



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, May 11, 2016

Day 26

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

**Legislative Assembly of Alberta**  
**The 29th Legislature**

Second Session

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

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

**Party standings:**

New Democrat: 54      Wildrose: 22      Progressive Conservative: 9      Alberta Liberal: 1      Alberta Party: 1

**Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly**

Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Clerk	Philip Massolin, Manager of Research Services	Chris Caughell, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel/Director of House Services	Nancy Robert, Research Officer	Gordon H. Munk, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel and Legal Research Officer	Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms	Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

## **Executive Council**

Rachel Notley	Premier, President of Executive Council
Sarah Hoffman	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health
Deron Bilous	Minister of Economic Development and Trade
Oneil Carlier	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Joe Ceci	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
David Eggen	Minister of Education
Richard Feehan	Minister of Indigenous Relations
Kathleen T. Ganley	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Christina Gray	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal
Danielle Larivee	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Brian Mason	Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation
Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
Stephanie V. McLean	Minister of Service Alberta, Minister of Status of Women
Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Human Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

**STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

**Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund**

Chair: Ms Miller  
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	McKitrick
Dang	Taylor
Ellis	Turner
Horne	

**Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future**

Chair: Mr. Sucha  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schneider

Anderson, S.	Hunter
Carson	Jansen
Connolly	Panda
Coolahan	Piquette
Dach	Schreiner
Fitzpatrick	Taylor
Gotfried	

**Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee**

Chair: Mrs. Littlewood  
Deputy Chair: Ms Miller

Anderson, W.	Nielsen
Clark	Nixon
Connolly	Renaud
Cortes-Vargas	Starke
Cyr	Sucha
Drever	Swann
Jansen	van Dijken
Loyola	

**Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Goehring  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

Drever	Pitt
Hinkley	Rodney
Horne	Shepherd
Jansen	Swann
Luff	Westhead
McPherson	Yao
Orr	

**Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

Chair: Mr. Shepherd  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Cooper	Littlewood
Ellis	Nixon
Horne	van Dijken
Jabbour	Woollard
Kleinsteuber	

**Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. Wanner  
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Cooper	McIver
Dang	Nixon
Fildebrandt	Piquette
Jabbour	Schreiner
Luff	

**Standing Committee on Private Bills**

Chair: Ms McPherson  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Connolly

Anderson, W.	Kleinsteuber
Babcock	McKitrick
Drever	Rosendahl
Drysdale	Stier
Fraser	Strankman
Hinkley	Sucha
Kazim	

**Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing**

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick  
Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

Carson	Loyola
Coolahan	McPherson
Cooper	Nielsen
Ellis	Schneider
Goehring	Starke
Hanson	van Dijken
Kazim	

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Mr. Fildebrandt  
Deputy Chair: Mr. S. Anderson

Barnes	Luff
Cyr	Malkinson
Dach	Miller
Fraser	Renaud
Goehring	Turner
Gotfried	Westhead
Hunter	

**Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Loyola  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Loewen

Aheer	Kleinsteuber
Babcock	MacIntyre
Clark	Malkinson
Dang	Nielsen
Drysdale	Rosendahl
Hanson	Woollard
Kazim	

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon.

If you would bow your heads. Let us reflect, each in our own way. Let us reflect on the power of community and the power of collaborative work and the impact it can have on our province. Through a co-operative effort we will be able to preserve our communities and our province through the tough times that they may face. Let us as Albertans remember that we are here for one another and that no one should feel alone during these difficult times.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader of the third party.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two guests sitting in your gallery. Former MLA for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo Mike Allen is also the owner of Campbell's Music, which just happens to be celebrating a 40th anniversary this week. Mike is also a two-term municipal councillor and past president of the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce. I had the pleasure of working with Mike Allen on highway 63, which is now 99 per cent complete. Thank you, government, for finishing it. I expect that the evacuation efforts would have been severely worse if highway 63 remained a single-lane highway.

Attending with Mike today is Denise Wilkinson, who is a restaurant manager and the vice-president of membership for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo PC Association and Mike's partner. I would ask Mike and Denise now to please rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

### Introduction of Guests

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

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House students, staff, and parents from Webber Academy in my constituency of Calgary-West. For the teachers: Mrs. Kari Labelle, Ms Barbara Webber, Mrs. Valerie Ellaid, Ms Jennifer Harriman, and Ms Carol Webber. The academy is one of the top private schools in western Canada. It's recognized for its high educational standards and renowned for preparing students for university and their broader citizenship in society. The school's founder, Dr. Neil Webber, is well known to this House as he is a former cabinet minister, as is his son Len, now an MP for Calgary Confederation. I'm proud that Webber Academy is in Calgary-West. It is located in a truly beautiful venue overlooking the foothills and the mountains. Almost 100 students from Webber Academy are here today. Can we please welcome them and give them the traditional warm welcome of this House.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Are there any other school groups today, hon. members?  
Hearing none, the Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two women who are on the forefront of co-ordinating local relief efforts for evacuees from Fort McMurray. Kathy Prudhon and Cindi Haché are respectively the founder and executive director of the Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society. With the support of the city of Edmonton and the government of Alberta and many community partners, Cindi and Kathy lead the EERSS in co-ordinating local partners and volunteers to deliver direct material assistance to victims of disaster. I look forward to speaking more about their work in my member's statement today. For now I would ask that they rise and receive the warm welcome of this House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly Matthew Lillico. Matthew is a Wildrose member who is working to build our organization up here in Alberta's capital. I'd ask that he stand and receive the tradition warm greetings of the House.

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two staff members from my constituency office in Edmonton-Mill Woods and one staff member from the Labour ministry. I have my constituency office manager here, Marta Azocar, who has been with me since July and does a fabulous job of keeping things running in Edmonton-Mill Woods, as well as our part-time constituency assistant, Dylan Sloan, who started in March. As well, from my ministry staff I'd really like to introduce Karen Ramkhelawan, my scheduling assistant. I do not know how she does it, but thank you, Karen. I'd like to ask that they all rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

**Loyola:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't see my guests, but I'll introduce them here. They might be on this side.

It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. Jagvir Brar and Zora Singh Brar. Jagvir has become a good friend of mine over the last year, and I was honoured to have him as a volunteer on my last election campaign. He's an extremely dedicated volunteer and participates in all outreach events organized by the constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie. Zora Singh Brar is Jagvir's father-in-law and is visiting Edmonton from Punjab and is looking forward to a tour of the Legislature later this afternoon. I'd ask both my guests to rise if they are here and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Your guests may not be here yet, hon. member.

### Ministerial Statements

#### Fort McMurray and Area Wildfire Update

**Ms Larivee:** Mr. Speaker, the situation in the Fort McMurray area and the well-being of those who were evacuated continue to dominate our thoughts and our actions. There are thousands still under mandatory evacuation orders for Fort McMurray, Anzac, Gregoire Lake Estates, and the Fort McMurray First Nation. I know first-hand how hard it is to be away from your community, and my

heart goes out to all those people who are displaced from the comforts of home. We continue to focus on those evacuated residents to ensure that they remain safe and have access to the support and services they need.

This morning our Premier announced the details on the emergency financial assistance available to evacuees. This afternoon our government will start issuing preloaded debit cards to those who have registered with the Red Cross to help them through this tremendously challenging time. Adults will receive \$1,250 and \$500 for every dependant. This one-time emergency payment will help evacuees meet their immediate short-term needs.

I know this has been a stressful time, and I would like to make an appeal to allow individuals and families with the most need to come forward first. Those families who are not in dire need of funds, who perhaps still have at least a few dollars left to use, are being asked to please wait a few days. These funds will be available for some time, and no eligible evacuee will be left out. There are debit card distribution centres in Edmonton at the Butterdome, in Calgary at McMahon Stadium and the BMO Centre, and at Lac La Biche in the indoor soccer centre adjacent to the Bold Center.

Evacuees will need to bring with them their Red Cross registration number, photo identification, identification for their partner or spouse and dependants if they are claiming relief for them, and proof of residence or presence in the community. For those who left behind identification documents such as drivers' licences, new Alberta ID cards will be issued free of charge at a registry agent. Those who have questions about this program or questions about any of the efforts under way should contact 310.4455 or, again, check the emergency.alberta.ca website.

**1:40**

Our government also remains committed to providing evacuees with as much information as possible as it becomes available. We held our second telephone town hall last night, and it was very well received by residents. We had several experts available to answer questions of evacuees on topics ranging from house insurance to health care, education, the current state of the wildfires, and plans for re-entry. We had good participation on last night's call, with more than 13,000 evacuees who participated. There are plans for at least two more town halls, one tonight and one on Thursday. Again, evacuees should register with the Red Cross to ensure that they receive the details of these calls.

Mr. Speaker, an important step in the recovery will be to get the major industry in Fort McMurray back up and running. Yesterday our Premier met with leaders from the oil industry to discuss the state of the oil sands facilities in the region and plans to return to full operations. We expect that many companies will resume operations in the coming days, which is good news for their employees and for our economy. We are committed to working closely with them on the plan for a safe and timely recovery. The Alberta Energy Regulator has created a recovery team to assist with planning for the safe and environmentally responsible resumption of operations. The regulator is working with each affected company on a start-up plan. This work will include appropriate authorizations, inspections, monitoring, and logistical support to get sites operational.

On that note, yesterday highway 63 was reopened for industry goods to move through. That includes the transportation of oil sands supplies and equipment. The RCMP is managing a staging area south of Fort McMurray to allow for free-flowing travel that's intended for industry use. This is good news, Mr. Speaker, to get our industry working again.

While industry begins its return, I want to say that we are working as quickly as possible to make Fort McMurray safe for residents to

return to. As we speak, we have many people on the ground in Fort McMurray, those conducting damage assessments and beginning repairs on critical infrastructure such as the power grid, gas lines, and water treatment facilities. A team of inspectors is on the ground to conduct structural assessments, first on critical infrastructure and then on businesses and residences. Alberta Health Services will be assessing the city's hospital and begin establishing an urgent care centre. In fact, there are already health care services available for the first responders there. And planning is under way to develop interim housing solutions for those who lost their homes.

Mr. Speaker, we have hundreds of people on the ground right now working as quickly as they can to make the city safe and habitable, but there is significant work to be done. I understand the difficulties faced by those who have lost so much. I want everyone to know that everything that can be done is being done around the clock to get you home.

Although the fire has moved away from Fort McMurray, the fire potential remains high. The fire in northeastern Alberta is out of control, and the size is currently estimated at 230,000 hectares. The current forecast indicates a high of 12 degrees Celsius today, 30 per cent humidity. Winds will remain a factor at 25 kilometres per hour from the northeast. Widespread smoke remains a concern, and we are monitoring air quality closely to ensure that our first responders are safe. In Fort McMurray there are more than 700 firefighters bravely battling the blaze along with 20 helicopters, 13 air tankers, and many pieces of heavy equipment.

This battle has physical and emotional impacts on our first responders. To provide the support these brave women and men may need, three mental health therapists trained in psychological first aid arrived yesterday in Fort McMurray to provide support. In addition, Alberta Health Services is deploying a critical incident stress management support team. The team will include one mental health trauma specialist, three emergency medical services peer support members, and one EMS chaplain to provide psychological health help to all interested emergency responders.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to urge those evacuees who haven't already registered with the Red Cross to do so. People can do this by visiting redcross.ca to register their name and whereabouts. As of this morning more than 47,000 households have registered with the Red Cross. There are 13 reception centres open in the province. As always, the best place to go for the most up-to-date information is emergency.alberta.ca.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

## Members' Statements

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

### Fort McMurray and Area Wildfire Relief

**Mr. Stier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past week has shown the steel and resolve of our province. It begins with a story of those who, without being asked, found their way to drive up highway 63 and to evacuation centres to provide free gas and free meals. For over a week these individuals have done this tireless work without ever being asked.

The acts of service did not stop there. Many businesses and individuals immediately brought their equipment, both big and small, to provide immediate relief and assistance to those in need. In cities, towns, and villages across Alberta families have opened up their homes to strangers, to pets on a moment's notice. In fact, barely an hour after a mandatory evacuation was in effect, folks were already signing up to help.

In our cities we've seen incredible leadership from our municipal officials. I want to first thank the mayor of the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo, who was asked to oversee the largest evacuation in our province's history. I'm thinking of towns like Lac La Biche, which, despite a population of only 3,000, has warmly welcomed 4,000 evacuees to the Bold Center on the southeastern edge of town.

It should come as no surprise that the City of Champions, too, stepped forward to lend a hand. The Edmonton Expo Centre received a call for help at 9 p.m. By 11 p.m. their doors were open and ready to welcome nearly 20,000 evacuees. Edmontonians have been tirelessly assisting evacuees to find accommodation, stocking up on things like clothes, pet food, baby diapers, and other important items.

Not to be outdone, Calgary, too, has opened its doors, providing lodging for nearly 2,000 evacuees. Calgary facilities like the Calgary Zoo, the Telus Spark centre, and leisure centres are all offering Fort McMurray residents an opportunity to spend even a couple of hours having fun, getting their minds off all this worry.

Once again Albertans have shown their true character in the face of a crisis. The coming days, weeks, and months are certain to be difficult, but I know we will emerge from this tragedy stronger than ever before.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

#### Acts of Kindness to Wildfire-affected Albertans

**Ms Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the news we are hearing about the big players in the evacuation of Fort McMurray. There is no doubt how important their work is and the lives that have been saved because of it. But thousands of smaller acts of kindness are taking place, and I want to honour these today.

There are the children setting up lemonade stands; groups hosting barbecues and pancake breakfasts, with the proceeds going to the Red Cross; the family whose child's specialized walker had to be left behind, and someone in Edmonton stepped up and gave them their daughter's spare one. Local bands are coming together for concerts to raise funds and to raise spirits. There's the Hutterite colony that showed up at a reception centre to feed the people a home-cooked chicken dinner; the Syrian refugees in Calgary, who have so little, that gave what they could to purchase much-needed supplies; the people of Fort St. John, who sent a large horse trailer of supplies because Fort McMurrans needed it more. People are opening their homes to complete strangers. One farmer and his wife not only gave someone gas, but fed him, cleaned and fixed a tear in his clothes, and sent him on his way. When he stopped to get coffee, he reached in his pocket and found a \$100 bill.

I could list these incidents all afternoon and not be finished. These are all small acts in the big scheme of things, but added together, they are huge, and they speak to the remarkable character of Albertans.

I am so proud to be an Albertan, and I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone for these acts of kindness.

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

#### Fort McMurray Wildfire Pet Evacuation

**Dr. Starke:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been eight days since the wildfire forced the residents of Fort McMurray to evacuate, leaving unimaginable destruction in its wake. We've seen the chilling photos and videos that some have taken as they fled, showing just how little time people had to escape, and we've heard from many of the evacuees who were forced to leave beloved pets behind. I can

only imagine how difficult that was and how anxious these pet owners have been waiting for news.

**1:50**

Well, late last week animal control, SPCA, and Humane Society officials began going door to door. They have already rescued hundreds of pets of all shapes, sizes, and species. These pets are being cared for in a facility here in Edmonton until they are well enough to be reunited with their owners. Yesterday morning I had the honour of spending a few hours conducting health assessments and treating these frightened and bewildered animals. I can't tell you how rewarding it was to play a small part to reunite these animals with their families, families that I know will benefit tremendously from the comfort of their beloved pets during these difficult times. I was struck, but not surprised, by the selfless dedication of my Alberta Veterinary Medical Association colleagues, veterinarians and animal health technologists, some who have been there on duty for days with only a few hours' sleep.

Pets enrich our lives in immeasurable ways: they have become integral parts of our families; they give unconditional love; and they bring us joy, laughter, companionship, and comfort day in and day out. We know that in the days since the evacuation these four-legged companions have been greatly missed. We also know that in the difficult days ahead, they will play a vital role in the healing process.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans have contributed their unique skills and expertise in countless ways to help the people of Fort McMurray. I've always been proud to be a veterinarian but never more so than yesterday. I'm thankful that I can put my skills to use and be of assistance during this crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Oral Question Period

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

#### Fort McMurray Residents' Housing Concerns

**Mr. Stier:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take a moment to commend the strength once again and the courage of the Fort McMurray evacuees. We know that for many of these evacuees, there is a good chance their home survived the blaze. Understandably, however, these men and women want to see the damage with their own eyes. The other day I asked about timelines for these Albertans to return home. The government had no answers for me then and would only defer to work being done on the ground by officials. To the minister: what specific infrastructure criteria must be met before the evacuees are allowed to return home to Fort McMurray?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Certainly, we fully recognize how desperately people want to get back home, and we're working around the clock to make that happen. A big piece of that is actually the assessment of the work that needs to be done. We continue to work on things such as water, power, electricity, waste management, and we'll transition slowly to ensure necessary services such as the grocery store being prepared and the hospital being prepared and all of those pieces. We look forward to providing that information, with a clear representation of the plan, to residents as soon as possible.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Stier:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that safety is paramount, but there are things this government could do to ease the burden on evacuees while they wait. On June 20, 2013, flooding devastated parts of southern Alberta. Eight days later there were bus tours arranged so that residents could assess the damage for themselves. Similarly, seven days after the Slave Lake wildfire officials organized bus tours there, too, so residents could have a first-hand look at the wreckage. Is the government arranging bus or video tours so that Fort McMurray evacuees can see their homes with their own eyes?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for that important question. There's no question that officials have been discussing that very issue. The mechanics and the logistics of having 80,000 people return to a town that is a four- or five-hour drive away for bus tours are not the same as the examples that were given previously.

However, there is work being done on the issue of a video tour. Our officials are working with Google Maps to look at whether that kind of work can be done because we understand that people want to see things as soon as they can.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Stier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has said that a schedule for return won't be provided to evacuees for another 14 days, on top of the painstaking seven days that they've already been waiting. These men and women need to get back to their homes or, at the very least, to have a solid timeline for a return. The 2011 fire victims were back in their homes in 13 days; the 2013 flood victims were back in their homes in nine. Can the government provide a full list of reasons why Fort McMurray evacuees will have to wait 22 whole days before they even get a timeline for a return?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know that it is absolutely the first thing on the minds of the evacuees from Fort McMurray, that they want to go back. We absolutely understand that. Particularly, you know, the first responders that the member opposite referred to in his member's statement have had tremendous success in getting people out of Fort McMurray safely, so we don't want to undo that record by letting them go back prematurely. We also don't want to set a date which then has to be missed because of a gas line or an electric line or lack of a water supply because, quite frankly, the emotional task of building towards a specific day and then having that day removed is even more . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Premier.

The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

### **Fort McMurray Wildfire Recovery Contracts**

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been talking with many of my constituents over the past week, and I've heard many stories of compassion, generosity, and pride for our Fort McMurray community. However, many of my residents are skilled labourers and trained professionals, and they are eager to lend their expertise to rebuild their home, but they've been prevented by this government from doing so. As the MLA for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo this is of great concern as in the days and weeks and months and years to come we will need all the help we can get in rebuilding.

My question to the Premier is this. Will you ensure that Fort McMurrayites with the will and resources are given the opportunity to rebuild their city?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. It's certainly a very good question. That issue actually comes up as part of the larger consideration of: how do we help small-business owners and business owners who've been negatively impacted by the fire in Fort McMurray? As we move from the emergency response phase, which, quite frankly, really just ended about Sunday, Monday, into the transition phase, that exact work is being done. The whole evaluation of the services that are required and where we can get them and how we can certainly be sure that those from Fort McMurray are able to participate as much as possible is being worked out right now. We'll have more to say . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Yao:** Mr. Speaker, I have specific examples of Alberta businesses and individuals who are from Fort McMurray and have the infrastructure and capacity to help during this crisis. They are companies with machines on the ground, who want to help. Take, for instance, a local excavation and demolition company that has machines sitting at the waste-water treatment plant in Fort McMurray. They're ready to help with the fire abatement and cleanup, but instead of using these ready-to-go machines on the ground, the government has already said, "No, thanks" and are instead bringing up machines and contractors from Calgary. To the Premier: why are you ignoring this made-in-Fort McMurray assistance being offered?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's not a question of ignoring; it's a question of assessing the resources on an urgent basis, on an emergent basis. There's no question that this issue is being addressed and being examined by the transition team, by the emergency management people who are planning the transition. So it will form part of the plan going forward. The decision is not done. We've only just begun the work of securing the city, and there will be a great deal of work going forward. I ask the member to give us specific examples, as I indicated to his leader yesterday, and we'll be happy to . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Premier.

**Mr. Yao:** I do have a specific example.

Examples of local solutions are being ignored. The Wildrose has heard stories of water trucks being available in Janvier, which is just 120 kilometres from Fort McMurray. When the offer was made to supply these 20 water trucks, the forestry department said: no, thanks. A rebuild of Fort McMurray without utilizing the tools available in the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo does not make sense. Will the Premier work with her officials to rectify this situation?

**Ms Notley:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I think I've kind of already answered that question exactly. We've asked our officials to look at that issue and to look at a planned-out process to ensure that those who want to help, who are capable of helping will be offered the opportunity to help. As I've said, there is a tremendous amount of work going forward. In the meantime specific examples, with names and people and contacts and that information, will help us as



we work with our officials to work through this together, collaboratively, to ensure that everybody can contribute and the most support can be given to business owners in Fort McMurray.

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

### Job Creation

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP government has failed to support job creation in Alberta, and Albertans are suffering for it. Last week the Labour minister admitted that they are failing on contractual obligations to promote the Canada job grant, which trains Albertans for better jobs. Big-union AFL-CIO has called the Canada job grant the kind of action Canadians should expect from government at all levels. Will the Premier commit to unemployed Albertans that her government will fulfill skills training obligations?

2:00

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Labour.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that question. Through the Canada-Alberta job grant we provide skills training to Albertans who need it, and the program is incredibly well adopted. Through a provincial election and a federal election some of the announcements have not been happening as per the contract. However, rather than announcing our skills training, we are delivering the skills training. We will work with our partners to make sure that we fill those contractual obligations and do those announcements going forward. In the meantime providing the skills training is our priority.

**Mr. Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, six major announcements have to be announced every year to be able to fulfill that obligation. That has not been done. Albertans send away an extra \$15 billion a year to Ottawa, and our government is not even fully utilizing what little money gets transferred back. Alberta receives over \$100 million annually under the labour market development agreement to help with skills training. What we are not sure of is if these dollars are being used to provide useful training to Albertans who are out of work and worried about making next month's mortgage payment. Will the Premier commit to releasing details on which specific organizations are receiving these funds?

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

**Ms Gray:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the work that our government is doing on jobs and skills training. I've provided the member opposite with significant information and details about the program and the nearly 2,000 companies that have taken advantage of Canada-Alberta job grants as well as the 14,000 workers who have enjoyed that. I'd be happy to work with him if he thinks more details are necessary on this particular issue, but the Canada-Alberta job grant is very well utilized in this province, and we can be quite proud of the work that's happening there.

**Mr. Hunter:** There's no doubt that challenges from outside and inside our borders are having an impact on everyday Albertans, but the government has to take ownership of their poorly thought out policies negatively affecting and impacting the economy. It's been one year since the election, but any policies designed to give businesses a sliver of hope won't even kick in until next year. With increased costs to businesses like dramatic minimum wage hikes and a new carbon tax, what is this government doing to help support job growth now instead of sending jobs away?

**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 has been very active since last fall's budget, where we increased ATB's capacity to lend to small and medium-sized businesses by \$1.5 billion. In the fourth quarter they kicked out \$338 million. There is also the STEP program, that the previous government cancelled, that our government has brought back and increased its capacity. That's going to employ about 3,000 folks this summer. There are a number of initiatives that our government has taken that are going to get Albertans back to work and get our economy moving.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The leader of the third party.

### Fort McMurray and Area Wildfire Information

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our hearts go out to the people displaced by the Alberta wildfires. The impact of fleeing on a moment's notice and leaving your life behind is something that I cannot comprehend. I am surprised to hear that anyone seeking to enter Fort McMurray is required to sign a nondisclosure agreement, including the media, required to have photos and videos vetted by the government before they can be released. Can this be true, and if so, why is it necessary to control the information coming out of Fort McMurray?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. All I can say, very definitively, to the member opposite, in answer to your question, is: no, it cannot be true. It is not true. That is not happening. Sometimes information gets out there, and it spreads a little bit too quickly. To be very clear, that is absolutely not something that's happening in Fort McMurray.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that, but on Global News there was a report today, and it talked about how even first responders, who have risked life and limb to fight against the disaster, are required to sign a nondisclosure. Again I will ask the Premier or anybody else over there: is this the case, and if so, what possible reason could there be for it?

**Ms Notley:** We've been advised by officials that on one or two occasions private contractors may have introduced this particular practice – for whatever reason we're not entirely sure – to some people. But let me be perfectly clear. None of the public officials that are managing the disaster response in Fort McMurray are asking for anybody to sign this kind of document. It's just not happening, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker, people out of their homes are worried about their pets, their neighbourhoods, their belongings. They're anxious, they're scared, and they need information not two weeks from now but right away. Everybody understands the concerns around safety, and we all respect that, but since the Premier has admitted just now that some people have to sign nondisclosures before sharing information, can I ask the Premier to disclose who does? Give us the list of who does have to sign a nondisclosure so that that'll also tell us who doesn't.

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, what I am saying is that there have been some second-hand reports that maybe some private contractors may have done that, but I wouldn't know because I'm not in charge of them. To be clear, the public officials who are

managing this disaster are not asking anybody to sign nondisclosure agreements. So in answer to the question: it's not happening.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

### Wildfire Evacuee Emergency Debit Cards

**Loyola:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today displaced residents of Fort McMurray will begin to receive emergency financial assistance in the form of preloaded debit cards. This is a much-needed support, and I'm glad that the government has moved so quickly to get this help to residents. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. When and where can evacuees receive this money, and what ID is required to receive this assistance?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Evacuees can start receiving their emergency assistance cards this afternoon, beginning at 2 p.m., at four reception centres: the Butterdome in Edmonton, McMahon Stadium, the BMO Centre in Calgary, and the Bold Center in Lac La Biche. They will be open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day, and more centres will open tomorrow, and we'll continue to add more locations in the coming days.

Registration with the Red Cross is required along with identification and social insurance number to receive the cash card. Family members may pick up the debit cards for the entire family but must bring the identification of their spouse and dependants. Any evacuees without ID can receive the cards by making a statutory declaration or can be reissued Alberta ID . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
First supplemental.

**Loyola:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many Albertans have evacuated out of province to stay with family and given that many evacuated Albertans may be far away or simply cannot get to a distribution centre, what is the plan to ensure that these Albertans get the emergency assistance?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will ensure every Albertan evacuated from the Fort McMurray area will receive emergency assistance whether they are out of province or cannot access a distribution centre. Seniors, those with mobility issues, those with special needs, and others who are in Alberta but unable to apply in person can contact 310.4455 to make arrangements to receive emergency financial support from the government of Alberta. We are also working with the Red Cross to provide that assistance from the government of Alberta in addition to the funding provided by the Red Cross for those who have left Alberta. Details on how this will happen should be coming in the days to come.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Loyola:** Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Many evacuees live and work in Fort McMurray. However, their identification lists their residence as somewhere else. To the same minister: how will the government ensure these evacuees will receive emergency assistance?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard from many evacuees about this concern through the telephone town halls I've

been hosting and various messages we've been receiving. As stated, our government will do what it takes to make sure all evacuees receive the emergency assistance cards. Evacuees in this situation may present documentation such as pay stubs or utility bills to prove residence or presence in the community to receive the cards. Additionally, any evacuee lacking identification or documentation can still receive the cards by making a statutory declaration or can be reissued ID at any registry office. We continue to make every effort to ensure evacuated Albertans receive the assistance cards and the support they need in this difficult time.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
The hon. Member for Airdrie.

### Seniors' Advocate

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in the estimates for Seniors and Housing the minister clarified that the position of the Seniors' Advocate, which was created to help vulnerable seniors navigate government bureaucracy and to help stop elder abuse, is currently only being filled on an interim basis, which wasn't exactly clear when she said on April 7, "Certainly, we do have a Seniors' Advocate." To the Minister of Seniors: how can you claim that protecting vulnerable seniors is a priority for your government when you haven't even appointed a permanent Seniors' Advocate?

2:10

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Seniors and Housing.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Currently the seniors' and health advocate is responding to all the concerns that are coming forward for seniors. There's staff available to help them, and certainly that's going ahead. It's very important for us to be responding to any concerns that seniors are presenting, and their concerns are being taken care of.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Mr. Speaker, given that the minister resorted to pointing fingers on April 7 and saying, "This is an area that has been neglected by the previous government" and given that yesterday she admitted that there hasn't been a permanent Seniors' Advocate since January 1, 2015, which means that her government was at the helm for 12 of the 17 months of the interim period to date, to the minister: when will your government actually take some ownership and do the right thing for vulnerable seniors by appointing a permanent and independent Seniors' Advocate?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. All of the concerns of seniors in this province are being taken care of by the seniors' and health advocate, that's currently in place. Any concern that comes through to our government is being addressed immediately by that person. Right now we're going through an open recruitment process for the Seniors' Advocate, but right now there is the seniors' and health advocate, who's looking after them, so those concerns are being taken care of.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Mr. Speaker, given that when the government's in-house position is finally permanently filled, the Seniors' Advocate will still be under the government's authority and only have limited powers and given that the Seniors' Advocate is a vital component to seniors' support services and should be empowered to act independently on seniors' behalf, when will this minister do her job,

stop playing politics, and prioritize an independent Seniors' Advocate?

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. What the opposition is proposing would cost 10 times what the current arrangement costs. It seems this is another example of the opposition wanting to make deep cuts while also asking to spend more. Our Seniors' Advocate is very effective in the responses to all the seniors, and we're very pleased with the work they do.

Thank you.

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

### PDD Service Delivery

**Ms Jansen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When asked during the recent review of the Human Services budget estimates, the minister stated that there are currently 413 people waiting to access PDD services. This number is shocking and has been growing at a rate of approximately 100 per year since 2012. These are people and families potentially in crisis waiting for PDD housing and supports. To the Minister of Human Services: what supports are the people on the wait-list getting, or are they just being left to fend for themselves?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Human Services' mandate is to assist Albertans in creating conditions for safe and supportive environments so they can realize their full potential. There are, yes, 413 people on the wait-list. These are people who are in the process of planning for services, who are waiting for appropriate service providers, and whose service request exceeds available funding. We are working with those people to make sure they get the services they need.

**Ms Jansen:** Well, they need more than just excuses.

Given that the previous government recognized PDD as a fully distinct program branch with an associate minister, this has been lost under our current government, and since you no longer recognize disability services as distinct and unique, the stakeholders are distressed and they are confused. To the Premier: will you take the big step towards restoring trust with the disability community by reinstating an associate minister of PDD?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that this is a little rich coming from the members of the third party because, you know, I was there when they tried to cut \$40 million from the PDD program, and we had to fight very hard to get that money put back. We talk about the wait-list, which, absolutely, we need to focus on, but the members opposite might want to think about the fact that that wait-list was developed primarily under their tenure. We can't fix everything right away, but we're working on it.

**Ms Jansen:** Well, apparently, Premier, you can't fix anything on this file.

Is the Minister of Human Services prepared to commit to answering stakeholder calls on this issue and instituting a collaborative review of not just part of the PDD system but all of it, including SIS and your PDD transformation plan? The stakeholders want to know.

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Human Services.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ever since I've been the minister, I've been working with the stakeholders and I've been

fixing the issues that they have created, such as standard 8 for the safety of individuals. I have been fixing the issues that they created with contracts, contract alignments. These are the problems of the past government. We are working with our stakeholders, representative organizations to get this right.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

### Fort McMurray Energy Industry and Contract Workers

**Mr. Panda:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fort McMurray's oil and gas companies first opened their doors to evacuees and then moved them to safe locations. But those employees who are not working and not collecting benefits such as employment insurance will not be safe financially. What is being done to ensure that those who are not covered by EI, such as PSAs, personal service agreement contractors, are still being looked after in their time of need?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Ms Larivee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we're very concerned about all the residents of Fort McMurray that have had all the various impacts that they have had regardless of where they came from in the area. We're working very hard to ensure that we provide supports to them. That, certainly, is the reason that we're providing the short-term emergency aid, that starts as of today, the \$1,250 per adult, the \$500 per dependant, to provide them that additional support to help with their short-term needs at this time, when they're away from both their homes and potentially their employment.

**Mr. Panda:** Mr. Speaker, I asked about PSAs, and it was not answered.

Anyway, given that economists predict that Alberta's unemployment rate could hit 15 per cent because of the disruption from the fire and given that Fort McMurray's oil field companies employ tens of thousands of people from across Canada and that these people, my former colleagues, Mr. Speaker, are eager to return to work and are crucial to resuming oil sands production, can the minister tell us what's being done to expedite the process of getting people back to work?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Energy.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. The Premier and I met yesterday with the oil industry folks, oil sands CEOs, and there's in fact a lot of hope coming in the next while. Most, if not all, of the north facilities were not damaged, so there's a plan in place. Shell is already ramping up; Suncor is. We believe that the facilities in the south were also not damaged, but we need to ensure that once the hot spots are taken care of.

**Mr. Panda:** Thank you, Minister. Given that for every day that production is kept offline because of the wildfire it provides an opportunity for foreign oil companies to fill the supply gap, taking money out of Canada, and given that any sustained pattern of this supply gap taking place could result in a significant loss of wages for Alberta's oil workers, what will be done in the coming weeks and months to ensure that our market share is protected and expanded so that Albertans continue to have employment opportunities at home?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Energy.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, when we met with our industry partners yesterday – they have a plan to get production back in as quickly as possible. We were fortunate that much of the infrastructure was not hurt. The pipelines are just being inspected to make sure that there are no ruptures anywhere. Once most of that work has gone on, the AER is working with each individual company to get them online in an organized fashion. Some will be on in the next few days; many will be on in the next few weeks.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

## 2:20 Springbank Reservoir Flood Mitigation Project

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the government held an open house in Calgary to discuss the details of the Springbank off-stream reservoir project, called SR1, with the public. My constituents and I were hoping that the government would provide some important details and updates to show that it was taking the concerns of the Springbank residents seriously, but once again we were disappointed. The government had no updated details or cost information to share. I'd like to ask the minister: now what is the current total estimated project cost, and when will you release those numbers? I'm not sure who to direct that to.

**Mr. Mason:** The Springbank diversion project is absolutely critical to protect people downstream and many hundreds of people in the city of Calgary as well, so it's a critical project and very important that we move forward with it. Mr. Speaker, we're currently in the process of talking to the landowners about acquiring their land, and I don't wish to prejudice those negotiations by throwing out any numbers.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I'm interested in the negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Given that SR1 could require the expropriation of private lands, which merits an extensive impact assessment and consultation with landowners, whereas McLean Creek would require little to no private land expropriations and given that the amount of land required for SR1 is continually and rapidly increased while the government's projected land costs have remained unchanged, will the minister commit to listening to Springbank landowners in this process, and can the minister tell them when they will be releasing accurate land cost estimates for SR1?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, it's unfortunate the hon. member wants to jeopardize the negotiations by asking us to tell the price before the negotiations are even concluded. It's important that this project proceed in order to protect people, and it's our job to make sure that it's done in a sustainable way and at the best possible price for the citizens.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we might have a different definition of negotiations.

Given that a key component in the decision to choose SR1 was a shorter timeline required to complete the project and given that the project did not take into account the time necessary for the regulatory process or, more significantly, the time needed to procure the required land, how can this government be so confident that SR1 will protect

vulnerable communities faster than the proposed alternative of McLean Creek?

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that we did very much take into account the time necessary to acquire the land. We've completed successful negotiations with landowners to provide access to officials in order to conduct a four-season environmental impact assessment, and that is on schedule. The work has begun.

## Ethics and Accountability Committee

**Dr. Starke:** Mr. Speaker, shortly after being elected, the government appointed a Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee. There were high hopes and expectations for a collaborative, nonpartisan review of four critical pieces of legislation that govern our democratic institutions, but this committee has only met seven times in eight months and has yet to begin substantive discussions on even one of the four acts. Last night the Member for Calgary-Elbow proposed extending the committee's arbitrary and artificial deadline, which was defeated. To the committee chair: how many hours of meetings do you anticipate being required to complete the committee's mandate?

**The Speaker:** A point of order is noted.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, I will respond by way of saying that it is not in order for a member to ask . . .

## Speaker's Ruling

### Questions about Legislative Committee Proceedings

**The Speaker:** As I heard the question, it was with respect to the schedule and time. Is that correct? I think the question is in order. I would rule that it is.

Minister, please.

**Mr. Mason:** I'll be happy to answer. It is very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition members who walked out on that committee . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. minister, I'm advised that you cannot answer. The member who is chair of the committee, I'm advised, is . . .

**Mr. Mason:** Any member can answer a question, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Could I have counsel with the table, please.

I had already recognized the chair of the committee. I must caution that the issue is exclusive with respect to schedule and time as I've understood the question that was asked by the hon. member, so would the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville please answer the question.

## Ethics and Accountability Committee

*(continued)*

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand and answer my first question in this House. You know, democratic reform is a priority for this government, and that's why the government launched an all-party committee, something that has never happened in this province, to be able to provide recommendations. So being that the opposition members, instead of rolling up their sleeves and getting to the work at hand last night, chose to walk out of yesterday's meeting, through the committee clerk . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, you may not have heard my comment. Please limit it to time and schedule. You were continuing to give far more than what was necessary. I think the question has been answered. When is your meeting scheduled?

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Thank you. Through the committee clerk I have requested future meeting dates and am waiting for some of those members to respond in order to work on the task at hand and schedule the next meeting.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Dr. Starke:** Mr. Speaker, given that even Senior Parliamentary Counsel last night described the scope of the committee's work as unprecedented and given that the federal electoral reform committee is planning eight months to review only one act and given that the committee needs additional time to thoroughly study, discuss, and debate some hundreds of changes that have been proposed, to the committee chair. In eight months we have actually debated zero changes to zero acts. Given this committee's past productivity, how much time are you allowing for each of the hundreds of proposed changes to all four acts?

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I certainly would, if need be, consult, but I think your question has gone beyond the answer that was provided.

**Dr. Starke:** Schedule and agenda, Mr. Speaker. In order.

**The Speaker:** I don't believe that to be the case, hon. member. Is there another question you'd like to ask?

**Dr. Starke:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, there is. Given that the government has now used its majority on the committee on more than one occasion to vote down reasonable proposals by opposition members and given that we are yet to enter into substantive discussions that will fundamentally change the way whistle-blower legislation . . .

**The Speaker:** I must rule that question out of order as well.

**Mr. McIver:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Noted again.

#### Point of Clarification

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker, under 13(2) I think members have the right to ask the Speaker to explain a decision, and under that section I'm rising and making the request.

**The Speaker:** I believe I've explained my reasoning, that it was related to the schedule and timing of meetings, and I have made my ruling, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-South. [interjections] Quiet, please.

#### 2:30 Fort McMurray Energy Industry Recovery

**Ms Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our industry partners have been essential in the work that is being done to support the people of Fort McMurray during this time of crisis, yet we know that the fire has also had significant impact on the energy industry as a whole. Yesterday the Premier and the Minister of Energy met with many top executives from the oil and gas sector to discuss the current state of operations and the plan for going forward. To the Minister of Energy: can the minister update the House on how this

meeting went and how the minister is working with our industry partners to support them in this current time?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. First, I want to continue to extend my sincere thanks to the energy companies and their staff for their tremendous efforts in our time of crisis. Their role was not only to evacuate themselves and their employees; they shut down their facilities in a safe manner, took care of others that showed up at their sites, and made sure there was a safe evacuation. Yesterday the Premier and I met with our industry partners and we discussed the safe . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
First supplemental.

**Ms Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the destruction we've seen from this fire has been devastating in many parts of Fort McMurray and given that the many from Fort McMurray who work in the oil sands are worried about the impact it will have on their jobs, again to the Minister of Energy: what is the current status of the oil sands sites in the Fort McMurray area, and how have they been affected by the fire damage to the region?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Yesterday at our meeting the oil sands CEOs that we met with were able to report that all facilities north of Fort McMurray appear to be undamaged. There is some work being done to secure some of the electrical lines that were overground. The underground pipes appear to be fine; there are a couple valves to be fixed. The south of Fort McMurray also seems to be fine, but they have to do a little bit more work once the hot spots have cooled down.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Ms Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the longer our industry partners are either offline or operating at reduced levels of production, the greater the possible impact on our province and the people that work in the area may be, again back to the same minister: can the minister update the House on the progress that has been made so far in getting industry back online and returning to normal production?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. At our meeting yesterday government and industry officials discussed the requirements that were needed for a normal return to production. Our Alberta Energy Regulator is working with each company on their recovery plans and making sure that things are safe and environmentally responsible in the resumption of their operations. This will include appropriate authorizations, inspections, monitoring, and logistical support for them to return to operation.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

#### Ethics and Accountability Committee (continued)

**Mr. Cyr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night the NDP members voted down a motion to extend the deadline for the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee. The committee is tasked

with reviewing four significant pieces of legislation over the course of a year, but now we're over seven months into the mandate, and we haven't reviewed a single act. To the minister responsible for democratic renewal: why isn't the government taking the task of improving our democracy seriously?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of democratic renewal.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Democratic renewal is a top priority for this government as evidenced by the creation of an all-party committee, something unprecedentedly done. Let me be clear. The committee has been busy working, and our members have been busy preparing, doing foundational study, knowledge. If the members opposite have not been using this time, that is to their detriment, and last night, rather than get to work, the members opposite chose to walk out.

**An Hon. Member:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Point of order noted.

**Ms Gray:** I realize that the Wildrose do not appreciate mornings, but now they don't like summers?

**Mr. Cyr:** The democratic processes have needed to be . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. member.  
Please proceed.

**Mr. Cyr:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Democratic processes have needed to be reviewed in Alberta for a long time. Last May Albertans were promised more accountability and transparency when the government changed hands. Since then things have barely changed. When will the NDP government stop limiting democratic engagement and involvement?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had some big changes since the last government. We no longer allow corporate and union donations in our democratic system, something that has had a large impact already. The discussions that have already begun at this committee are meaningful. I would like to take a moment to thank the member of the Liberal Party for staying, and I would like to urge all members of the committee to stay at the table and help us work through these issues.

**An Hon. Member:** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** Point of order noted.

**Mr. Cyr:** The scope of the work for this committee is what Parliamentary Counsel has dubbed unprecedented, yet this committee has only met seven times. Given that members leading this committee can't seem to get their act together, to the minister responsible for democratic renewal: when will this government admit they have dropped the ball and extend the timeline so the committee can conduct the proper reviews?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The deadline for this committee of one year and the large task set out for us was known to all members from the beginning. I personally called and spoke with members of the opposite party to talk about how we could deal with such a large task. All members assured me that they were interested in working with us, and then last night they left the table.

**Mr. Nixon:** Point of order.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Fort McMurray Wildfire Recovery

**Mr. Gotfried:** Mr. Speaker, the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo's economic development organization operates under the mantra of BIG, or Bold Innovative Growth. I'm confident that the agency will hold to this ambitious strategy when working to rebuild Fort McMurray area businesses and the regional economy. To the minister of economic development: what supports will your ministry provide directly to regional economic development agencies as they seek to recover from the devastation of their economy and business infrastructure?

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

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for his very pertinent question. Everyone's first focus, of course, is safety and support for Fort McMurray evacuees. You know, as the fire danger decreases and we work toward recovery and rebuilding, we know that there are going to be serious and immediate challenges for many small-business owners and employees. Providing support for small businesses is essential to help our local economy. I can tell you and the hon. member that I'm committed to working with that body along with small businesses in order to get . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
First supplemental.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Fort McMurray and the oil sands are internationally known and given that the regional municipality has been extremely successful at leveraging other natural attractions in support of a vibrant tourism and recreation sector, I'm concerned with the impact the devastating fires will have on visitor attraction and the economic benefits derived from them. To the minister of tourism: as we rebuild, what short- and long-term impacts do you expect on tourism-related businesses, and how do you plan to mitigate these challenges?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of tourism.

**Miranda:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member for the very important question. Right now, as we know, we are talking about securing and making sure that everything is safe. Going forward I have had the opportunity to speak to the staff in my ministry to see where we can actually go in and help and provide the support that we have available to them. We have, for example, provided accommodation for Fort McMurray Tourism CEO Frank Creasey within the division offices here in Edmonton while he's working.

The whole point, Mr. Speaker, is . . .

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that housing is a critical concern and top of mind for residents displaced by the fire and given that the Wood Buffalo Housing & Development Corporation has been on the cutting edge of affordable housing innovation and would be a natural partner for this government in rebuilding efforts, to the minister of housing: could you outline for this House how your ministry is planning to work with and support Wood Buffalo housing as they seek to provide appropriate and affordable homes for affected residents?

2:40

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Seniors and Housing.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I've met with Cynthia Woodford, the vice-president of the property services at Wood Buffalo housing corporation, and I certainly want to commend them on their tremendous efforts in the face of adversity during the evacuation. The seniors' facility there, the Rotary House Lodge, was not destroyed, and there'll still be a lot of work to do to ensure that structure is safe. We are continuing to work with the housing management body regarding the affordable housing units and taking stock of that, and we're very pleased to do that with them, and they're a very strong organization.

Thank you.

#### **Fort McMurray Disaster Relief and Recovery**

**Mr. Carson:** Mr. Speaker, to say that the fire in Fort McMurray has been tragic is an understatement. While the efforts of first responders and fire crews that continue to protect the people in this city have been heroic, I've heard from many people who are anxious about the future and who are unsure if they have a home or a job to return to and are looking for an update on the current state of their homes. To the Deputy Premier: can you update the House on the work that is being done and what still needs to be done before people may return home?

**The Speaker:** The Deputy Premier.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Certainly, we have a number of individuals working on the ground and in the air as we speak. Our first focus, of course, is critical infrastructure, so we're actively working to assess and repair the power grid, gas lines, and water treatment facilities and making sure that there's somewhere for refuse to be disposed of. We are sending teams of inspectors in to conduct structural assessments. Of course, once critical infrastructure is addressed, then we'll be able to move forward to businesses and residences.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that it may take a considerable amount of time before evacuees are able to return home for good and given that I've heard from many people who are concerned about making ends meet in the meantime, again to the same minister: what is the minister responsible doing to ensure supports are available to the people in the long term?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, ensuring that we get the preloaded debit cards that we've announced into the hands of those who need them most and to everyone as quickly as possible is a high priority. That has begun already, about 45 minutes ago, in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lac La Biche. We're continuing to work with the Red Cross to bring in additional supports to residents who may not be in those municipalities but in other parts of our province and even our country, and we continue to work with our partners on the ground in Fort McMurray as well as in the receiving centres to make sure that individuals get the supports they need.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that some people who call Fort McMurray home have left the province to find temporary housing with friends or family, again to the Deputy Premier: what supports are available to those people who are waiting to come back home?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Hoffman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, if anyone requires special assistance, joining in the town hall conversations that are happening tonight and tomorrow night and raising your questions would be useful as well as calling 310.4455 if you have any questions that require immediate support. We also want to ensure that everyone who needs the resources the most in terms of those preloaded cards gets them as quickly as possible. We're working with industry so that workers who are returning in short order get the supports they need, both in Fort McMurray and their families, if they're not able to return, in the other communities throughout Alberta and Canada.

Thank you for the question.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

#### **Members' Statements**

*(continued)*

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

#### **Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society**

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to recognize the incredible work being done by the Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society. For 30 years the EERSS has been assisting the victims of fires and other disasters by providing them with basic supplies, household necessities, furniture, and support. The organization is small but mighty. They took the lead on provincial relief efforts after the 2011 fires in Slave Lake, helping to collect and deliver an airplane hangar full and two warehouses full of relief goods, and supported victims of the 2013 Calgary floods with two full semi-trucks of goods and supplies. They've supported hundreds of victims of local fires, were there for those impacted by the Black Friday tornado in 1987, and even reached across provincial lines to support Manitobans caught in the 1997 Red River floods.

Now they're using their expertise and their experience to lead the charge to collect and distribute essential goods for evacuees from Fort McMurray. In less than a week they have set up two additional donation centres, converted a former department store into a distribution and assistance centre for evacuees, and have taken on the task of organizing hundreds of volunteers to co-ordinate it all.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have the words to convey the importance of the work that the EERSS does. They're the embodiment of the spirit of generosity, compassion, and goodwill that we've seen well up in Albertans in response to this recent disaster. It's my honour to represent the EERSS, and on behalf of this House I would like to extend to them our most profound thanks and appreciation for their commitment to supporting Albertans in need.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

#### **CC4MS Centre for Male Survivors of Sexual Violence**

**Mr. Sucha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured and privileged to rise in this House and speak about the Calgary-based not-for-

profit Canadian centre for male survivors of sexual violence, also known as CC4MS. This centre is one of three organizations in Canada that specifically offer supports for male survivors of sexual abuse. CC4MS focuses on the healing of adult male survivors, building advocacy, and educating others about this situation in their community.

Last summer I had the opportunity to learn about CC4MS. I was honoured to meet with their hard-working staff and to know about the valuable services they provide to our community. Their mission is to improve the lives of adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse through treatment, education, advocacy, and research and has helped survivors heal with hope.

Mr. Speaker, CC4MS estimates that about 1 in 6 adult males has been sexually abused by someone they trust. This issue has gained much-needed public attention through advocates such as Sheldon Kennedy. But, unfortunately, we have a long way to go. Adult male survivors are made to face stigma and go through emotional difficulties and traumatic experiences. Often survivors prefer to remain silent. Their silence can lead to substance abuse, disconnect from one's family and one's loved ones, depression, and possibly suicide.

While meeting with CC4MS, I was touched to learn about the services they provide. They shared a moving story of an adult male survivor disconnected from his own family due to the fears of triggering a painful childhood memory.

I want to thank CEO Frances Wright and all the employees and volunteers who help break the silence and provide support to men in need.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to have CC4MS in Calgary. They are an integral part of our community and an asset to us all.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

#### Fort McMurray Wildfire First Responders

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What can we say to our first responders and emergency workers who rushed into the inferno in and around Fort McMurray, the very same men and women who continue to provide us with selfless acts of bravery? When others flee for safety, they run towards danger, focusing on the job they were both called to and trained to do, working long, exhausting hours in conditions that at times seemed like hell, as we saw in Fort McMurray, taking rest when they can on lawns.

Emergency call-out, shift work, time away from their families, and the inevitable danger that comes with this way of life are all accepted norms for our first responders. Again I ask: what can we say to our first responders? We can say thank you. To the over 700 men and women who've fought these infernos in northern Alberta: you have our support and deepest gratitude. First responders are living, practical examples of the following text: greater love has no one than to lay down his life for his friends. That is from John 15:13.

I'll close with the Firefighter's Prayer:

When I am called to duty, God,  
wherever flames may rage,  
give me strength to save a life,  
whatever be its age.  
Help me embrace a little child  
before it is too late,  
or save an older person from  
the horror of that fate.  
Enable me to be alert,  
and hear the weakest shout,  
quickly and efficiently  
to put the fire out.  
I want to fill my calling,

to give the best in me,  
to guard my neighbour,  
and protect his property.  
And if according to Your will  
I have to lose my life,  
please bless with Your protecting hand  
my children and my wife.

Thank you to all our first responders.

#### 2:50 Tabling Returns and Reports

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

**Mr. Sucha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to table the requisite number of copies of a news article from CBC dated March 17, 2016, referencing McDonald's decision to use self-serve kiosks in their restaurants, entitled McDonald's Plans to Add 1,900 Jobs in Alberta with Revamped Service Model. On Monday during debate over Motion 505 the Member for Calgary-Hays made a reference that some individuals would infer that McDonald's . . .

**Mr. McIver:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. This sounds like debate, not a tabling.

**The Speaker:** Yes. I agree, hon. member. Table the report, please.

**Mr. Sucha:** Okay.

**The Speaker:** Are there any other tablings?

I believe we may have some points of order. Leader of the third party, I believe you had a point of order? Is that correct?

**Mr. McIver:** Well, I just had the one point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I'm in error, hon. member.

I believe that the Government House Leader was first on his point of order.

#### Point of Order

#### Questions to Committee Chairs

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe that you dealt with this, although I wasn't able to get it all out, but it basically has to do with the requirement that members are only allowed to ask the chair of a committee with respect to the agenda of the committee, and I believe that you've already covered that today.

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

**Dr. Starke:** Well, Mr. Speaker, as long as the hon. Government House Leader has opened that door of debate, let's walk through it. In point of fact, for someone who is such a learned and long-standing member of the Chamber, he should know the rules best. In fact, on page 506 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* it very clearly indicates that "Questions seeking information about the schedule and agenda of committees may be directed to Chairs of committees."

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I'm advised that this relates to a ruling which I have already made and provided an explanation to the House for.

**Dr. Starke:** So why is he making it, then?

**The Speaker:** He just said that he withdrew the point of order.

Where are we in terms of other points of order? I think it was the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.



**Mr. Cooper:** Did he have one first?

**The Speaker:** Is there another point of order that you have? Is it related to the ruling that I made earlier?

**Mr. McIver:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Then I believe I've made a ruling. The order stands. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre, I believe you had a point of order. Is that correct?

**Mr. Cooper:** I think the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster has one on referring to the presence or not of a member, and he would be next.

**The Speaker:** To the point raised by the Opposition House Leader, I assumed that the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster was speaking to the first decision, that I've already made. My error.

Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster, please proceed.

### Point of Order

#### Referring to the Absence of Members

**Dr. Starke:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we can perhaps expedite the process because I have three points of order but they're all really the same. There was one earlier, and then there were two more later on.

In the response of, initially, the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, followed by two responses from the Minister of Labour, the members made reference to members of both the third-party caucus as well as the Official Opposition caucus leaving yesterday's committee meeting. That is clearly and has traditionally been out of order.

I'll refer you to page 213 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, in which attendance is dealt with at some length. I'll just simply read the last sentence in the first paragraph, which says:

The Speaker has traditionally discouraged Members from signalling the absence of another Member from the House because "there are many places that Members have to be in order to carry out all of the obligations that go with their office."

Mr. Speaker, this is a long-standing tradition of this House, and it, in fact, is in place so that members cannot be unduly called out or embarrassed because at times they are unable to be here, whether it's here in the Chamber or, indeed, in committee meetings.

Mr. Speaker, this was further substantiated on April 3, 1987, in a ruling by Speaker Jerome on a point of privilege that was raised by the Member for Windsor West, Mr. Gray, on the absence of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister from the House of Commons during question period. He raised it on a point of privilege, but in that ruling Speaker Jerome reiterated and reinforced the long-standing practice within the House that the absence of members is not to be referred to, nor is the fact of whether members leave or come to a committee meeting to be referred to.

I have to say that it is more than a little bit rich that at last night's meeting we were treated to the members of the committee lecturing members of the opposition on their work ethic, and now we have them breaking the rules. [interjection] I'm getting to it, Mr. Speaker. Now we hear them breaking the rules not once, not twice, but three times in succession.

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I heard the reference with respect to page 213. Is that correct?

**Dr. Starke:** That's correct.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Government House Leader, do you have something with respect to the point of order?

**Mr. Mason:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to quote the section which says, "Allusions to the presence or absence of a Member or Minister in the Chamber are unacceptable." That is true, but I don't wish to deal with this just as a technicality because I think there is something much more serious about this and something that I think needs to be addressed in this point of order. And that is to say that the third-party House leader is attempting to use a rule that is intended to protect members who may have other duties from being, I guess, exposed as being absent when, in fact, they have other things to do. That's what it rules on, that there are many places members have to be in order to carry out all of the obligations that go with their office.

What we saw last night, Mr. Speaker, was a shameful walkout of opposition members from the Wildrose Party, the Progressive Conservative Party, and the Alberta Party from the committee because they did not get their way in the committee.

**The Speaker:** Are we speaking to this particular point of order? Is there additional, new information?

**Mr. Mason:** I'm not finished, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Is there new information?

**Mr. Mason:** Am I allowed to make my response to the point of order, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** I would ask, hon. Government House Leader: is there new information? You seem to be referring to the opposition.

**Mr. Mason:** I'm responding to the point of order made by the third party's House leader, and normally the Speaker would permit me to conclude my remarks.

**The Speaker:** I would ask you to conclude your remarks. However, is there new information that you are introducing that is related to the point of order?

**Mr. Mason:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** And what would that be?

**Mr. Mason:** It has to do, Mr. Speaker, with the attempt to use a point of order in a way that does not apply. The fact is that opposition members in an apparently premeditated walkout from the committee to make a political point is not the same as a member being absent while they're pursuing other duties. For them to try and use a point of order to hide their irresponsible behaviour is beyond rich. [interjections] Beyond rich. [interjections]

3:00

**The Speaker:** Government House Leader, I would ask that in the future you stick to the point. The last concluding adjectives were not necessary.

I think I will recognize the leader of the third party.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will say that the repeating of the offence by the Government House Leader is not in itself a defence.

I'll cite 23(h), "makes allegations against another Member," and (i), "imputes false or unavowed motives to another Member." While I don't have the benefit of the Blues in front of me – and if I turn out to not be a hundred per cent correct on this, I'm happy to be corrected – without that, it seems to me that when the member

who is the subject of the point of order was on her feet, she made reference to people not wanting to do their jobs, which is again making allegations against other members and imputing false and unavowed motives to other members.

**The Speaker:** Opposition House Leader, were you speaking to this point of order?

**Mr. Cooper:** I was intending on speaking to the hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster's point of order. I'm not sure if we're currently on a new point of order.

**The Speaker:** No, we are not. We are on the point of order of the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster. You have additional points to make?

**Mr. Cooper:** I have additional points to make that are new information.

**The Speaker:** All right.

**Mr. Cooper:** And I would like to rise on the leader of the third party's point of order in a moment's time.

I would just like to add that the hon. Government House Leader had made comments with respect to page 216 in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, specifically referring to the Chamber. I might just add that in our standing orders, the ones that the Assembly follows significantly, is Standing Order 1: "The proceedings in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and in all committees of the Assembly shall be conducted according to the following Standing Orders." So if, in fact, a ruling will be made on a reference to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, particularly 216, then it should not only refer to the Chamber but to committee.

Furthermore, I encourage you to review in your decision chapter 20 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* on committees, page 1051, when it speaks about committees not being able to adopt their own rules. In my opinion, it speaks specifically to the rules applying in the Chamber also applying to committee. As such, the Government House Leader's comments with respect to it only applying to the Chamber, I would say, certainly is not the case and referring to the absence of a member both here or in committee is equally as inappropriate.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, in past decisions in this House it's been suggested that I maybe should have taken more time to contemplate decisions and consider all of the aspects and not make one too quickly, so I have taken the liberty of taking more time to consider the various arguments that have been put forward. I have looked at – I hear the arguments that are put forward.

I think what has happened, notwithstanding the point that the Opposition House Leader has suggested, is that it seems to me that the balance of the standing orders – well, that may be an umbrella. They are the more specific details, within our standing orders.

I believe what is taking place here is that both sides have used this as an opportunity to talk about their opinions and views of activities that might have taken place within committee. As I understand and interpret both the earlier decisions of this House as

well as in Ottawa, committee work stays within the committee until they report back to this House. I think there's been undue exercise of getting that debate in, and that's on both sides, Government House Leader. In fact, we ought to leave that within committee.

I ruled the member out who was answering the question. I accepted the first question from Vermilion-Lloydminster. Hon. member, I determined that the answer you were giving went far beyond schedule and dates and times, so it would be my ruling on this matter that with the decisions I have made thus far, the point of order raised by the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster is, in fact, out of order, and I've made a decision.

There are other points of order, I believe. The leader of the third party.

### Point of Order Imputing Motives

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did raise the point of order against a member, and I'll repeat that. While I don't have the benefit of the Blues in front of me, it occurs to me that if I had the Blues, I might find phrases about how the opposition doesn't want to do their job, which under 23(h), (i), and (j) qualifies as imputing motives to another member or making allegations against another member. Without the benefit of the Blues – and there was a lot of noise, but it occurs to me that I heard the member say something to that effect.

3:10

**The Speaker:** The Government House Leader.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have taken the opportunity to ask the hon. member what it was indeed that she said, and she has sent me a note with the words that she used or recollects using. What she said was that instead of rolling up their sleeves and getting to the work at hand, they chose to walk out. In my view, that is the opinion of the hon. member, and she is entitled in this place to express that opinion. I happen to agree with it.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, I think, Mr. Speaker, the very best argument I could make . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I think you've made your point.

**Mr. McIver:** I think the Government House Leader made it for me.

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, please. On this particular issue, hon. member, I do not have access to the Blues, either. So on this particular point of order I am going to look at the Blues and, in fact, confirm if that's the case. However, I would defer that decision.

I think that the daily Routine is concluded if I am correct.

A legislative policy committee will convene this afternoon for consideration of the main estimates. Alberta's Economic Future will consider the estimates for Culture and Tourism in the Grassland Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:11 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]

## Table of Contents

Prayers .....	875
Introduction of Visitors .....	875
Introduction of Guests .....	875
Ministerial Statements	
Fort McMurray and Area Wildfire Update .....	875
Members' Statements	
Fort McMurray and Area Wildfire Relief.....	876
Acts of Kindness to Wildfire-affected Albertans.....	877
Fort McMurray Wildfire Pet Evacuation.....	877
Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society .....	885
CC4MS Centre for Male Survivors of Sexual Violence.....	885
Fort McMurray Wildfire First Responders .....	886
Oral Question Period	
Fort McMurray Residents' Housing Concerns .....	877
Fort McMurray Wildfire Recovery Contracts .....	878
Job Creation.....	879
Fort McMurray and Area Wildfire Information .....	879
Wildfire Evacuee Emergency Debit Cards .....	880
Seniors' Advocate .....	880
PDD Service Delivery .....	881
Fort McMurray Energy Industry and Contract Workers.....	881
Springbank Reservoir Flood Mitigation Project .....	882
Ethics and Accountability Committee .....	882, 883
Fort McMurray Energy Industry Recovery .....	883
Fort McMurray Wildfire Recovery.....	884
Fort McMurray Disaster Relief and Recovery.....	885
Tabling Returns and Reports .....	886

*Alberta Hansard* is available online at [www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

For inquiries contact:

Managing Editor

*Alberta Hansard*

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875