureaucracy is all that they seem to have in mind?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I find it really rich that the Official Opposition’s solution to the fact that thousands of Albertans are losing their jobs is to lay off thousands more teachers and nurses and front-line workers. That alone would just exacerbate the problem. Now, as opposed to the Wildrose opposition, our government plans on working with the private sector to create more jobs, strengthen our public sector, and ensure that Albertans have the teachers in the classrooms and health care professionals when they get sick and also a path forward to a balanced budget.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Public Consultation on Land Use

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 4, 2015, the Minister of Environment and Parks made a staggering, sudden

announcement to convert the Castle area partially to a wildland park and a provincial park. This announcement. . .

The Speaker: Would you stop the clock for a minute? I could not hear the question.

Could you proceed again, hon. member?

Mr. Stier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, assuming they heard the first part, this announcement was purposely done without key stakeholder notification. A long-time logging contractor was not consulted, nor were the officials for the three local municipalities. To the minister: why, prior to this sudden announcement, did you avoid discussing that decision with the company that had faithfully held the forest management agreement for decades plus the key elected officials in three local municipalities?

The Speaker: The minister of agriculture.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. Consultations with the sawmill that the member is referring to in Cochrane are ongoing. We respect the forestry industry across the province. There are 17 communities in Alberta that are very important to the forestry industry, and we’re committed to protecting that forestry industry, which is important to Alberta.

Mr. Stier: My question is still to the Environment and Parks minister. She made a sudden announcement regarding the Springbank reservoir, where once again key stakeholders, including landowners, were given no prior notification and the affected municipality was only notified the evening before. To the minister: given that your party had a campaign against that decision during the election then flip-flopped and given that you provided no notification, how can Albertans trust you when you’re always leaving them in the dark?

Ms Phillips: Well, you know, there’s a simple first piece to the answer, Mr. Speaker, which is: that is not true. There were ongoing consultations with affected municipalities on flood mitigation projects for some time. Now, the fact of the matter is that this Official Opposition would leave the entire city of Calgary with no flood protection and open to a \$6 billion flood event as we saw in 2013. We did the hard work of taking the tough decision, and we acted.

Mr. Stier: Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact, what the minister has just said is not true. She’s clearly not acting in the best interests of Albertans and cannot be trusted.

To the minister again: given that it is obvious that you, Minister, do not wish to notify key stakeholders or local municipalities on extremely sensitive and crucial issues, how can Albertans trust you now to represent their best interests on the international stage when you go to the climate change conference next month when you’ve broken that trust here at home?

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can say that the premise of this question is categorically untrue. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time I did speak with municipal leaders in the region to look at the various options and get their input, which I then shared with the minister of the environment.

Thank you.

2:30 Environment and Parks Ministry Issues

Mr. Fraser: The environment minister has said that decisions around the environment should and will be made on the best

evidence, and, Mr. Speaker, our former government and this caucus agree that decisions should always be made on sound evidence. Minister, I don't intend to overwhelm you. I know and I understand that the portfolios of Status of Women and the environment are two very important issues for Alberta's families. These are legacies that we will leave our mothers, daughters, sisters, and the environment is something we'll leave for all future generations. Minister, with the conduct and the evidence you displayed yesterday in estimates, perhaps it's time you asked the Premier to split up these two very important ministries with separate ministers so that they can get the attention they deserve. Wouldn't you agree?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That is a decision for the Premier, and I will not presume to speak for her, but I want to assure the hon. member that we have absolutely the greatest confidence in the minister to perform both portfolios.

Mr. Fraser: Now, given the fact that the Springbank dam was based on evidence – the evidence shows that a portion of the Springbank dam will flood to protect Calgary – and given the fact that now there are new mitigation talks to protect a subsection of homes along the Elbow River, Minister, if you mitigate that, the water is going to go somewhere. This was a contentious issue for this community in the last flood. Minister, what portion of Calgary or community downstream are you now going to tell that they will flood because of this decision?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of the environment.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. It's actually a really good question. That is why we have undertaken the flood hazard mapping studies that we have, the studies that the Auditor General prevailed upon the previous government to do and they did not do. We have undertaken that work, and we'll have that conversation this afternoon in estimates because there is a cost associated with it. That was part of the announcement that we made with the mayor of Calgary on how we move forward on mitigation for both the Elbow and Bow rivers.

Mr. Fraser: Well, let's be clear, Minister. The evidence showed that with the previous flood maps, the water went exactly where we predicted it to go.

Minister, you've talked a lot about your own community and how you want to protect your own headwaters, hence why you made the decision to shut down development in the Castle region. To avoid the appearance of your own political benefit, Minister, will you please table the report and evidence to this House pertaining to the headwaters in the Castle region showing the health of the headwaters before and after?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. You know, the Castle area: putting it under some form of legislated protection was a long-standing request of landowners, various people who hold grazing leases, municipalities, and others in southern Alberta. The fact of the matter is that the South Saskatchewan regional plan is a good plan, but in some ways it did not listen to the local communities, and on this Castle decision that was one of them, and we acted.

Agricultural Policies

Cortes-Vargas: Mr. Speaker, dry conditions and hail earlier this year were the grave conditions for many farmers across the province. While the constituents of Strathcona-Sherwood Park weren't completely impacted by these conditions, many Albertans worried that this year's harvest would be far lower than previous years. Many neighbouring areas and surrounding counties issued a state of agricultural disaster. To the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry: how did this government help farmers cope with the challenging early growing season?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, early season conditions resulted in a significant increase in the number of claims for insurance compensation through the province's Agriculture Financial Services Corporation. As a result, this government declared an agricultural disaster, which allowed the AFSC to provide approximately \$350 million in support to farmers through premiums and reserves that were already in place to ensure producers with insurance are compensated for their losses in a timely manner. That said, this year's harvest overall was much better than anticipated.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I know that many farmers were very appreciative of that support.

Given that early season conditions were so challenging and given that the experiences differed in different parts of the province, would the minister inform the Assembly of the status of the 2015 harvest?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, more than 99 per cent of crops are now in the bin, so I'm happy to inform this Assembly of the provincial yields, which are higher than estimated earlier this year. Provincial average yields for spring and durum wheat are reported at 86 and 85 per cent of their five-year averages, with barley at 90 per cent, oats at 86 per cent, canola at 95 per cent, and dry peas at 80 per cent. Overall, this year's crops came in at about 87 per cent of the five-year average. The reason for this is better than expected conditions later in the crop season, improved seed genetics and farming practices, and good ground conditions during harvest.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta farmers will continue to face difficult growing conditions and as the effect of climate change becomes more evident, to the same minister: what are you going to do to promote sustainable agricultural practices across Alberta to help ensure the success of Alberta farmers for generations to come?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, this government takes the threat of climate change seriously. With innovation, diversification, and investments in technology Alberta's farmers can weather the storm. This government has established the Farm Stewardship Centre in Lethbridge to focus on research, development, and the implementation of best practices that will help farmers improve on farm stewardship, protect the environment, address important issues like climate change, while continuing to diversify the Alberta economy. This government will also ensure that the AFSC remains a crucial backstop for farmers and ranchers with a suite of financial and insurance supports available.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Infrastructure Funding

Mr. Schneider: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP government's strategic plan, with significant input from David Dodge, outlines their intentions for funding public infrastructure. It refers to a tool called a special investment vehicle, that would build and manage such infrastructure, borrow to finance it, and charge user fees to generate revenues. That sounds in layman's terms like a toll to me. Will the minister come clean and tell Alberta just exactly what the special investment vehicle means for Albertans? Are you introducing a toll?

The Speaker: The Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. No.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Schneider: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Dodge report discusses the use of electronic toll systems as an avenue of funding for bridges and given that we know there are bridges all across this province that are in desperate need of more funding, like the one in Fort Saskatchewan, what exactly is your government's plan when it comes to placing tolls on bridges in our province?

Mr. Mason: Nein, non, nyet tolls.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Schneider: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since municipalities in our province, like Edmonton and Calgary, are responsible for key arterial highways inside the ring roads and whereas motorists are frustrated by perpetual congestion and traffic lights stopping and starting traffic along these arteries and in the light of the Dodge report: is the Minister of Transportation planning to give tolling powers to municipalities through a new municipal charter? Yes or no?

Mr. Mason: Three guesses, hon. member. In whatever language the answer is no.

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

Fentanyl Use on First Nations

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is national addictions week, and I'd like to congratulate two Kainai physicians who've been honoured by the University of Lethbridge with this year's friends of health sciences award. Dr. Susan Christenson and Dr. Esther Tailfeathers launched several successful initiatives to save lives on the Blood reserve, where fentanyl has taken a terrible toll. To the Minister of Aboriginal Relations: given the success, leadership, and persistence of these doctors, what are you doing, specifically, to save the lives of Albertans on other reserves?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the question and to the member for raising it. Certainly, fentanyl is one of the most extreme drugs that we've seen in our time. Doctors are talking about the very extreme consequences of having as much as just two grains of fentanyl. We're working on a four-pronged approach. One piece is making sure that we have education and public awareness campaigns. One piece is working to make sure that we have naloxone kits in the hands of people who are likely to have an overdose and the people who care for them. We're also working to

address the manufacturing and trying to create greater barriers between it being brought into Alberta. Lastly, we're working to make sure we have this crisis centre in place as well as investing in detox opportunities.

2:40

Mr. Rodney: Thank you to the Health minister for the answer.

Again to the Aboriginal Relations minister: given that you committed last week to outline your department's efforts to ensure that the life-saving antidote naloxone is available on all Alberta reserves and given that any delay in setting up the system means lives lost, what are you doing specifically to ensure that all First Nations reserves have a ready supply of naloxone and that residents are trained to administer it at a moment's notice?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. Well, of course, this is a critical issue for all Albertans because fentanyl is a very dangerous drug, and the antidote naloxone is one of our key pieces in addressing this situation. We have been working with policing agencies on reserves, we've also been working with First Nations directly, and we will continue to work with EMS as well as working on information because it's really critical that we work with our partners in Health to ensure that the information on the danger of this drug gets out so that we can prevent people from taking it in the first place.

Thank you.

Mr. Rodney: Again, to the same minister: given that the Blood Tribe Police Service launched an extremely effective on-reserve crime unit dedicated to gaining control of fentanyl distribution, what specific plans – and we are looking for specifics here, Minister – do you have to adapt the Blood reserve's successful state of emergency model on other reserves that are trying to get a handle on fentanyl abuse and distribution in their area?

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. Well, of course, we have a number of police forces throughout Alberta policing on First Nations. There are a couple of other First Nations that have their own policing forces, but a majority of it is done with the RCMP, so we are working with those partners to ensure that they have access to naloxone and that they have access to all the information necessary going forward to make sure that they can cut off the supply.

Thank you.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Mosaic Entertainment

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The more I learn about the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Creek, the more aware I am of the rich diversity of businesses there, one of which I was fortunate enough to tour recently. Mosaic Entertainment is a television studio. Unprepossessing in its outward appearance, but much like Dr. Who's TARDIS, it has a much bigger inside than the outside suggests. Mosaic Entertainment is primarily a skit comedy company, and it has produced a variety of shows, among them is *Caution: May Contain Nuts*. The show currently being filmed, *Tiny Plastic Men*, is being shown on Super Channel.

Our tour began with us meeting the executive producers, learning how the studio works, then moving on to see how the creative inspirations grow into stories and finally a show, needing only a place to be produced and a cast and crew to bring it to life. After meeting the cast members, all well-known names in the Edmonton theatre scene, it was on to the wardrobe. In the midst of the racks of costumes, some ready to be worn and some needing to be refurbished and altered, there were sewing machines, piles of colourful fabrics, and components everywhere. The costume designer and her assistants have to be creative and innovative to produce the needed costumes on site.

Next was the props area. The props, ranging in size from furniture to small toys, were stored everywhere, even on the walls of the lunchroom, where boxes labelled with made-up toy company logos were stacked. Everywhere we walked, we saw people setting up equipment, rehearsing scenes, or carrying props to the sets.

Finally the moment came. We were provided with director's chairs, placed well behind the cameras, and we watched a scene from the show being filmed.

Touring this studio showed us Albertans creating a successful and creative business, employing many local people, and providing entertainment and new ways of looking at the world. We're very lucky to have them.

Fall of the Berlin Wall 26th Anniversary

Mr. Fildebrandt: On August 13, 1961, the Soviet Union built the Berlin Wall, an iron curtain that cut not just a city or a country but the entire world in two. For three decades the Berlin Wall stood as a global symbol of oppression and tyranny. For the west it stood as a symbol that our Cold War opponents would ruthlessly stamp out any yearning for freedom that loosened their grip on power. For free people around the world it stood as a physical reminder that while free nations welcome people in, slave nations keep them in.

For Germans: [Remarks in German]; a nation half free, half slave. It was a stone in their hearts, keeping families, friends, brothers, sisters, and countrymen apart. Most of my family escaped the east before the wall went up, but many families did not. Millions of families were trapped behind it, and some were even divided by it.

Twenty-six years ago, in November 1989, the people of East Germany overthrew the Socialist Unity Party and began to tear down the wall with their own bare hands. Within two years most of the socialist regimes in eastern Europe and Russia had fallen. As the colonized nations of the Soviet Union declared their independence, so too were the people of East and West Germany brought together again in unity and justice and freedom. [Remarks in German]

Let us remember this anniversary as a new symbol that the human need for freedom can be walled in and suppressed for a time but never extinguished. The world has never had a greater portion of its people freer than today, but there still remains millions oppressed or even enslaved in their own countries. As one of the oldest free nations in the world we have a duty as Canadians to fight for them. Let us pray for those around the world still not free. They will be in time.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

Bill 205

Persons with Developmental Disabilities Services (Public Consultation) Amendment Act, 2015

Ms Renaud: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Services (Public Consultation) Amendment Act, 2015.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 205 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Mrs. Littlewood: I would like to table the aforementioned *Calgary Herald* article written by Don Braid titled Alberta Farm Workers Win the Long Struggle for Basic Rights – I have the appropriate number of copies to table – as well as an article titled Farm Safety Breakthrough: Proposed Rules to Ensure Safe Workplaces, Protect Workers. That is also a *Calgary Herald* article, and I have the appropriate number of copies.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the requisite five copies of a document called Alberta's Contribution: Alberta Party Caucus Climate Change Plan, a balanced plan reflecting our desire to address climate change and other impacts of energy development with the goal to continue the development and expansion of Alberta's energy industry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a document that my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition referred to today, an open letter to Premier Notley from the mayors and reeves of over 30 municipalities in Alberta.

2:50

The Speaker: The Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of a letter that was just delivered to the office of the Premier requesting that the Premier relieve the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women from her duties.

The Speaker: Are there any other tablings?

Hon. members, I'm pleased to table five copies of the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta 2014-15 annual report pursuant to section 63(1) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and section 95(1) of the Health Information Act and section 44(1) of the Personal Information Protection Act.

It's the appropriate time, I think, for me to deal with points of order. I think there were a total of three.

Government House Leader, on the first one, can you elaborate on the point of order?

Mr. Mason: I had three of them, and I actually have a fourth one.

The Speaker: Okay. This is the appropriate place to deal with them.

Point of Order Tabling Cited Documents

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, maybe I'll just give you the fourth point of order, and that is that during tablings today we expected the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills to table the survey of his constituents which he referenced yesterday in question period. It is customary that when a member refers to a document in the House, particularly during question period, they table it at the first opportunity. So I would hope that the hon. member would table that on Monday. That's my fourth point of order.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. I'll have to beg for your forgiveness, good sir, as I did forget to bring that document today to the House. I'll be more than pleased to table it in the House tomorrow given that we will be here.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Government House Leader, the first.

Point of Order Language Creating Disorder

Mr. Mason: I will do two together, and they have to do with the decorum in the House when government members are answering questions. It seems to me that the Official Opposition is acting in a way to try and disrupt the proceedings of the House when hon. ministers are trying to respond to their questions. The degree to which the catcalling, heckling, yelling, shouting, quite frankly, attempts to shout down ministers is unacceptable, and I would ask you to impose decorum. Clearly, some heckling has always been permitted in the House, but there seems to be a consistent attempt to drown out or intimidate ministers of the Crown in giving their answers. I think that this should not be acceptable to you, Mr. Speaker, or to the House.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, the section specifically, if you could point that out.

Mr. Mason: It's 23(j).

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. I rise today to speak to the point of order under 23(j): "uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder." While I can accept that the opposition was boisterous today and was voicing some concerns, I personally didn't hear much use of abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you know, if you are uncomfortable with the decorum in this House, you are welcome to rise at any point in time and ask for a little bit of a softer tone or volume in the House. I think that you did have the opportunity to rise today, and it was when the government was doing the exact same thing that they've accused the opposition of today.

The Speaker: On this particular point of order, as I may have indicated on a couple of occasions, particularly this week, I have that issue under advisement myself, and I would prefer to deal with this as part of a bigger picture at a future date.

I would remind the House, though, as I think about that, that you choose to indicate that you want to use time efficiently and constructively. However, I note that on several occasions I've had

to actually ask the House to be quiet so that I could hear. So as I look forward to bringing a response on that matter in the future, I also urge all of the members, all of the party whips, those present, that we need – we had children in the Assembly today, as we often do, and they are looking to us as leaders. You are role models. All of us are role models, and I wish to remind each of you to use your best efforts, either as individuals or as caucuses, to make this place a more respectable place. I will defer my ruling until next week.

I think there was a point of order from the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Mason: I had another point of order as well.

The Speaker: I'll deal with this one first if I might.

Mr. Cooper: I rise to speak briefly to the point of order from my colleague from Drumheller-Stettler. There's a tradition in the House of not using props. He felt that there had been one used, but in the name of time I'll withdraw that point of order on his behalf.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Government House Leader.

Point of Order Anticipation

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. During question period I believe the hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills – and correct me if I'm not correct on that – attempted to ask a question with respect to Bill 6, which is the bill that deals with the health and safety of farm workers. [interjection] It was the Official Opposition Leader, yes. He attempted to ask a question to the Premier about Bill 6, the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act, which stands on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders. I would note that our standing orders say – and this is clear – on page 16, 23(e): "anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper or on notice for consideration on that day."

Mr. Speaker, also, if you review *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms* at page 122, section 14, "Questions should not anticipate an Order of the Day although this does not apply to the budget process." Clearly, this bill is not part of the budget process.

Just to go a little further, Mr. Speaker, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, edited by O'Brien and Bosc, quite rightly points out that this rule has been changed or modified in the Canadian House of Commons. Without going into it at length, the Speaker ruled there that questions in question period dealing with something that is on the Order Paper were henceforward okay except in a couple of instances, and I won't go into the detail of that.

However, that is not the procedure in this House or in our standing orders, Mr. Speaker, as you yourself ruled on June 17. At 3 o'clock in *Alberta Hansard*, June 17, 2015, you yourself said:

With respect to the point of order, it related to a question by the Member for Calgary-Cross to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General about donations to political parties, which is the subject of Bill 1, which can be found on page 19 of the *Alberta Hansard* for yesterday, June 16.

Then you read the standing order, Mr. Speaker.

A Member will be called to order by the Speaker if, in the Speaker's opinion, that Member

- (e) anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper or on notice for consideration on that day.

Basically, the rule is what it says, that a part of the proceedings should not be on the same subject as something that is scheduled for later in the day. My investigation into the matter demonstrates that the rule is not necessarily strictly observed in relation to Oral Question Period. Speaker Kowalski stated on March 3, 1998, page 649 of *Alberta Hansard* that questions that were framed so as to ask if something was a matter of government policy “took it out of the realm of debate on a particular bill.”

3:00

I will note, Mr. Speaker, that that is not the frame used by the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition in asking his question as he specifically referenced the bill.

You went on to say:

I note that in a May 8, 2013, ruling on the same issue, page 2194 of *Alberta Hansard* for that day, Speaker Zwozdesky reaffirmed Speaker Kowalski’s ruling on the rule against anticipation not being violated by a question about the government policy in relation to a bill which was up for consideration that day.

Members may be interested to know that the Canadian House of Commons no longer applies the rule against anticipation during question period, as is discussed on page 561 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. In this instance, the question asked what the government was doing about campaign financing, which is, of course, the subject of Bill 1. I think the Official Opposition House Leader had a valid point and a legitimate point of order although it could have been maybe brought forward to the Assembly’s attention at the appropriate time.

As we move forward together during this session, I am sure that we will now be more aware of the rule against anticipation.

Mr. Speaker, wise words.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to respond to the point of order in question today, from section 23(e). I think there are some very key points for consideration today when it comes to the question at hand. The standing order states “anticipates, contrary to good parliamentary practice, any matter already on the Order Paper or on notice for consideration on that day.” Mr. Speaker, there is no such bill that will be considered today. In fact, we will be rising here momentarily to go back into the estimates process. The department of agriculture or the Department of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour are not going to be debated today.

Having said that, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states that the rule was changed, that questions are no longer to be ruled out of order on the sole basis that they are anticipating orders

of that day. So there is a wide swath of precedent that creates an either/or situation and does not require the question just to be on the Order Paper but to be under consideration that day. It is very clear that we will not be considering it today. I think you’ll find that while the hon. member across the way brought some points when it comes to anticipation, for many of the questions that he raised today, the topic of discussion would be debated later that day.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, briefly on the rule of anticipation: this is one that is long standing, but the application of this rule, at least in Canadian Houses of Parliament, has certainly been significantly relaxed, and there is a very practical reason for that. Items are placed on the Order Paper as soon as they are introduced, and they remain on the Order Paper sometimes for a matter of days or even weeks. If during that entire period of time the members of the opposition are enjoined from asking questions with regard to those pieces of legislation, it certainly limits our ability as members to probe the government as to their intentions with regard to the legislation.

I understand fully the desire to not cause duplication or to waste the time of the House with something that could then be taken up during the course of debate. However, Oral Question Period is the most direct opportunity for members to directly ask the ministers involved what the state of government policy is on that, and the rule of anticipation, as has been previously stated on pages 560 and 561 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, has been appropriately relaxed in order to allow for that to happen. In this particular situation, Mr. Speaker, if we are not allowed to ask questions with regard to any matter on the Order Paper, we are in fact significantly hindered in our ability to fulfill our role as members of the opposition. I would ask that you rule this particular point of order out of order.

The Speaker: Hon. members, thank you for your comments. I choose to read the references identified by the various members and make a decision at a future date.

Having said that, pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b) the House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30.

The legislative policy committees will convene this afternoon for consideration of the main estimates. Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Seniors in the Foothills Room, and Resource Stewardship will consider the estimates for Environment and Parks in the Grassland Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:06 p.m. to Thursday at 1:30 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]

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