



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Wednesday afternoon, November 2, 2016

Day 43

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

Second Session

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Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), Deputy Chair of Committees

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Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)
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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)
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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne (ND),
Deputy Government House Leader
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)
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Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (ND)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W),
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Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W),
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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)
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Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND)
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Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W)
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC),
Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader
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)
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Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (ND)
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
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

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Kazim	

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Welcome. Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Dyakuyu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated in your gallery, I'd first like to introduce Ukraine's ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Ambassador Andriy Shevchenko. Ambassador Shevchenko is a remarkable advocate for Ukraine and Ukraine's interests. Alberta has come to be known as the Ambassador's second home, and we are thrilled he was able to join us on this historic day. Bitamo, Ambassador.

For my second introduction, I'm very pleased to welcome to this House the executive of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council. The work that this council does in advocacy and promotion of the Ukrainian community across this province is remarkable, and they were instrumental in the creation of an act that will be introduced today, Mr. Speaker. I'll ask that they rise as I state their names: Ms Olesia Luciwo-Andryjowycz, president; Mr. Ivan Lypovyk, vice-president; Ms Daria Luciwo, past president; Ms Larisa Hayduk, secretary; Ms Romana Latenko, treasurer; Mr. Yaroslav Szewczuk, director; and Ms Christine Moussienko, director.

For my third introduction, and also seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce and welcome back a former Speaker of this House, Mr. Gene Zwozdesky. Mr. Zwozdesky, in addition to a storied career within the Alberta Legislature, is a leader in the Ukrainian community and was instrumental in bringing forward the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act in 2008, also known as the Holodomor.

I'd ask all of my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Thank you and welcome, with particular acknowledgments to Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, hon. member. You said those words like it was natural for you to say them.

I would recognize the leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, though you hardly need the introduction, and through you to all members of this House someone that you know better than the rest of us, your daughter Ms Stephanie Wanner, who is a child life therapist at the Stollery children's hospital in the division of pediatric oncology and who joins us in your gallery to observe childhood cancer awareness day in this Legislature. Also, since this is national Take Our Kids to Work Day, I think you have met that standard.

It also gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you Ms Val Figliuzzi. Val has been the executive director of the Kids with Cancer Society in Edmonton since 2004. Val brings great passion to her role as her son was diagnosed with cancer in 1991 and she was a great advocate for the superb treatment he received in both Edmonton and Texas to ultimately achieve a cure. She continues to work very hard for all children with cancer in northern Alberta.

Also present in your gallery is Ms Carmen Huth, whose son Karsten passed away November 25, 2015, at the age of 17 from leukemia. This is still the reality for over 20 per cent of all children who are diagnosed with cancer today. Ms Nicole Brosseau and her son Emmitt, who is five years old, are also present. Emmitt was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia – I failed medical school, Mr. Speaker – on August 5 of this year and is undergoing treatment now at the Stollery. We wish nothing but great outcomes for young Emmitt and his entire family.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I will introduce to you and through you to all members of the House my wife, Christine McIver. Christine is the founder and chief executive officer of the Kids Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta, which she founded 20 years ago. Mostly my life would be unbearable without her.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to stand today and introduce to you and through you from the wonderful small Ukrainian town of Myrnam, Alberta, a group of grade 6 students and their principal, Mr. Keith Gamblin; assistant principal, Adrienne Owen; staff Tara Campbell; and parents Irene Jacula, Deirdre Myshaniuk, and Rick Dees. If I could get the students and staff and parents to please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you two classes from the bustling metropolis of Beaumont at Académie Saint-André; their teachers Miss Brittany O'Neill, Mme Stéphanie Therrien-Messier; their chaperones Mr. Michael Foley and Mrs. Leanne Bownes. If they would stand now and please get the recognition of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Edmonton-South West.

Mr. Dang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you some of the brightest students from one of the most beautiful constituencies in all of Alberta. The students today are from Roberta McAdams school, which we grand opened with the Minister of Education just a week ago. I read to them just a month ago. They're accompanied today by their teacher Mr. Ash Robinson and their chaperones Mrs. Sushma Dalal, Mrs. Kawaliet Nagra, and Ms Tamsin Carreck. If they could please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

I believe you may have some other guests, leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and reintroduce to this House and all Members of the Legislative Assembly Mrs. Janice Sarich, former MLA for Edmonton-Decore and former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education. Mrs. Sarich served with four Premiers and worked diligently to serve and advocate for the interests of Alberta from 2008 to 2015. She is a fourth generation Ukrainian, as her

great-grandparents emigrated from Ukraine to Canada in 1898 and 1901.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to introduce Heather Klimchuk, the former Member for Edmonton-Glenora from 2008 to 2015. Heather served as a former minister of culture and community services and of Service Alberta. Joining us today also is Jacquie Fenske, former MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, who served from 2012 to 2015. Jacquie contributed as a member of many legislative committees and represented her community with great vigour. I would also like to express regrets from former Premier Stelmach, who is attending a funeral today.

All of these guests are here today to support the introduction and ultimate passage of the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. I ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

1:40

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly a group of hard-working civil servants from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. Staff members of the competitiveness and market analysis section of Agriculture and Forestry are here with us today. They represent the many women and men who work hard to ensure that our farm families are equipped with information on how they can best compete in the agriculture market. I would like to ask that they now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Dyakuyu, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of our Assembly three distinguished guests joining us from the Ukrainian religious community here in Alberta and seated in the members' gallery. I will ask that they rise as I state their names: the Most Reverend Bishop David Motiuk, a bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic eparchy of Edmonton; His Grace Bishop Ilarion of the Edmonton and western eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada; as well as Ms Ann Lega, who is accompanying Bishop Ilarion here today. So please join me in providing the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly four guests joining us from Ukrainian community organizations in Alberta and seated in the public gallery. I'll ask that they rise as I state their names: Ms Andrea Kopylech, vice-president of the national Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Orysia Boychuk, president of the Edmonton branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Deborah Stasiuk, president of the Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts; and Ms Slavka Shulakewych – I was practising that one; sorry about that – program co-ordinator with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council. Please join me in providing the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and bitaemo to all guests here celebrating our shared Ukrainian heritage. It is my honour to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Brielle Anderson. Brielle is here with her mother, Kim Brundrit. Kim works in my constituency office, and Brielle is here job shadowing me all day as part of national Take Our Kids to Work Day. Brielle has been put to work by my constituency staff and has agreed to help any caucus who may need her help in writing a shadow budget for the upcoming budget. If you could please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly four guests joining us from Ukrainian education organizations in Alberta. They are seated in the public gallery, and I'll ask that they please stand as I call their names: Ms Marian Butz-Gauk, president of the Edmonton Catholic Schools Ukrainian Bilingual Parent Advisory Society; Ms Ivanka Soletsky, president of the University of Alberta Ukrainian Students' Society; Ms Alicia Slusarchuk, president of Grant MacEwan University Ukrainian students' society; and Mr. Daniel Moussienko, president of the University of Calgary Ukrainian society. I would ask that all members please extend the warm welcome of this Assembly to them.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this House three guests joining us from the Ukrainian community and seated in the public gallery. I'll ask that they rise as I state their names: Mr. Taras Podilsky, Mr. Jars Balan, and Mr. Michael Sulyma. If you could all please join me in providing them the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Dyakuyu, Mr. Speaker. As a proud descendant of Ukrainian settlers who arrived here in 1913 and had seven kids, including my father, it's my great pleasure today to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two guests joining us from the Ukrainian community and seated in the public gallery. I'll ask that they rise as I state their names: Mr. Vitaliy Milentyev and Mr. Yarema Shulakewych. Please rise to receive the warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two guests joining us from the Ukrainian community and seated in the public gallery. I'll ask that they rise as I state their names: Ms Marilyn Mucha and Mr. Bill Shostak. I ask that they rise and accept the traditional warm welcome of the House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although he's not currently here, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you

to all members of this Legislature Mike Carter, the president of the Calgary Firefighters Association IAFF local 255. He's been with the Calgary fire department for 18 years and currently holds the rank of captain. During his career he has responded to the Slave Lake fire, the floods in Calgary and High River, and most recently the fire in Fort McMurray. I would encourage all members to give him the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly now for when he arrives.

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

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it is my distinct pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you and indeed to all members of the Assembly some recent arrivals from the Ukraine that have become close to our family and myself: Yuriy and Lena Yemets and our newest Canadian baby, Destina. I ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a very, very hard-working young lady from my office, one of my ministerial assistants, Katie Hasenbank. Katie was instrumental in helping to pull together many of the guests and visitors that we have joining us today as well as helping with all aspects of today. I'd ask all of my colleagues in this House to please join me in acknowledging all of her hard work.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. members.

Are there any further introductions? The Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Dyakuyu, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present to the Assembly six guests. If they could rise as I call their names: Natalia Toroshenko, a former Vegreville councillor and Ukrainian teacher; Hazel Anaka, co-ordinator of Babas and Borshch, a Ukrainian festival in Andrew; the mayor of Mundare, Charlie Gargus; a Lamont county councillor and deputy reeve, Daniel Warawa; a former Vegreville councillor, Greg Kurulok, and his wife, Chris, who own the Ukrainian Ceramic Cottage in Vegreville. Proud of their cultural heritage, proud of their community work, please join me in welcoming these guests with the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Are there any other introductions, hon. members? I think I speak for all of you when I say how fortunate we are to have the beautiful and appreciative people of this province. It's something we need to all cherish.

Members' Statements

Carbon Levy Advertising

Mr. Cooper: The NDP has taken a page out of the previous government's handbook when it comes to a complete lack of respect for Albertans. In fact, the Speaker ruled yesterday that they have been found in contempt of the Assembly. The NDP have shown the moms and dads, business owners, and oilfield workers across this province that they are beneath them by not considering them when introducing a \$3 billion carbon tax and then having the gall to ask those same hard-working Albertans to pick up the tab for

\$5 million to advertise the virtues of that carbon tax, that will hurt the economy and every single Albertan.

1:50

The NDP have shown contempt for the rules of the Legislature by breaking those rules and using \$5 million of Albertans' money to advertise a carbon tax that Albertans didn't ask for or didn't want. The NDP got off with a slap on the wrist and a quick apology, and they think that's okay. Oh, how times have changed. When in opposition, the Government House Leader railed against the government of the day for being found in contempt on a very similar situation with partisan ads. The Government House Leader called the PCs an affront to the dignity and respect that should be afforded to our Legislature. Pot, kettle, black.

The facts are clear, Mr. Speaker. The NDP has been caught breaking the rules, using the hard-earned tax dollars of Albertans to push NDP propaganda on the carbon tax, and they should be paying the \$5 million back. Actions have consequences, and the NDP's flippant use of taxpayer dollars to push out the carbon tax propaganda must be paid back. Albertans can count on the Wildrose for standing up to this government and for showing real leadership, unlike the NDP, who are willing to write cheques using Albertans' hard-earned money.

Statement by the Speaker

Oral Question Period Time Limits

The Speaker: Hon. members, before we start the clock on Oral Question Period, I committed to provide a response to the question which was raised yesterday with respect to stopping the clock. I'd like to briefly comment on that matter, which was raised by the House leader for the Official Opposition. I remind members that it's at the discretion of the chair to stop the clock when providing comments or direction on proceedings of this House. Yesterday I provided caution to members in the application of the sub judice rule during Oral Question Period, and I declined to stop the clock at that time. I think the particular point that was made and maybe intended by the hon. member at the time was on the length of the sub judice, which I wrote, on the second day. In the future I will be conscious of that and will continue to use my discretion, however, as to when I apply the principle.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: If we would now start the clock. The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Carbon Levy Advertising

Mr. Jean: Earlier this week we saw a partial admission from this government that their carbon tax will cost thousands of Albertans their jobs on top of the over a hundred thousand that have already been lost since they were elected. Then, to make matters worse, just yesterday the Speaker found this government in contempt for breaking the rules with their \$5 million carbon tax ad campaign. We knew the ads were ineffective, and we knew they were a waste of money, but now we know that they should not have been allowed in the first place to have been able to spend Albertans' hard-earned money like this. How can the Premier possibly justify this ridiculous abuse of taxpayers' dollars during a time when Albertans can't afford it?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday our Deputy Government House Leader was very clear when he said that we “would never, under any circumstances, want to offend or obstruct the dignity of [this] House,” and as such, he offered our sincere apology, and I echo that sentiment again today.

However, let me be clear that while we sincerely do apologize for that situation, we will not apologize for making sure that Albertans are informed and aware that they finally have a government that takes the issue of climate change seriously and that will move forward to diversify the economy, to protect the environment, and to ensure that we finally take action.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: In 2013 the Redford PC government was found in contempt for breaking the rules with a partisan ad campaign funded by taxpayers. The now Government House Leader teed off, saying that in all his years of service he’d only seen the 44-year-old PC government held in contempt once and that a simple apology probably wasn’t enough. Fast-forward to today, and it only took a year and a half for this NDP government to do exactly the same thing as the old PC government. Can the House leader please explain why Albertans should now settle for a simple “sorry” when his government broke the rules on a \$5 million campaign when he thought it wasn’t appropriate before?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We certainly take into account the Speaker’s rulings in adjusting our position with respect to these matters. We take guidance from the chair, and we take that very seriously. I suggest the opposition should do the same.

Mr. Jean: If we actually thought it would stop them from doing so, Mr. Speaker, we could, but the only thing more grating to Albertans than this government’s carbon tax ads is the carbon tax itself. Instead of campaigning an election on it, the Premier used taxpayer dollars to promote it, and still two-thirds say that they don’t want it. What they do want are good jobs and, of course, a competitive industry, and they want to have a say on a carbon tax that will ultimately cost taxpayers a lot more money than \$5 million. Will the Premier test the effectiveness of her ridiculous advertising and put the carbon tax to Alberta voters in a referendum?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, it’s interesting. Today we received an important endorsement for our climate leadership plan, and that was from the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake. On CBC he suggested that having energy efficiency programs like retrofits of public institutions and hospitals and schools was a good idea. But what the Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake fails to understand is that someone has to pay for that, that renewable energy and energy efficiency don’t come for free, and that you need to show leadership in order to get these things into place so that we can reposition our government as the progressive energy-producing province that we are, and that is long overdue.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.
The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Prescription Drug Coverage for Rare Diseases

Mr. Jean: Albertans pride ourselves on a health care system that’s supposed to provide universal health access, yet those who need the care the most still fall through the cracks. Haley Chisholm, a teenager from High River who desperately needs access to a drug called Soliris to keep her kidneys functioning, is an example of that. Her family simply can’t afford it, and the province’s short-term exceptional drug therapy program refuses to pay for it. Can the Premier please explain to Haley Chisholm why the health care system isn’t there when she needs it the most?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, our Minister of Health, I’m sure, will look into that matter although, generally speaking, I will say that one of the things that we need to do if we’re going to reduce the rate of increase in health spending is that we can’t go forward with 6, 8, 10 per cent increases every year and that drugs are one of those things. That being said, on cases like this we need to be looking at it, and it will be looked at.

But, please, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, you can’t take \$2 billion out of operating expenses and not restrict people’s access to public health care. These guys are engaging in magical thinking if they don’t understand that.

Mr. Jean: Very insensitive, Mr. Speaker.

Haley’s doctors talked to physicians in the United States who’ve used Soliris successfully to treat patients suffering from the same condition as Haley, but in Canada our universal health care system won’t even allow drug trials for this condition because not enough people suffer from it, so Health Canada says that it’s not worth while to fund it. Unbelievable. Haley Chisholm is not just a number, and the province should step up and recognize this. Will the Premier today, right now, commit to reviewing the provincial regulations that prevent Alberta Health from funding Haley’s treatment?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, I’ll certainly have the minister look into it and get back to the member with respect to the particulars, but what I will say is that our regulations are designed so that health care professionals are making decisions about what is in the best health outcome for people. It is not politicians, so I will not be engaging in this particular deliberation because, quite frankly, that is not the way to have a strong, evidence-based public system of health care. Our minister will look into it and get back to the member opposite with the details, but we are not going to engage in political interference in evidence-based decision-making.

Mr. Jean: “I hope the government realizes that it’s not really a waste of money to spend the money on me. I hope they see me as a person and not coins that they’re spending. I have plans to do good things for people.” That’s a message from Haley Chisholm delivered last week. The way we treat people in our health care system needs to change. It doesn’t need to be so cold and uncaring. I believe the Premier would agree. Will she commit to making the systematic changes needed to support Albertans suffering from rare diseases, like Haley Chisholm, or not?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, as I said, our government will continue to support our public health care system to the very best of our ability because we know that that is the way to ensure that everybody gets the care that they need when they need it. One of the ways to do that is to ensure that the matter is reviewed by medical professionals and that specific instances are reviewed by doctors who can tell us what is the best way forward. So we will

certainly look into this matter and find out what the evidence has been and what the decision-making has been.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

2:00 Electricity Power Purchase Agreement Lawsuit

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, we've been asking a lot of questions about PPAs because the government's efforts to rip up these contracts hurt Albertans in many, many ways. When a government goes to court to rip up contracts that have been running since the turn of the century, the investment community really notices. People become afraid to invest in Alberta, and they are. That makes everything more expensive for Albertans, and it's becoming so, and that hurts everyday Albertans. Does the Premier recognize that her decisions to have the government sue its own agencies and power companies are going to hurt Albertans?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, the other investors in Alberta are the industrial consumers who need to understand that the rules that they have been advised about by the government are, in fact, the rules that are in place. Residential consumers of electricity also deserve to know that. We as a government are going to stand up for those consumers, many of whom are also investors, to ensure that the rules that they thought were in place were, in fact, the rules that were in place. Other than that, we will continue to stand up for fair prices for all Albertans.

Mr. Jean: The Premier doesn't seem to understand the great impact of the PPA lawsuit. Suing Enmax hurts Albertans, Calgarians in particular. This government acts like there is a barrel with billions and billions of dollars sitting in Enmax's office that the NDP can use in their slush fund. This government rails against the profits made by power companies, but Enmax is a social enterprise. Its dividends actually fund the city of Calgary. EPCOR and Capital Power actually fund the city of Edmonton. Does the Premier understand how our electricity system works in Alberta? Does she realize the mistakes that she's making on our electricity system in Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, we fully understand this matter, and one of the decisions that we've made is that we are going to do everything at our disposal to stand up for Alberta consumers, individual families and industrial consumers, to make sure that they pay the price that they need to pay and not a cent more. At the end of the day, you can choose to stand up for the power companies or you can choose to stand up for Albertans. We will be standing up for Albertans.

Mr. Jean: Last year the NDP changed the specified gas emitters tax. They didn't consult with anyone. They got it wrong, and power companies warned them that they would turn back PPAs. No one in the NDP government listened, but that's because they didn't know what they were doing. FOIP documents now reveal that the Premier only asked for a beginner's briefing on how the electricity system works in Alberta in March, 10 months – a full 10 months – after she plunged the system into chaos. Will the Premier admit right now that she didn't know what she was doing, and will she call off this absurd PPA lawsuit against the people of Alberta, particularly Edmonton and Calgary?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly urge the member to read the memo that his staff have been distributing because, of course, what it says is: further to the briefings the Premier has received on all these issues, we'd like more information. It doesn't quite say what you think it says, to the member opposite. Generally speaking, I will continue to answer this on a general basis because the matter is before the courts. Our government has made a decision to do whatever we can to stand up for Albertans – for regular Alberta consumers, for residential consumers, for industrial consumers – so that they pay the best prices they can for their electricity.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

The leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week the NDP government will take Alberta companies to court over power purchase agreements. With PPAs we've had a reliable supply of energy for years, and Alberta energy has been the cheapest amongst the provinces historically. Because this government didn't understand the impact of rushed policies, Alberta power companies are exercising their right to return the PPAs. To the Premier. Your ministers failed to properly consult with industry stakeholders and didn't take the advice of their hard-working public servants after you got advice. Will you now do the right thing and drop this court case before it starts because that's what's in the best interest of Albertans?

Speaker's Ruling Sub Judice Rule

The Speaker: Would you please stop the clock? I simply want to remind the Assembly once again about Standing Order 23(g), the sub judice rule, which governs statements made in the Assembly about legal proceedings. I reiterate my caution to both sides of the Assembly in their statements, both in posing questions and in responses. I will provide considerable latitude, but I want to urge members to exercise discretion in making statements that may be subject to the rule.

Please start the clock.

The hon. Premier.

Electricity Power Purchase Agreement Lawsuit (continued)

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that, I mean, it really is a bit rich coming from over there. Certainly, the position of these power companies is that they signed a deal, a deal that nobody saw in the public sphere because of an OIC to keep the deal quiet, a deal that said that they could keep their profits, and when they started to experience losses, taxpayers had to pay for it. That's what the companies are suggesting is the case, and it appears as though the members opposite think that that's just great and in the best interests of Albertans. Well, we do not.

Mr. McIver: News flash for the Premier. No matter who wins this lawsuit, Albertans lose. Albertans pay. You are causing this. You're causing extra expenses for court cases. You're causing extra distress on the very companies that invest in creating power, renewable and otherwise, in Alberta, yet you're forging ahead with the extra price tag of the court case when the same person is going to pay either way. Why are you so against Alberta-based

investment? No. You just said it. You're against profit. You're offended by it. Premier, why are you offended by companies making profit?

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: Hon. members, please be cautious about words used that might have a volatile effect on the House.

The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, as you can imagine, reject almost the entire premise of that question. I will simply say that we will continue to stand up for Albertans. We will assert that the system was one where the private industry, who was intended to take the risk, enjoy the benefits of the profit, therefore, one would expect, would also endure the risk where there was some. Either way, we will continue to take whatever action we can to get the best deal we can for Albertans, and we will not back down from that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McIver: In this province only the government thinks that profit is a dirty word, Mr. Speaker.

Given that our PC government put a price on carbon, worked with publicly owned companies like Enmax and Capital Power to invest in renewable energy, it was clear that we were taking a stand on the realities of climate change. To the Premier. The economic impact study you released this week was an insult to Albertans. Will you be accountable to Albertans and share a fulsome economic impact, not the flimsy piece that was presented this week, and make the case to Albertans? So far you haven't even come close.

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we have released a good deal of information about this. Indeed, as I mentioned a couple of days ago, there have been other studies out there as well that have supported our position that, in fact, our climate change leadership plan will grow the economy, will ensure that we are able to diversify the economy, will actually overtake the cost of doing nothing, something which is not in any kind of economic analysis, will actually protect the environment, will actually position Alberta as a progressive, modern energy producer, and will ultimately enhance our ability to grow our markets. It will benefit . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Royalty Framework

Mr. Malkinson: Mr. Speaker, a recent study from the University of Calgary School of Public Policy concluded that Alberta's new royalty framework is making – get this – Alberta more competitive on the energy market than other jurisdictions in Canada, in particular our neighbours in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. To the Minister of Energy. While this is great news for companies, my constituents and everyday shop-floor Albertans want to know: how will they see the benefits of this new framework?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the member is correct. Jack Mintz on Monday wrote that our royalty framework will make Alberta significantly more attractive for investment. He continued to say that Alberta is indeed more competitive than British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and many of the oil-producing states in the United States. This is going to attract

investment in Alberta, and it's going to help fund the health care and the education systems that all of us enjoy and want.
[interjections]

2:10

The Speaker: Both sides of the House, please keep the volume down.

First supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the study did not factor in the carbon price, residents of Calgary-Currie want to know if the same minister can tell Albertans if and how the carbon price will impact the implementation of the new royalty framework.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is correct that Mr. Mintz's analysis did not include the carbon price. However, we have exempted on-site combustion of fuel at traditional oil and gas wells from the carbon levy for the next five years. This is going to allow companies to adapt and address methane emissions, and it will encourage investment in technology to do this, something which will be helpful to the midstream and downstream sectors.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the minister for the answer. Can the minister inform Albertans of the royalty programs that will come into effect in the new year?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, the new royalty framework takes place beginning January 1. We have two programs, enhanced hydrocarbon recovery program and emerging resources program. Those are for those harder-to-get resources, so it's a bit of a royalty break. It's going to bring out more drilling in those areas, and these are going to allow companies some assistance in accessing harder-to-get resources. This is a win-win-win for industry, it's a win for investors, and absolutely it's a win for Albertans, who are the owners of the resource.

Electricity Power Purchase Agreement Lawsuit

(continued)

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, it's no surprise that this government lacks the skill and mindset to partner with the greedy and selfish private sector. The Alberta no-jobs plan is a complete failure in getting Albertans back to work, yet you publicly vilify those you suggest will make massive investments in renewable and baseload power. To the Minister of Energy. Companies such as Capital Power and Enmax facing lawsuits are the same investors needed for job growth and stable, affordable power. Is this how the NDP world view envisions building relationships with industry, job seekers, and potential investors?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Consumers shouldn't have to pay for business losses because regulatory loopholes were created in secret, in a way that certainly appears to have been unlawfully negotiated by that party when they were in government. That's exactly why

we're moving forward by going to court. We want to make sure we have a fair and equal playing ground for Albertans and for all businesses here in the province of Alberta.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, given that socially responsible power companies are investing millions of shareholder dollars in renewable power technology and given that taxpayers currently carry no direct debt related to power generation because of billions of dollars of capital invested by these same companies, again to the minister: why does your government continue irresponsible and punitive legal attacks on business, despite their significant commitments, in what may prove to be a costly, poorly orchestrated effort to drive them away?

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to set the record straight that that is not at all the intention of what we're doing. We are in the process of going forward and asking the courts for clarity around a secret, backroom deal loophole that was negotiated by Enron, that certainly doesn't fit with the principles that were sold to Albertans when we were moving to a deregulated market, which created lots of opportunity for businesses to make \$10 billion worth of profits. Now, the other part of what was promised by the then government is around that when there is time for losses, they need to step up and fulfill their part of the commitment. We are going to make sure that we protect Albertans as we move forward and create a good business environment for all.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy Premier.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, Albertans will judge by results, not intentions. Given that the success of your climate leadership plan must include private investment in renewable power and given that this government continues to erode investor confidence by arrogantly renegeing on known clauses within 15-year-old contracts, to the same minister, a simple question: do you and your colleagues understand that irresponsible, ideologically driven policies and disdain for private capital are clearly driving investment out of our province? Yes or no?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the unlawful loophole that was created was dishonest. It was not forthcoming to the folks that were part of the consultations. It was negotiated in at the eleventh hour, and it certainly isn't the kind of business environment that business partners deserve in Alberta. That's why we're moving forward to provide clarity about whether or not it was actually lawful. We don't believe it was.

The Speaker: All members of the House, I remind you again about the language and tone that you use, as it causes an uproar in this House. I want both sides of the House to recognize that.

Mr. Rodney: Point of order.

The Speaker: My apologies to the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I missed you. Please proceed.

Political Party Funding

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. NDP members of the all-party Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee rammed through a motion for taxpayers to fund political parties despite opposition from every other party in this Assembly. This is not what Albertans thought they were getting when the Premier promised to do things differently. To the minister responsible for democratic

renewal: will you commit to this Assembly right now that your government will not spend a single taxpayer dollar to fund political parties?

The Speaker: The hon. minister. [interjections] Minister, proceed.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The work of the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee is very important to this government. Our very first bill, Bill 1, removed corporate and union donations to begin the process to get big money out of politics. The committee itself was not able to complete all its work due to a series of delays implemented by the opposition. We have been reviewing the results of that committee, looking forward to what we may be able to do with the work the committee has completed. I am not looking at any options to include new spending in changes to the election financing act.

Mr. Nixon: This past weekend Wildrose members voted to show that they knew it was wrong to fund political parties with tax dollars, but this government clearly disagrees. Given that tens of thousands of Alberta families are out of work and that the NDP is running record deficits on the backs of future generations and has been found in contempt of parliament for illegal advertising, to the Premier: how can you justify your party's self-serving plan to line your pockets with taxpayer dollars on the backs of Alberta families when they're barely making ends meet?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Albertans have told us that they want to take big money out of politics. We are looking at the best options moving forward. None of these options include new spending, unlike the members opposite, who want to increase the deficit by \$1.5 billion through tax cuts for their wealthy friends.

Mr. Nixon: Given that Wildrose members don't want political subsidies and are united with every other opposition party on this matter and given that whether it's the risky and ideological carbon tax or the misguided Bill 6, the NDP government seems immune to consulting, again to the Premier: what will it take for the NDP to realize that political subsidies using hard-earned taxpayer dollars are something that Albertans just can't afford and will not stand for?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will repeat for the third time that as we move forward with our election financing changes, we are not looking at using taxpayer money or adding new money into that system. What we are doing is making sure that campaign financing, getting big money out of politics, is a priority for this government. Under the current rules a person can donate \$105,000 across four years. That is big money. Getting that out and making sure that the committee could come to an agreement on that was a priority of ours. The opposition was not interested in doing so. We will continue to work to bring forward changes.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

I'm just wondering how many of the former MLAs are sorry that they're not back in this room. It's such an experience.

The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

2:20 Brazeau County Agricultural Disaster Declaration

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today Brazeau county, which is in my constituency of Drayton Valley-Devon, declared a state of agricultural disaster "due to the hardship that weather conditions,

specifically, excessive and persistent precipitation have placed on local farmers.” Approximately 75 per cent of unharvested cereals in the region remain standing according to the most recent Alberta crop report. The county has requested a disaster recovery program be set up to address this issue. What is the NDP government doing for these Albertans?

The Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mother Nature certainly presented a lot of challenges to farms this year: at the beginning of the year not enough water, by the end far too much. It’s been a great challenge. Certainly, our government is committed to supporting the agricultural industry in this province, and we continue to look at ways to support our farm families in situations such as those in Brazeau county, who really have had a tough year because the weather just was not in their favour.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is serious as 84 per cent of the spring wheat, 64 per cent of the barley, and 79 per cent of the oats planted in this county are still standing and unharvested. The economic consequences could be dire. Given that the energy industry is hurting so badly and that Mother Nature has just walloped our second-largest industry, agriculture, what types of programs can the minister provide to these farmers who are calling for disaster assistance?

The Speaker: Hon. member, I may have heard a preamble in that first part. I know you’ll be cautious on the next one.

The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This season, again, has been a roller coaster for many of our producers, and it has indicated again that how challenging or successful a particular year is depends completely on how Mother Nature chooses to respond. The delays in harvest in many parts of our province have substantially impacted the quality of crops, and there are tremendous concerns. We take these issues very seriously. The AgriInvest, AgriInsurance, and AgriStability programs are available to help mitigate the potential effects of these types of conditions when they occur. Again, we continue to work with the agriculture industry to provide the supports needed.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Brazeau county Reeve Bart Guyon has said that these extremely wet conditions over the past few months have resulted in very low crop yields across Brazeau county and given that he wants to call attention to this extremely important issue and he reminds us all that farmers feed families, and let’s support them, will this government support our farmers in Brazeau county, and if so, how?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. AgriInsurance may be available to provide assistance through unharvested acreage benefits, which provides advance payment on insured crops that remain unharvested after November 30. We encourage producers to get in touch with their local AFSC office to explore their options and to submit their report before November 15 to help AFSC determine levels of advance if necessary. We continue to monitor

the harvest carefully to evaluate the final impact of this year’s wet conditions, and we will continue to find ways to support Alberta’s hard-working farm families.

Government Policies

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, this weekend hundreds of conservatives from across Alberta gathered in Red Deer to discuss how to take Alberta back. Wildrose members voted overwhelmingly at our annual general meeting to kill Bill 6 and to scrap the carbon tax. These policies were proposed by the grassroots members of Strathmore-Brooks, who have felt these impacts first-hand. The closure of Western Feedlots in my constituency is a real-life economic impact study. Will the government commit to publicly releasing the full internal economic impact study of the carbon tax that the Premier talked about yesterday?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we indicated, we are looking at releasing all of the underlying data that uses the same econometric modelling that underlies the fiscal plan and the budget. Certainly, this work is ongoing with respect to the economic benefits of carbon pricing and the reinvestment of those substantial revenues in communities, in individuals, in businesses, and in First Nations.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago we got the news in Strathmore that Western Feedlots would be closing its doors. They cited as their reason that they were facing headwinds in the cattle market but also this government’s policies on the carbon tax and the heavy regulatory burden of Bill 6. The concerns that we have raised are no longer theoretical. Real people in my constituency are losing their jobs. If the government will not reconsider its decision to force the carbon tax and Bill 6 on Albertans, what will they do to ensure that more businesses like Western Feedlots do not have to close their doors?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it is disappointing to hear about the job losses at Western Feedlots.

I will remind the member that, of course, marked gasoline for agricultural purposes is exempt from the carbon levy. I will further remind the hon. member of an initial \$10 million investment in on-farm efficiency programs, and we await additional investments from the federal government. I’m looking at how we can increase that programming over time. One final note, Mr. Speaker, of course, is that in June of last year a 1,400-pound calf sold for about \$2,800. This year they are selling for about \$1,800, so that’s the state of the industry right now.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, at least we’re hearing some positive signs that the NDP are at least quietly acknowledging that their carbon tax is creating real problems for rural Alberta. They introduced their \$10 million subsidy program to compensate farmers for the huge added cost of the carbon tax, but that \$10 million is equal to .3 per cent of the \$3 billion carbon tax. It’s pennies. Why doesn’t the government just scrap the carbon tax and keep the change?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason why we are pricing carbon is that climate change is real. I know that it is fashionable on the other side of the House to retweet conspiracy theories, peddle hoax memes, and otherwise cast doubt on the reality of climate change, but that is not the approach of this government. The approach of this government is to make thoughtful investments in communities, in the agricultural sector, to make folks' operations more efficient, creating good jobs and making our economy resilient to a carbon-constrained future because, once again, climate change . . .

The Speaker: Thank you.

Electricity Power Purchase Agreement Lawsuit Advertising

Mr. Fraser: Today Albertans want answers but are seeing this NDP government refuse to answer questions on legal action against PPAs to avoid prejudicing the court case. It was only yesterday that the Premier said that getting into the details would not be appropriate for this forum and should be reserved for the courts. Well, this caucus agrees. It's entirely inappropriate to attempt to influence public opinion with the case before the courts. So would the Premier be able to tell Albertans why she launched an ad campaign in papers around the province? Does she consider that to be an appropriate forum to influence public opinion?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Certainly, we think it's important for Albertans to know what their government is doing to defend their rights and their interests. The Official Opposition and the third party have made it very clear who they're interested in defending, that being the other side of the contracts, companies who have been very successful at benefiting during the good times, and now they want to pass losses onto individual Albertans as well as to industrial consumers. We don't believe that's fair. That's exactly why we're asking the courts to make a ruling on whether or not the clause that was added at the eleventh hour by the third party and their subsidiaries is indeed . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Fraser: Given that the Premier and the Deputy Premier refuse to be held accountable on this issue and the Energy minister has been muzzled and given that the NDP instead thought it would best to explain a sham of a court case to Albertans with a \$100,000 ad campaign, to the Premier: \$100,000 may not seem like a lot to you, but it is to taxpayers, and with all due respect, Deputy Premier, instead of spending money on NDP political spin, would it not be better spent on education and health care?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. We are moving forward on making sure that Albertans are defended and protected. Certainly, we don't believe that the Enron clause is in the best interest of Albertans, nor do we believe it was done in a way that was appropriate. That's why we're moving forward with the courts and asking them to make a ruling on this so that Albertans don't have to pay more than what they were promised in the first place, which was shared risk and shared reward. It's time for that commitment to come through.

Mr. Fraser: Well, given that the NDP also used government services to launch a public website full of political rhetoric and given that in this House this government refuses to be accountable to Albertans on why they're suing these companies – Deputy Premier, suing Albertans is not going to bat for them.

The government can't have it both ways. You attempted to influence public opinion when the matter was before the courts, and Albertans aren't buying it. Today will you not waste another tax dollar on this litigation, trying to save your own political skin, and drop this lawsuit?

2:30

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd say that all Albertans have skin in this game, and the reason why we do is because 15 years ago we were promised that there was going to be public consultation and they would talk about what would be in the PPA contracts. At the eleventh hour the party that's asking the very question, clearly documented, negotiated with Enron and snuck in a loophole that certainly wasn't done in a way that passes any kind of nod test. That's why we're going to the courts, to make sure that the courts can make a ruling.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Educational Curriculum Review

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has committed to developing new curriculum across six subjects over the next six years. Given that this curriculum change is focused on providing students with the knowledge and skill sets needed for Alberta's changing environments and given that Alberta's families are eager to see results, to the Minister of Education: can you please provide this House with an update on this integral work?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much for the question. Last month we launched an in-depth survey on curriculum that's open to all Albertans. To date we have more than 19,000 responses that have taken the survey – it feels really good – and lots of great feedback that is being taken into serious consideration for the next round of development. You can see the survey at curriculumsurvey.alberta.ca, and I would encourage everyone to fill it out. Working together, we can build a curriculum that we can all be proud of.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that perhaps the most important feedback the government will receive during this review is from Alberta families, how are you engaging families in your work on the curriculum?

Mr. Eggen: Thank you for the question again. Along with the surveys we have a series of face-to-face meetings around the province in partnership with the provincial consortium. These sessions allow face-to-face meetings with parents and teachers and students to directly consult on these things. We've already had hundreds of these interactions, and we will continue to do so. Once again, of course, curriculumsurvey.alberta.ca. We'll break 20,000 by the end of today, I'm sure.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the survey is one tool to receive feedback and guide the review and we know that this represents the beginning stages of the review, to the same minister: what are the next steps once the curriculum survey is closed?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly we will be analyzing the results, and we'll share them with the public. We'll turn back to our working groups to develop a first incarnation of some curriculum. We have very interesting contributors there, including the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, who use our curriculum as well. Then we will come back to the public once again because, you know, changing the curriculum, developing, seeing what's good with our old curriculum, and improving on other aspects, I think, are in the best interests of all Alberta students.

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

Indigenous Community Concerns

Mr. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, it's a sad state of affairs that in our province our indigenous peoples are repeatedly left behind or face additional barriers in our system. Our justice system in Alberta has received the worst grade in the country for fairness and access. According to a recent study Alberta has the most disproportionate level of aboriginal incarceration of any jurisdiction in Canada. That doesn't happen overnight, and neither will fixing it, but we need to start somewhere. What specific steps is the Minister of Justice taking to address these serious problems in our justice system?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for what's really a critical question. The member is absolutely correct. This problem has accumulated over many years and decades, and it's really tragic, the overrepresentation we see of our indigenous populations in correctional centres. We have begun taking steps already to deal with interim remands. Ensuring that people don't go to jail for things like a C-Train ticket is the first step. We're also looking to ensure that judicial interim release is functioning in a way that's more fair to all Albertans, and we're working on other methods with the court and with the federal government, who is also very interested in this issue.

The Speaker: Thank you.
First supplemental.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you. Given that an opioid epidemic is sweeping our province and given that finally the NDP has taken our advice and released more up-to-date statistics, unfortunately revealing that First Nations individuals are 5.5 times more likely to visit an emergency room related to opioid use, and given that First Nations individuals in our health care system are also being dispensed opioids at a rate two times higher than our non First Nations population, what is the government doing to address both the legal and illegal opioid epidemic in our First Nations communities?

The Speaker: The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the very important question. Our government is very concerned with the overrepresentation of First Nations people and indigenous people from Alberta in our overdose statistics, and certainly we are

working very closely with partners in the indigenous communities across the province. We know that the key way to address the opioid crisis is through harm reduction, which is why I'm proud that we're moving forward with expanding opioid dependency treatments as well as moving forward on harm reduction such as supervised consumption services.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you. Given that the Native Women's Association of Canada reports that Alberta has the second-highest number of cases of missing and murdered indigenous women across the country and given that an estimated 84 per cent of these cases are the outright murder of our sisters, daughters, and wives and given that the NWAC has found that overlapping and unclear jurisdictional areas have impeded solving these cases, when is the government going to step up, work across ministries and levels of government to actually do something to save lives?

Mr. Feehan: Thank you very much for the question because this is an issue that is quite central to our concerns in this province, particularly with government, who has stood up time and time again to make sure that this government is behind the call for murdered and missing women, participating right away when we became government in the calls to the murdered and missing women inquiry and in participation in all the round-tables that have happened at the national level. We are very proud of the fact that we have, through our orders in council, adopted the national commission and made sure that Alberta is going to be at the forefront. As well, we've been working very closely with the families in the . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

Electricity Power Purchase Agreement Lawsuit Legal Counsel

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I provided the government with an opportunity to explain why it chose to hire a B.C. lawyer for the PPA court case rather than its own legal counsel at Alberta Justice or an Alberta law firm. As per page 1603 of *Hansard* the Deputy Premier chose to prejudice the court case in her comments instead of answering my question, so let's give the government another opportunity, shall we? To the Premier: why are you insulting Alberta's legal community by hiring a friend of the NDP in B.C. instead of tapping into the wealth of capable counsel here in Alberta?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We do have many tremendous lawyers here in Alberta, and we're proud to have many of them employed by the public service in the government of Alberta. Mr. Arvay is by far Canada's pre-eminent constitutional public and administrative law expert. He has many proven successful verdicts when it comes to standing up for the public interest, including tobacco, and it was important that we use somebody who's got a proven track record to make sure that they're defending Albertans in this case.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we have just learned that the Associate Deputy Minister for Policy Co-ordination in Executive Council articulated under Mr. Arvay in British Columbia and given that it is a curious connection, for sure, and this

relationship further creates reasonable suspicion which further corroborates that this government is only interested in working with those with the NDP world view, to the Premier: do you really expect Albertans to believe that no one was qualified to handle this case in the province of Alberta?

Ms Hoffman: Once again, I'll say that we do have exceptional lawyers throughout Alberta, and we're very proud to have many of them working within the public service. We want to make sure that Albertans get what is due to them, and that is certainly somebody who has a proven track record of standing up for the public interest. I think it makes sense to have people who may have experienced that as articling students employed within the public service as well, so certainly I won't apologize for having smart people working in the government or hiring them to defend Albertans, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that since asking about the strange hiring practice yesterday, I've had many Albertans tell me they want answers and given that the Deputy Premier did not deny that Mr. Arvay was given a sole-source contract and given that Albertans are now relying on me to obtain the answers, again to the Premier: what was the process the government used in selecting Mr. Arvay? Is it a sole-source contract? Let me be clear here. How much is he getting paid?

2:40

Ms Hoffman: I imagine that the member opposite is familiar with the rules of public accounts and probably has been aware that one of the things that doesn't set you up for success is disclosing how much you might be spending on a particular case, but we will do absolutely what was done and what is practice as recommended by the office of the Auditor General around disclosure. We will continue to follow that in terms of the public interest, and, yes, there are times where there is a sole-source contract. A sole-source contract isn't a bad thing if you're picking the best person to actually move forward with the contract. I think it would be wise, and Mr. Arvay is arguably the best interest in arguing for the public interest. We'll be happy to disclose the details monetarily afterward. [interjections]

The Speaker: It's a wonderful day in the neighbourhood.
I believe we are at Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Women's Representation in Municipal Government

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Provincially our caucus is almost at gender parity and our cabinet has more women than men, but at the municipal level women hold 26 per cent of council seats throughout Alberta. What is the Minister of Status of Women doing to support more women getting elected in municipal office?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We recently through Status of Women launched a campaign to get more women to run for municipal office. It's called Ready for Her. We're very excited about it because this problem starts well before election day. We know that most women have a good chance of winning if they run, but it's simply a matter of getting them to put their name on their ballot. In Calgary, for example, there were only eight women out of 49 individuals who put their names forward in the last election, so we're hoping to turn that around because you can't vote for a woman if she's not on the ballot.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that fewer women put their name on the ballot, why is it that fewer women decide to run for office?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. We know that women face different barriers than men do. Women are still by majority the primary caregiver in their homes, whether it's for their children or another family member. Additionally, we know that when it comes to running for office, women tend to need to be asked to run. I know that this was true for myself. I heard it from many women when we were on tour, and I know that it's true for many women who are currently elected here today. But, sir, we know that we make better decisions when our councils better reflect the populations they serve.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: given that women are so underrepresented now and given that they face these barriers, how many women do you expect to run next year?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you again for the question. For the edification of this room, we're talking about the municipal election in 2017, and I would personally like to see at least 50 per cent women on next year's ballots. As part of our tour we've created an online resource called readyforher.alberta.ca. It's a tool kit to help more women run for office and their supporters to help rally behind them. I believe in having the best candidate for the job. There are so many qualified women here in Alberta. It's simply a matter of getting those women to put themselves on that ballot and put themselves forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Hon. members, I have a request from the Minister of Seniors and Housing. There's a supplementary response to a question from the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills yesterday.

The hon. minister.

Affordable and Special-needs Housing

Ms Sigurdson: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills asked yesterday about something that is in my portfolio. I had the opportunity to meet with the directors of Mountain View Seniors' Housing, and at that time they gave the information about their plans going forward, their business plans, and in their business plans they do not include any requests at all for renovation dollars for their community housing projects. They have put forward alternative plans, and we're working very closely with them, so I just suggest that the member speak directly to those directors because they know best what's good in their community.

Mr. Cooper: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite surprised that the minister of housing would stand in her place, when there are 41 bedrooms sitting vacant because this government has chosen not to provide the resources for maintenance for low-income housing, and pass the buck along to another level of government.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked a very important question with respect to the housing available in Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, and I would expect that the minister would want to do everything that she could to ensure that those housing units would be used by individuals.

The Speaker: Hon. member, do you have a question?

Mr. Cooper: Yeah. The question is: is it not true that she would like to ensure that those units that are needed are made available?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Do you have the question, hon. minister?

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, this government has invested \$1.2 billion over five years in the capital plan. We are committed to working with housing management bodies like the one in the member's riding. These representatives – mayors, elected officials on councils – have told us: we have alternative plans to serve the people in our communities. We're working with them directly to support them to do that.

The Speaker: Hon. members, in 30 seconds we'll continue with Members' Statements.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Ukrainian Pysanka Festival in Vegreville

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first weekend of July each year marks a three-day celebration known as the Pysanka Festival hosted in the proud town of Vegreville, a weekend where you meet both performers and attendees that have come from across the world to enjoy the festival and perform in it. This year the festival chose Mayor Charlie Gargus and his wife, Debby, to be the hospodar and hospodynia. They are ambassadors whose job is to welcome all guests.

There are many activities held: the art show and sale; Ukrainian folk bands in the beer gardens; a folk arts showcase that displays traditional music instruments, clothing made by artisans, and pysanky; displays that show the uniqueness of designs and colours that represent different regions of Ukraine, reaching back in time over hundreds of years.

The yarmarok is a marketplace that brings vendors selling fine wares of exquisite wood carvings, beautiful embroidery, pottery, pysanky, and ornate clothing, of which I'm wearing an example from the region of Bukovina.

There are also demonstrations such as weaving silk and wool belts, the making of Ukrainian ethnokorail, cross-stitching, and poetry reading.

Families have also been long-time volunteers, putting on pioneer activities such as a blacksmith shop, a stone mill, rope-making demonstrations, leather-working, and one of my favourites, bread-baking in the pich, where the bread always sells out.

The centrepiece, however, is the grandstand show. All generations come together to watch performances both local and global: A.L. Horton school's Ukrainian bilingual program students sing both Ukrainian and Canadian national anthems; Ukrainian dancing from the Vegreville School of Ukrainian Dancing; Sopilka School of Ukrainian Dance; Sche Raz from Manitoba; the Volya Ukrainian Dance Ensemble and the Pavlychenko Folklorique

Ensemble; Oleksandr Bozhyk, a Ukrainian virtuoso violinist; choirs singing traditional Ukrainian ballads; Marianna Ilkiv, an accomplished soloist from Ukraine; and Millenia, a band that works to preserve and advance Canadian-Ukrainian music.

I will take this opportunity to say *dyakuyu*, or thank you, to all the organizers of the Pysanka Festival.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Childhood Cancer

Mr. McIver: Thank you, and my sincerest gratitude to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to deliver this statement today. Twenty-five years ago my wife, Christine's, oldest son, Derek, was taken by a brain tumour when he was just nine years old. This was long before Christine and I met. I know that since that time a lot has changed in the world, but very little has changed in the world of kids' cancer. Every year in Canada the equivalent of 20 busloads of children are diagnosed with cancer, yet from all of the research funding in Canada today only 3 per cent goes to children's cancer research. Cancer is the number one disease killing children today, and we still only devote 3 per cent to research. Over 200 Canadian children die from cancer every year. That's the equivalent of over six classrooms of children dying every single year.

2:50

Since 1980 only three new cancer drugs have been developed for kids compared to over 200 new drugs for adults, and these decades-old toxic drugs are destroying kids emotionally, physically, mentally. Seventy-five per cent of the survivors face a lifetime of serious health problems after treatment and lower levels of education and poorer employment outcomes. With roughly 30,000 childhood cancer survivors living in Canada today, we need to change this.

Research is the only answer, investing in children's cancer research to develop therapies that save lives without causing the devastating health problems that cripple their minds, bodies, and spirits. Mr. Speaker, no one begrudges any of the research done for adults, but the fact is that kids' cancer is different. It requires separate and different therapies and drugs as kids' bodies are not fully developed.

Again let's acknowledge the kids present in the gallery today who are in the trenches battling cancer right now. Both the Kids Cancer Care Foundation and Kids with Cancer Society are raising vital dollars for research and other life-enhancing programs for all kids that were diagnosed. Remember: 3 per cent of research for kids with cancer will never be enough.

Gord Downie and the Tragically Hip

Mr. Westhead: Mr. Speaker, the Tragically Hip is one of Canada's most iconic and beloved bands. With a sound that makes the headphones edible, it's music that can take you away. Yeah, it's perfect. Well, it isn't, and it is. It doesn't take much to ruin a moment like this. On May 24 the band announced that lead singer, Gord Downie, was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer and broke the hearts of everyone.

It's a sad thing; bourbons all around. But only a fool would complain. We were never more here. At Tragically Hip concerts across Canada this past summer Canadians danced the sidewalks clean and saved our tears for the show. The music was so loud it flapped my pant legs.

With 14 studio albums and five solo albums Gord Downie's contribution to Canada's collective consciousness is incalculable. If I had a wish, I'd wish for more of this. But there's got to be more

than just to despair. Gord Downie's latest project, *Secret Path*, is bringing renewed attention to Canada's shameful residential school legacy. Downie is retelling the tragic story of Chanie Wenjack, who died in 1966 attempting to escape a residential school in northern Ontario.

Gord, this one is for you. You infiltrate our lives; you resonate with meaning. Use it up. Use it all up. Don't save a thing for later. Just say it, convey it, sing out like a bird. "No tears," you said. Understood. Let's just see what tomorrow brings. There will always be much, much more than this. I'll just close my eyes; I'll just catch my breath. This is the only place to be, here, here, and here, et cetera, when something stirs in your heart, a feeling so strong and intense, when something occurs in your heart and there isn't a next sentence.

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

Calgary Country Hills Fire Station 31

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In late June I joined fire department 31 in Calgary-Northern Hills to have dinner and hear from the A crew after so many went to fight the Fort McMurray wildfire in May 2016. The first group of firefighters volunteered following a four-day shift cycle, boarding a bus at midnight headed north. In their words, they arrived the next morning at 6 a.m. to an eerie hellscape. Burnt trees were everywhere, neighbourhoods reduced to ash. In the midst of abandoned vehicles even a city bus was left stranded in the middle of a highway median, and fires still burned in Beacon Hill.

As the front line of the wildfire kept shifting, these Calgary firefighters were tasked with protecting critical infrastructure. Soon their five fire engines arrived by truck, and the crew was deployed to an industrial park near the airport. That first day stretched from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. After working 53 hours in three days, this crew from Calgary was cycled out to limit exposure to toxins and other effects of the catastrophic fire. Captain Florence remarked that in 18 years he had never been to a fire they didn't put out. The crew just didn't want to leave; they wanted to stay and help the Fort Mac firefighting team.

From the 4th of May to the 7th of June 400 of 800 potential volunteers were deployed. Days after returning their skin smelled like campfire, their throats were sore, and their eyes watered, certainly from the air quality in the midst of that fire, possibly from the devastation they had witnessed. For Captain Florence and his crew it was humbling and very difficult as firefighters to leave a fire that was still burning. Yet in his words: nobody was putting out that fire but Mother Nature.

While his words ring true, we have no doubt that the efforts of these brave men and women saved much of Fort McMurray, and for that every Albertan is grateful. As Albertans we will support the front-line firefighters through the aftereffects of working in such catastrophic conditions. We'll continue to be inspired by the way these firefighters rose to the challenge to pull together in hard times and know we'll be safe because of our first responders.

I'd like to thank Mike Carter, president of Calgary Firefighters Association IAFF local 255, for joining us today.

The Speaker: The Government House Leader might have a motion to introduce.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask for unanimous consent to continue with the daily Routine.

[Unanimous consent granted]

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

Trust in Government

Mr. Stier: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This fiscal year has sure been a doozy. The NDP has plunged our province into record debt and deficit, and we have seen four major credit downgrades as a result. But what's in even shorter supply than money these days is trust. After years of poor focus from the previous government voters were expecting a lot more on the trust file. Building trust really isn't that hard. It's about doing what you say and saying what you do.

When they were caught obstructing freedom of information requests to such a degree that the Ethics Commissioner felt compelled to step in, they broke trust. When they said that a 50 per cent minimum wage hike wouldn't cost us jobs when a leaked government memo was actually warning them about expected, and I quote, significant job loss, they broke trust. When they broke contracts with power companies and dragged them into a costly court battle even though internal documents verified that they knew all the consequences of breaking these contracts, they broke trust.

But when they planned to impose a \$3 billion carbon tax on Albertans in the middle of a recession, they really broke trust. Then just yesterday we saw that this government was reprimanded for the complete contempt of this Legislature after they spent \$5 million of taxpayers' money on advertisements for a policy that had not yet been legislated. They shattered trust boundaries. They say Albertans want this when, in reality, polls show overwhelming opposition to this risky policy. They even went one step further and used their majority to shut down our call for a referendum even though 30,000 Albertans signed our petition in support of that. They know Albertans don't want their carbon tax. Anything they say to the contrary is just more dishonesty from a government that has lost its way.

The NDP are about to learn a hard lesson. People are angry. When governments break the people's trust, it is not soon forgotten. In 2019 they're going to have a lot to answer for.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Bill 26

Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to move first reading of the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act.

Today it is my distinct honour to rise in this Assembly and introduce an act that would recognize the endearing contributions of Albertans and Canadians of Ukrainian heritage or origin to the province of Alberta. The act will establish Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day as each September 7, beginning in 2017.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a first time]

The Speaker: The Deputy Government House Leader.

3:00

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that pursuant to Standing Order 75 Bill 26, Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act, be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Mr. Rosendahl: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table information on bovine TB from the government of Alberta website. This issue was raised by the Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti yesterday in question period. The document cautions Albertans that bovine TB does not readily transfer to humans. It also provides lists of precautions and best practices that hunters and farmers can adopt to prevent any potential spread of the disease. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three documents to table with you today. The first, providing evidence that I've spoken to the directors of Mountain View Seniors' Housing, much to the chagrin of the Minister of Seniors and Housing, is a list of all of the properties that are currently vacant and considered to be uninhabitable.

The second is a total listing of the deferred maintenance costs that each one of those properties will require, and though the Minister of Seniors and Housing may have suggested that they didn't ask for any resources, that's certainly the number that it will cost. As I mentioned yesterday in my question, perhaps she should consider donating one to a local charity so they could turn it into a seniors' home.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, is a copy of an article that was referenced during my member's statement where the Government House Leader made some quotes to the media about his concern around a point of privilege.

The Speaker: Hon. member, given your concern of time I was a little puzzled that you would take so much time tabling those documents, but thank you for doing that.

Hon. members, I believe there were three points of order in the House today.

Government House Leader, I believe you raised a point of order. Is that correct?

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to withdraw the point of order.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The second, I believe, is from the Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Point of Order Parliamentary Language

Mr. Rodney: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As a courtesy to you and the table officers and all members, our reference is 23(i) and (j). Out of respect for the intended unanimous passing of the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act I did not want to raise a point of order here today, but out of respect for all Albertans I must raise a point of order here today. That's the bad news, but the good news is that I will include a very time-sensitive solution in my very brief remarks.

At approximately 2:15 p.m. today the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek was asking questions about the NDP government eroding investment in renewable power by renegeing on well-known clauses within 15-year-old contracts. In her reply the Deputy Premier used the term "unlawful" in a clearly unparliamentary fashion. Mr. Speaker, the comments were highly prejudicial to the court proceeding and fly in the face of your sub judice warnings in each of the past three days. It's highly insensitive and – I know

we're going to hear it in our offices – insulting not only to investors but also to you as Speaker, the members of this Legislature, the taxpayers of this province, who are the investors in many of these organizations, and therefore to all Albertans.

That said, indeed, I believe there is an appropriate, respectful, rapid response that has precedent in matters such as this, and that is, indeed, that the Deputy Premier rise in this Chamber now, apologize for her remarks, and simply withdraw them.

That concludes my remarks. Thank you.

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize, and I'm happy to withdraw the remark.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, in light of the very important business before the House – and I'm sure we'll have another opportunity to discuss this particular point of order – I'll be happy to withdraw.

The Speaker: Oh, very nice.

Orders of the Day

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to seek unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 77(1) such that Bill 26 can proceed to second reading immediately.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 26

Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and speak to Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. As a Polack on my mother's side and representing tens of thousands of Ukrainians, some up in the gallery, in the constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, it is my distinct honour to be part of this wonderful day, where our galleries are filled with proud Albertans and proud Ukrainians. They are here to witness the hopeful passing of an act that will officially recognize the enduring contributions of Albertans and Canadians of Ukrainian heritage or origin to the province of Alberta.

I am very thankful that we have a government that is willing to work with all of our ethnic groups and communities and that they would adopt this as a government bill because it is that important. Ukrainians were here, breaking the ground by the sweat of their brow, before Alberta even officially became a province of our great country. That is why the bill is proudly called Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. The bill was created in consultation with the Ukrainian community to ensure that they and their ancestors are properly remembered for all they contributed to Alberta.

We love holopchi and pedaha, or, as I used to know them, cabbage rolls and perogies, but Ukrainians built so much more than that. Churches were built that became the cornerstones of community and culture. Businesses were started across Alberta such as the Ukrainian Ceramic Cottage in Vegreville, a business that helped to support the Kurulok family so that Chris could stay home and work in the store while Greg was off at high school, teaching.

Nonprofit organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, of which Olesia Luciw-Andryjowycz is the president, have worked to preserve Ukrainian culture and heritage so that our future generations know and remember where they come from and to co-ordinate and represent the interests of Ukrainian Canadians.

Let's not forget the many political contributions that have come from people like Premier Ed Stelmach, former Speaker Gene Zwozdesky, and many more who have worked tirelessly to bring forward important pieces of legislation such as the legislation that recognizes the Holodomor as a terrible tragedy and that we have your office, Mr. Speaker, host every year, able to remember those that we have lost. This act will establish Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day as each September 7, beginning next year, in 2017.

The first officially recorded Ukrainian immigrants, Ivan Pylypiw and Vasyl Eleniak, arrived in Canada on September 17, 1891.

I'm also honoured to recognize in this Chamber our government's proclamation of the year commencing on September 7, 2016, as in Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act, which the hon. Member for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview first publicly announced on August 7, 2016, when we were at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, also opening up the Stelmach House.

There are many reasons why we are all proud to announce this act. Today there are approximately 345,000 Albertans of Ukrainian descent in Alberta. Ukrainian settlers were among the first Europeans to arrive here on Treaty 6, 7, and 8 traditional lands that make up our province. These settlers, many farmers, developed Red Fife wheat, a hardy strain of wheat that is still celebrated for becoming a critical part of the growing economy of Alberta.

Over time Ukrainian culture has become an integral part of Alberta culture. There are renowned Ukrainian dance companies such as Shumka that perform world-wide. As well, Albertans of Ukrainian heritage have made tremendous contributions in every aspect from business and industry to academia, public service, culture, and sports. Ukrainian Albertans have made Alberta a better place for us all to live in.

3:10

Today I am also happy to inform you of a number of significant anniversaries for the Ukrainian community this year. It is the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, and it is also the 25th anniversary of Ukrainian independence.

Canada's ties to Ukraine remain strong as on July 11 of this year Canada and Ukraine signed the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, or CUFTA. I would wish to thank all Albertans and Canadians of Ukrainian heritage for their contributions to our province and for preserving their rich culture.

I will just end on one note, that I was able to take part in the Babas and Borshch festival this year, and it turns out that borscht-making is in my blood because I achieved third place. Thank you.

It is my deep honour to introduce this act, and I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Jean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank everybody for being here today. It's truly an honour to be with you on this historic day here in Alberta. I especially want to say thank you to my friends, my Baba and Dido Bobocel, for the thousands of perogies and cabbage rolls I ate before my 18th birthday. It is true, and I continue to eat them regularly.

When we reflect on the history of Ukrainians in Canada, it's clear that the Ukrainian-Canadian story is a story about the possibilities

of our province and our country. When two Ukrainian farmers came to this great land in 1891, they saw the opportunity in the Canadian western frontier where others saw immense challenges. The farmers sent word home about the strong farming conditions in Manitoba and what would later become, of course, Saskatchewan and Alberta. My own family came just 20 years afterwards and indeed saw the same struggles but the same opportunity and great possibilities. This movement, just two dozen years removed from Confederation, was a seriously new day in our history.

By 1914 180,000 Ukrainian men, women, and children came to Canada in search of those new, great opportunities, but life for these early settlers was far from easy, was very difficult, in fact. The rich farmland was covered in trees and rocks, and of course winter, as we know, is cold and unforgiving. Mortality rates were high, especially in infants.

These early pioneers were in many cases given no financial assistance from our government whereas others were. It was unfair and not appropriate. During the First World War Ukrainian Canadians were labelled as enemy aliens and, in the worst case of discrimination, forced to live and work in internment camps. This is unacceptable. These actions should never be repeated, and we need to remember that in order to make sure it never does, because even in victory the horrors of war were being experienced by innocent Ukrainian men and women right here at home who lost their property, their rights, and their freedoms.

The stigmatization of Ukrainians lasted for years. In fact, I just spoke to somebody that works for the Wildrose, and he told me a story of how his family had to change their name. That's unacceptable, and it's a dark chapter in our story but a chapter we cannot ignore so that we never repeat it.

Through this time Ukrainians relied on the strength of one another to persevere. Settlements were a means of survival. Vegreville, as I learned today, was more than 5,000 square kilometres and remains a symbol today of Ukrainian strength and perseverance. We've all travelled there before. I can assure you I have. I volunteered my time on a friend's farm, throwing bales of hay around just near there, and of course my kids love the giant Easter egg. Now they know what the pysanka really stands for: harmony, vitality, and community.

Vegreville is a great Alberta town, like so many great Alberta towns. It calls itself home to many – and I mean many – large Ukrainian families, and I've met many of them. It's great pride that I have that Ukrainian families are part of our rich heritage. Alberta also calls itself home to hundreds of thousands of other people, but I would say that Ukrainian Canadians have so much rich heritage that I truly enjoy.

I'm so proud to serve in this very Legislature with many vibrant and dynamic men and women of Ukrainian descent, including, of course, the hon. minister of economic development, who made today a possibility. To him I say thank you. Great move.

For 125 years Ukrainians have been contributing so much to the fabric of the Canadian way of life and the Albertan way of life. The Ukrainian story is a story about possibilities and opportunity in the face of immense hardship. But still Ukrainians have persevered time and time again, as we have in Alberta, as they fought to make their dreams of raising a family, building a homestead, and carving out their own piece of heaven, a piece of Alberta, a reality.

It is my sincere honour and privilege to help you celebrate Alberta's Year of the Ukrainian-Canadian. I am happy to do so and proud to do so. Thank you for this, and thank you to all of you for being here today. God bless you. God bless Alberta.

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

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to start off by recognizing that one of our very own pages was born in Kiev, Ukraine, Maria Ovcharenko. I'm just looking to see if she's in the room, and she is.

On a side note, just this morning the Premier was telling me that she used to do Ukrainian dance, so we are trying to find a photograph of that.

Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to rise today and speak to second reading of Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. I'm very proud of my Ukrainian heritage, and I'm very pleased that this bill has been brought forward to honour the many contributions the Ukrainian people have made to our great province.

I want to first thank the hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for introducing this bill and note, Mr. Speaker, that she's been an incredible advocate for the many constituents of Ukrainian heritage in her riding.

I'd also like to give special thanks, Mr. Speaker, to Olesia Luci-Andryjowycz, the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council. Olesia was integral in advocating for this piece of legislation, was incredibly helpful in organizing so many of the members of the Ukrainian community to be here today, and provided extensive input on the bill. I'd also like to extend that thank you to all of the UCC Alberta Provincial Council executive members who have joined us here today. It's probably one of the most effective nonprofit organizations in our province, I think.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to acknowledge and thank my parents, Orest and Mary Ann Bilous, who, unfortunately, couldn't be here today but made sure that growing up, we not only understood and recognized but also celebrated our culture.

The journey our ancestors made to Canada was often one of sacrifice and uncertainty. My own grandfather came here as a young man alone almost 90 years ago looking for a better life. He had very humble beginnings as a shoemaker, but he made sure his children and grandchildren were proud of our culture and proud to give back to the country where he made his new home.

Many others made this journey, fleeing strife or even persecution, including the horrific events now known as the Holodomor. They overcame incredible hardships for a new start in our province, Mr. Speaker, and over the past 125 years they helped build this province. They were the grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents of so many Albertans today. These generations of Ukrainian Canadians became the backbone of communities across Alberta.

As the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville indicated, there are approximately 345,000 Albertans of Ukrainian descent in our province, and from 2008 to 2012 another 1,200 Ukrainians chose Alberta as their new home.

Today, as we celebrate 125 years of Ukrainian settlement in Canada and in Alberta, there is much to take pride in, Mr. Speaker, such as the strong role Canadians of Ukrainian heritage have played in building our province and our country and the strong ties that continue between Alberta, Canada, and Ukraine.

3:20

The Ukrainian language has been taught in Alberta schools since 1956, and instruction in Ukrainian was made available in 1974. Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to participate in Ukrainian immersion as a child helped me learn to appreciate my own culture and the diversity of our province, and I have to give a shout-out to my old elementary school, St. Martin. There are two Ukrainian bilingual elementary schools, St. Matthew and St. Martin, here in our great city of Edmonton.

Ukrainian culture has become a part of Alberta culture. There are renowned Ukrainian dance companies from Alberta that delight

audiences world-wide, and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that as a boy I always looked forward to the excitement of dancing. I'm proud to also say that the Cheremosh dance company is located in my home riding of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans of Ukrainian heritage have made tremendous contributions in every aspect of Alberta society, from business and industry to academia, public service, culture, and sports. Ukrainian Albertans have made Alberta a better place for all of us.

It is in recognition of the incredible achievement of Ukrainian Albertans that I am so proud that this act will make official the recognition of the year commencing on September 7, 2016, as Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Year and will establish September 7 as Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day. Slava Ukraini. Slava Alberta. Dyakuyu.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister. I'm wondering: were you the teacher of the Premier in teaching her how to dance?

Mr. Bilous: Lord, no.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Hays.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all of our invited guests. Special thanks to Ambassador Shevchenko for making the trip to Alberta. We deeply appreciate your presence as we consider this important bill today.

Today is an important day for Alberta and for our Ukrainian community in this province with the introduction of Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. This year marks the 125th since Canada received its first recorded Ukrainian immigrants. Canada was still a very young nation at that time, with so many possibilities, so many opportunities. So Canada must have shone like a beacon to people looking to start a new life, to take some of those opportunities for themselves, to use them to build a future for their families and future generations, and to strengthen their new country. That call was heard halfway across the world in Ukraine, and the first of many settlers began their journey across the seas to the young nation. We have been a better country for it every day since.

The relationship between Canada and Ukraine has always been a special one. Canada has the third-largest population of people of Ukrainian heritage in the world. There are over a million and a quarter people of Ukrainian descent in Canada, and the impact they have had on our country seems even larger than that. The friendship between Canada and Ukraine goes back to even before Ukraine declared its independence, in 1991, and this is in part thanks to the vibrant and local community of Ukrainian Canadians, that have already made their homes here.

As a result of that friendship between us, the understanding built by living with Ukrainian neighbourhoods and participating in Ukrainian culture, Canada was among the first nations to recognize Ukraine as an independent nation and the first nation to do so in the western world, Mr. Speaker. I think a large part of the reason Canada has long been a friend of Ukraine is that Ukrainians have long been good friends to Canada. They have been good neighbours, leaders of business, academics, dedicated public servants. Lord knows Ukrainians work hard.

We in the PC caucus are especially aware of the talent and dedication of Ukrainian Canadians in public life as we have had the pleasure of serving side by side with so many of them. We know that the Ukrainian community is very passionate about giving back and committed to being leaders in their community. That is especially true here in Alberta, where so many of our towns and cities were founded and built by people of Ukrainian heritage.

Because of this, Alberta has enjoyed the continued presence of a very large and passionate Ukrainian community.

Outside of Ontario, Alberta has the largest community of Ukrainian Canadians in Canada, and this is certainly not a recent development. Ukrainian communities were here before Alberta even became a province. The first settlers from Ukraine in Alberta shared the same entrepreneurial, frontier spirit that defines us as a province, and in this agricultural land of plenty called Alberta, Ukrainians know exactly what to do with that. Very effective and skilled farmers. The resilience and perseverance they showed mirrored the traits that are most prized by Albertans. There are many Albertans today that have come from other provinces and countries and who can empathize with the challenges that those early settlers faced.

Like many immigrants, they didn't always receive the warmest welcome on their arrival. It is indeed likely that many early Ukrainian immigrants faced discrimination in one form or another – no, it's not likely; it happened – but that prejudice was met with the same determination that carried them across an ocean, the determination to find and build their new home in Alberta. As they built their homes, built new communities, and shared their culture, they began to build Alberta side by side with other communities, and they found acceptance here in Alberta by demonstrating that one trait that Albertans respect above all others, hard work. It is partly their example that Albertans draw from today when we say that it doesn't matter where you come from or what you look like as long as you're willing to contribute.

It's impossible to tell the story of Alberta without telling the story of Ukrainian heritage, and that is what we are gathered here today to do. We have come together as Alberta legislators to designate September 7 as Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day. This is an important step in formally recognizing the impact Ukrainian Canadians have made in our province. Just as Canada stood up and recognized Ukraine as an independent nation, we stand up today in Alberta and recognize Ukrainian Canadians as an integral part of our province.

Make no mistake. It is vitally important that we have days like these to celebrate the heritage of Alberta's many diverse communities. It's important that along with recognizing the terrific hardships that these groups have endured like the Holodomor and the aggression Ukraine is dealing with today, we also recognize the good, that we take time to acknowledge the contributions from the sons and daughters of Ukraine that they make even today in our country and in our province. We celebrate that we are a better, richer, more diverse place when it comes to new communities, one with better food and, in some cases, better music, and we recognize the value and importance of that Ukrainian heritage in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very glad to speak to this bill today. I'm happy to be able to do my small part to mark this day of recognition. To all our assembled guests, the leaders and bright stars of the Ukrainian community, and to my Ukrainian friends and colleagues: thank you. It's an honour to be part of this today, and it's about time.

The Speaker: Hon. members, thank you for your support. You may have noticed that I've been passing on 29(2)(a), but believe that I do so on behalf of the House.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. It's my great honour to take a few minutes and tell you a little bit about my family history. We don't often get a chance to do that in this environment and particularly on *Hansard*. I feel very honoured.

As a fourth-generation Ukrainian Albertan I want to say thank you to my great-great-grandparents William, Rose, Alexander, and Anna, who came here as courageous young adults, independent of their parents, to homestead. Before that, they had to make money in Edmonton, and they did. It was William who moved out to what was called Crippsdale at the time, originally – I think it's the Thorhild area now – and started the homestead. Rose, when she was ready, married him and followed thereafter. They had many children, who passed along, I think, those same skills of determination and hard work.

I have to say that my grandmother, who was one of eight children, was not only proud that she was able to provide for herself, but she was so proud that even though she didn't have an opportunity to complete her schooling, her younger siblings did. So many families took that sacrifice of staying on the farm and generating money to be able to support one another.

I think that it was at Easter time when we'd stop and we'd divide the one hard-boiled egg into as many pieces as there were mouths sitting around the table. We talked about Christ, of course. Khrystos voskres. The response was about: indeed he has risen. Voistynu voskres. We'd talk about that unity that brings us together and that when there are many mouths to feed, we take the time to be grateful for what we have, acknowledge those around who need, and find a way to share the prosperity. I think that one symbol, even though it was only once a year that we'd stop and divide that egg into equal parts, making sure that everyone had yolk and everyone had white, was an example of the kind of sacrifice that so many of those who homesteaded made.

3:30

William and Rose had a neighbour Alexander, who was a bachelor, and he heard about this lovely other lady, who lived over by Legal, whose husband had died the year before. She came over very young as well, married, and was clearing the land when her husband died, probably of the flu. It happened then far more regularly than it does now, of course. We're very lucky to have the strong public health care system that we do here in Alberta. She was already with child. She continued to clear the land on her own. She made it through that first winter. She planted her crop, and when Alexander said, "Would you like to marry?" she said, "Sure, but you have to come to my place because there's no way after all this hard work that I'm going to leave here and go to yours." I'm very proud that I still have cousin Isidore, his wife, Maria, and their three daughters living on that original homestead.

I think that we often talk about the great strides that women have made, and they have been making them for 125 years. They've been making them for far more than that in this province when you look back at the indigenous cultures as well. It's some of those feisty feminist roots, I think, that helped me, through the perseverance of my baba, who was widowed at a very young age, to continue to acknowledge where we've come from and where we're going.

To my nephews, Maxwell and Blake: I'm so glad that we still have the homestead in our family. I hope that they will get to spend some time there in the years to come.

Thank you to my colleagues, particularly the minister for economic development and the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and giving us the chance to acknowledge the rich tapestry that is Alberta.

Thank you again.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister. If you'll allow me a comment to say that we all share so much. If we're not to know where we're going, it's important to know where we have been.

The minister – excuse me. The Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, especially for the appointment. It is indeed my honour and pleasure to speak today to Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. I also will be talking a little bit about my family, and I hope not to cry.

I'll just start with some history. The first officially recorded arrival of Ukrainian immigrants in Canada was in 1891 by two individuals, Ivan Pylypiw and Wasyl Eleniak, or Elaniak, as it's said up in our area of the woods there. While the first recorded arrivals of Ukrainians to Canada were relatively recent, I understand that they're thought by some to have started as early as the late 1700s. Ukrainian immigrants arrived as farmers and factory workers looking for a new life, and the settlers began to move west to set up homesteads. Since that time we've seen over 1 million immigrants, making people of Ukrainian descent the ninth-largest ethnic group in Canada.

I'd like to acknowledge my family and my wife's family, if I might. My great-grandparents, Frederick Krawchuk, originally Krevchenko – their name was changed when they arrived in Canada – and his wife, Olena Harbarenko, and their three children, Neda, my grandmother Minnie Hanson, and Uncle Paul arrived in Canada in 1910.

My wife, Donna's, great-great-grandparents John Kossowan and his wife, Marie Gumulik, arrived in May of 1889 with six children. Now every three years we hold a family reunion for the Kossowan clan, as they call it. There's upwards of 200 people, and they figure that that's about 50 per cent, maybe, of the descendants of that. They ended up with my wife's grandparents having 10 children of their own, so the family really expanded.

Her other grandparents, John Starosielski and wife Anna Onushko, and family arrived in 1929. Donna's grandfather Petro Labant also arrived 1928 and married into the Starosielski family, so that's where the connection is. We're very proud of them and very, very happy, when I look at some of the dates when these people emigrated to Canada, that they missed the genocide of Holodomor by a couple of years. You know, without them having the courage to leave at that time, my wife possibly wouldn't be here.

Ukrainian people are very proud of their heritage, their customs, and their traditions. They've been diligent in preserving their language and customs here in Alberta for well over a hundred years. My wife and I are both very proud to have been part of a Ukrainian dance group called Veselka, that we actually helped incorporate at its inception, in 1983, and we danced with them until we left the city in 1994. We're proud to say that the group is still going strong today, 33 years after it began. Being members of this group gave us many great opportunities to learn more about our heritage, traditional costumes, customs, and, above all, dance. Traditional Ukrainian dance is very vigorous, and as I age, I'm quite often reminded of my participation.

The Ukrainian people are very hard-working and devoted to family, devoted to their traditions and their way of life, and I'm very proud of my connection to the people of Ukrainian heritage, that have contributed to making Alberta the best place to raise a family in this world.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this year not only marks the 125th anniversary of the first settlers arriving in Alberta from Ukraine but also marks the 25th anniversary of Ukrainian independence as well as the 40th anniversary of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta, I

couldn't be more honoured to stand here and speak in support of Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act.

Ukrainians have been a significant piece of the Alberta mosaic since the late 1800s. The mass immigration of Ukrainians to the west served as a catalyst for the formation of the province and its rapid development in the years to come. In the 1890s Canada promoted settlement of the prairies by allowing them to claim a quarter section of land for farming at a fee of \$10. The dream of owning land and access to forest products attracted thousands of western Ukrainians who could raise the \$150 needed to pay for train and boat passage. Whole families and the greater part of many villages joined this emigration, settling in western Canada. In Alberta Ukrainian immigrants settled predominantly northeast of Edmonton, which would later be known as the Ukrainian bloc settlement in east-central Alberta.

We have benefited in innumerable ways from the countless contributions of these settlers and their descendants. Many aspects of our lives have been influenced, including academia and the arts, as is shown by the numerous Ukrainian dance groups for all ages in our constituencies such as my own in Stony Plain, where the Parkland Ukrainian Dancers Society was originally founded, in November 1976, when Luba Eshenko, a Ukrainian Shumka dancer, began instructing a small group of 10 dancers on a trial basis. The course was sponsored by the multicultural centre and Stony Plain's recreation department and soon became known as the Stony Plain Ukrainian Dancers. They danced at several schools, the nursing home, Farmers' Days parade, and at the multicultural centre. Within two years the club grew to 41 dancers. Luba's brother Toby, a parent and former Shumka dancer, managed the group while Luba taught with Rodney Klimchuk, a fellow Shumka dancer.

Parkland Ukrainian dancers have performed at many events throughout Alberta, western Canada, and far beyond. Some of the highlights have included the opening and closing ceremonies for the Alberta Summer Games festival in '88; Canada Day celebrations at the Valley Zoo; Oktoberfest in Kimberley, B.C.; Malanka at the Jasper Park Lodge; and many of the banquets and award ceremonies in our own region, as well, Disneyland. Every year the Parkland Ukrainian Dancers Society hosts Malanka in honour of Ukrainian new year. This fun family dinner, performance, and dance is an event that people from all over our community look forward to.

The Ukrainian settlers and their descendants were also very influential in the education of our children here in Alberta as Ukrainian language has been taught in our schools since 1956 and instruction in Ukrainian was available since 1974.

Civil society in Alberta: many of the Ukrainian settlers and their descendants were strong proponents of the labour movement here in Alberta. Government, industry, economic advancement, and the prosperity of our province: we owe much to the hard work of those who came before us and continue to remain the backbone of communities across Alberta.

3:40

Alberta is where many of the earliest Ukrainian religious and cultural institutions were founded, organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council; the Canada Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, Alberta chapter; and the Advisory Council on Alberta-Ukraine Relations, which was established by the government in Alberta in 2000 to promote and continue to integrate Ukrainian culture while encouraging Alberta-Ukraine relations.

Once the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement comes into force, it will help build lines of commerce and strengthen supply chains between the two jurisdictions. As an important trade partner of

Alberta Ukraine imports machinery, iron or steel products, meat, and animal feed.

The settlers from Ukraine embraced Alberta, and we are so blessed that they chose Canada, enriching us with their culture and being an integral part of our history.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much. It's a tremendous honour here to speak to this bill. I want to offer a warm welcome to all of the distinguished guests who have joined us here today in the galleries, especially Ambassador Shevchenko, Mr. Speaker, and Olesia Luciw-Andryjowycz. I practised that. I was going to get it right. My sincere apologies, Olesia.

In 1924 three brothers left western Ukraine destined for Canada, followed four years later by their sister, her husband, and two young children, who were a four-year-old boy and a one-year-old girl. They travelled by ox cart through Poland, France, and Germany in a small, rickety boat across the English Channel and then via transatlantic crossing, third class, from Southampton, England, to Quebec City. They boarded a train in Quebec City, travelled across Canada to southeastern Saskatchewan. They had \$10 in their pockets, and that meant that the four-year-old had to rely on the kindness of strangers on the train for some of his meals.

Now, they worked hard for 24 years as tenants of their relatives, and they moved no less than 18 times in those 24 years. They even spent parts of one winter in a granary. Now, they saved their money, and they eventually purchased their own land. In time their family grew to eight children. The sixth of those eight children is my mother, born Dee Anne Warnyca.

Now, this, I think, is a very typical Ukrainian-Canadian story. It is a real honour to honour the tremendous contribution of Ukrainian Canadians over the past 125 years. And if we've accomplished this much to this point, I can't imagine what we're going to accomplish in the next 125 years.

My family left Ukraine because they saw storm clouds on the horizon, and those storm clouds, sadly, came true in the form of Holodomor. We still have relatives in Ukraine; in fact, both my mother and my brother have been to visit the village, and I hope to go one day as well. I often reflect on how different our lives would be had my relatives not made that difficult choice to leave their family, leave home, and trek across the oceans to seek a better life in Canada.

Once in Canada those hardships, sadly, didn't end. They were not limited to just breaking the land, living in those harsh conditions. They were subject to systematic racism and exclusion, including internment during the First World War. Even to this very day my mother will hesitantly tell stories of name-calling and, sadly, much worse at school. But I have to say that my mom is the strongest and most resilient person I know.

Without question the defining characteristics of Ukrainian Canadians are that perseverance through difficult times, hard work, and a commitment to building community, a commitment to family. Now, the contribution Ukrainian Canadians have made to Alberta's economy, our educational system, agriculture, and especially the cultural fabric of this province forms such an integral part of what makes Alberta such a great place to live. That entrepreneurial, can-do spirit that motivated people to seek a better life 125 years ago, I'm happy to report, is alive and well today. So it is an honour to be one of the many Ukrainian Canadians to serve in this Assembly and to be able to recognize the remarkable history and contribution of

Ukrainian Canadians that have helped make Alberta what it is today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, again, to those who have joined us today. I really do enjoy hearing all the comments from my colleagues in the Assembly.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure for me and an honour for me to rise today on Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. I'd like to welcome as well the many guests that we have in the galleries to observe the debate today.

As I've shared with this Assembly before, I am of German descent, but my mother was born in Ukraine and lived there for roughly the first 20 years of her life, survived the Holodomor, and also survived the taking away, the *verschleppt*, of my grandfather in 1936, which is only one of the many things that Ukrainians both here and in Ukraine have survived. The resilience and perseverance of Ukrainians and those who lived in Ukraine is well known worldwide, and I think it has served them well here in Canada as well.

While my mother was of German descent, she could speak Ukrainian, though, which came in very handy because whenever my dad acted up, she would always swear at him in Ukrainian. It was also great because I got to eat not only German food but Ukrainian food, so I was raised with a love of *pyrohy* and *holubtsi*, but I have to admit that I just detest *borscht*. [interjections] It's a sad fact, especially living in east-central Alberta, which, as we sometimes call it, is that land beyond the garlic curtain.

In east-central Alberta, of course, we have many communities largely populated with people of Ukrainian descent, and I have many of those in the constituency of Vermilion-Lloydminster. They don't necessarily have Ukrainian names. Places like Innisfree and Clandonald aren't really Ukrainian names, but I can tell you that there are a lot more people of Ukrainian descent than of Scottish descent living in those very Scottish-sounding places. You know, the one thing that I'll say about the Ukrainian contribution to life in Alberta – and it's been said by many other members – is that it's been to every single aspect of life in Alberta, whether it's agriculture or health care or education, the contribution to our cultural fabric, and the contribution to public service.

It's that area that I really want to focus on today because many of our former colleagues, some of whom are here in the gallery, you know, certainly have taken up that torch, but it started many, many years ago. Michael Luchkovich was the first MP ever elected in Canada of Ukrainian descent, and he was elected in 1926. Now, at that time Ukrainians in Canada were still fighting against a lot of the kind of discrimination against Ukrainian immigrants, yet he bravely became the MP for Vegreville, serving and representing his constituents in Ottawa.

Appropriately, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has named the Michael Luchkovich award in his honour to honour persons of Ukrainian descent who have served in public service in various facets with honour. I am so very proud of three of my former colleagues – former Speaker Ken Kowalski, former Premier Ed Stelmach, and former Speaker Gene Zwozdesky – all of whom have been named recipients of this most prestigious award.

The other part of that whole thing, you know, of the nature of being Ukrainian – and I think part of it comes from the overcoming of some of the obstacles and difficulties that Ukrainians had – is this tremendous sense of humour. In fact, Mr. Speaker, you'll be interested to know that another former member of the Legislature of Ukrainian descent decided that perhaps Speaker Zwozdesky, who used to be the artistic director for the Shumka Dancers, should

decide points of privilege and order by having the combatants do a quick hopak in the middle of the hall. We could certainly save a lot of time and a whole lot of checking through precedents.

3:50

Mr. Speaker, all kidding aside, though, I think we can all agree that the contribution of Ukrainian Canadians to life in Alberta and indeed to life in Canada is immeasurable. It has provided an inspiration to other immigrant groups that have come to this country because, you know, there is a little bit of competition and a little bit of rivalry. I can even say as a German Canadian: well, if the Ukrainians can do it, surely to God the Germans can do it, too.

It is something that we should all as Albertans be proud of, whether we share a Ukrainian background or not. In many ways, because of the way Ukrainians have become a part of our province, they have taken part in so many aspects of our life here in Alberta. We are proud of that, we honour that, and we thank them for that. So to all of our guests in the gallery, to Ambassador Shevchenko and others: we thank you for your contributions, and we are so pleased to support this act on behalf of all Albertans.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Allow me to say to all of you that it's a privilege to hear these stories. It is really quite rewarding. And I can't believe he doesn't like borscht.

The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill 26, and I am honoured to be able to do so. I'm afraid, though, that I do have some bad news for members. In fact, we've been pre-empted in our proclamation by the town of Smoky Lake, who on July 29 of this year proclaimed It's Fun to Be Ukrainian Day, celebrating 125 years of Ukrainian settlement in Canada.

I'm indeed proud to represent a part of the province that has many communities that were either originally founded by Ukrainian settlers or where they had a preponderance of settlers coming from there. Boyle, which I'm happy to call home and, with apologies to Mundare, has the best homemade Ukrainian sausage in the province, Grassland, Redwater, Smoky Lake, Radway, Waskatenau are all communities with strong Ukrainian roots and a continuing Ukrainian presence that continues to enrich our region to the present day.

Although I'm not of Ukrainian descent myself, no one from northeastern Alberta is untouched by Ukrainian-Canadian culture, and indeed few are not connected to it in more direct and personal ways. Two of my brothers-in-law, in fact, are of Ukrainian heritage and, thus, so are many of my nieces and nephews, and I am blessed to have them as family.

It is indeed hard to imagine what life would be like in northeastern Alberta without the strong Ukrainian influence. Try to imagine a wedding or community dinner without Ukrainian food. Try to imagine a community celebration without the beauty of Ukrainian dance. In fact, try to imagine Alberta culture without the contributions of Ukrainian-Canadian musicians, writers, poets, and artists. Try to imagine our political culture without the strong commitment to collective action and social justice that Ukrainian faiths and political beliefs brought to the table. Ukrainian Canadians helped to build our economy and our culture and are an integral part of the rich multicultural tapestry that makes our shared culture so unique in the world and so robust. By celebrating Ukrainian-Canadian heritage, we are celebrating our own collective heritage.

Finally, the connection with our Ukrainian-Canadian community continues to enrich our province to the present day. In fact, Smoky Lake is twinned with a community in Ukraine and through this connection hopes to keep Ukrainian culture vibrant and living in Smoky Lake county while sharing Albertan technology and expertise with our new friends in Ukraine. By working together, Alberta and Ukraine can make both of our peoples richer for it. Canada and indeed the world benefit from our continued collaboration.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise on this occasion to speak in favour of Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. While not of Ukrainian descent myself, our family has the distinct pleasure of being close friends with some recent Ukrainian immigrants that have become like family. Yuriy and Lena and now Canadian-born Destina are new to Canada and are sitting here today watching these historic proceedings. Lena likes to refer to my wife as her Canadian grandma, and we couldn't be prouder of that title.

I would like to talk a bit about the history of Ukrainian immigration on this 125th anniversary of the first immigration to Canada. Ukrainians have been a significant piece of the Alberta mosaic since the late 1800s. The mass immigration of Ukrainians to the west served as a catalyst for the formation of our great province, and it helped accelerate its development in the years to come. The dream of owning land and access to the vast forest products attracted thousands of western Canadians who could raise the money needed to pay train and boat passage. It's my understanding that whole families and the greater part of many villages joined this immigration, settling in western Canada.

By 1914 more than 250,000 Ukrainians made their home in Alberta. Most of them were involved in crop farming, a lifestyle I share with them. While the benefit from this immigration was a great boon to our rural communities, it was also the post World War II immigrants that found their way to Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge. These folks helped expand our urban centres, populating and sharing their culture within our cities, making Edmonton the largest concentration of Ukrainians in Alberta.

Today about every fifth Albertan can claim Ukrainian ancestry, making our province home to one of the largest Ukrainian communities outside of Ukraine. Ukrainian culture has become so ingrained in Alberta that I doubt you could attend any wedding or function in Alberta and not find Ukrainian food staples right alongside Alberta beef on the menu.

I will leave you with this quote, found from a recent article quoting the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council:

Ukrainians have touched upon everybody's lives... As Ukrainians we are farmers, we're agriculturalists, we're teachers, we're nurses, we're doctors. We are Canadian. We have integrated into the Canadian fabric, but we're also a very strong fabric on our own.

As I consider my new friends from the Ukraine, I couldn't agree more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to apologize in advance for any mispronunciations.

I'm pleased to speak in favour of Bill 26, Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. Like most Albertans, I've been

influenced by the Ukrainian-Canadian community, and the first thing that comes to mind is the food. Humanity's most basic needs include food, and being able to go to the grocery store and buy locally made Cheemo perogies is one of the many advantages of living in multicultural Alberta.

A memory from growing up in northern Alberta is visiting the giant pysanka in Vegreville, and I'm sure many of my fellow Albertans have old Polaroids of themselves in goofy poses underneath it. I was happy to tell an audience in London, England, about the world's largest Easter egg when I presented at PechaKucha earlier this year.

I'd also like to acknowledge Cobblestone, here in Edmonton, for supplying the beautiful shirts that many members are wearing today and to thank the MLA for Edmonton-McClung for arranging for them.

I've been fortunate enough to attend some of the celebrations of the Ukrainian-Canadian community in Calgary this year. Most recently I attended the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian pioneers in Canada and the 25th anniversary of Ukraine's independence gala. After the world-class Ukrainian dance performers, the keynote speaker was Ambassador Shevchenko, who joins us here today. The Ukraine and Canada's Ukrainian community are very fortunate to have such an accomplished and passionate advocate. From his academic achievements to his remarkable career in media to his distinguished service in politics, Ambassador Shevchenko draws on his remarkable achievements in his commitment to furthering the interests of his country and his community. Thank you to the Ukrainian-Canadian community for your contributions to Alberta's and Canada's culture, government, and prosperity.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the contribution and impact of the Ukrainian-Canadian community are myriad, and I'm pleased to add my voice to those supporting the Alberta Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act.

4:00

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Member for Calgary-West.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and greetings to all of our distinguished guests in the gallery here today. I am grateful for the chance to stand up today and speak to this bill. While I could certainly go on about the many, many accomplishments and contributions that have been made to our province and our country by the Ukrainian community, my remarks are more on a personal level, like many of you.

For me, a day like today, where we celebrate the heritage of Ukrainian Canadians, has a special meaning for me. I, like many Albertans, have my own piece of Ukrainian heritage. That heritage comes to me from my mother's side of the family. It's my great-grandparents – it goes back to them – a great-grandmother of mine, who I did know growing up, who came here in the early 1900s, and my great-grandfather, who came here to work as a coal miner, with the proud heritage, of course, in coal mining here in Alberta.

I sit here and I listen to all these wonderful speeches outlining the impact that Ukrainian Canadians have had on this country and this province, and I'm not at all surprised because all I have to do is think of my great-grandfather and my great-grandmother, who travelled so far from their home with so much uncertainty about what they were going to find here in this new land. I think that's something that occasionally gets lost when we talk about those early immigrants from Ukraine, and that is uncertainty. We tend to forget that the wealth of information that we have about other countries when we travel is relatively new, that they couldn't simply look up Canada online and see pages of information.

Instead, they might have a few photographs, letters, or perhaps – perhaps – as time went on, a phone call may have occurred. With just that information they would undertake this incredible journey, cross over oceans and continents in search of the opportunity to build a better future.

So, again, when I hear the lists of accomplishments, the numbers of leading public figures, the communities and legacies that have been built, I am simply not surprised because the strength required to leave everything you've ever known and travel so far in search of an opportunity defies explanation, and if you place that strength together with the freedom and opportunity that they found in Canada, in Alberta, there is simply no limit to what could be achieved.

But going back to my great-grandparents, they came here, they worked hard, and they built a life. They occupy my thoughts on a day that I don't think they would have been able to conceive back then, that one of their descendants might be sitting in a Legislature where a bill is going to be passed in honour of and to recognize the impact that they had on this community and on this province. So as much as Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day is about Ukrainian communities at large, for me it is about one man and one woman who took a chance to make better lives for themselves and their family, because Alberta as we know it wouldn't be here without our Ukrainian community, and I wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for my grandparents.

With that in mind, my thanks go to our assembled guests, to our incredible Ukrainian community in this province, those people who came here to build a better life. I thank you, all. God bless.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure as well to stand up and support this bill today. Welcome to our honoured guests.

When I first moved to Fairview many years ago, I was delighted as a Scottish-Canadian girl to find out there was an area called Highland Park just west of the town. To my surprise with Highland Park, there's not a Scottish person lives in it. It, in fact, is one of the many Ukrainian settlements in our area, and some of the first people of Ukrainian descent to come to Canada and some of the very best farmers in our area live in that and many other areas.

The first Ukrainian food I ever had was when I was in Fairview. I had never had a perogy or a cabbage roll before, and now I can't think of life without having those at many of our community events. We, too, enjoy in our area many Ukrainian dance groups, and some of them are multigenerational. There are grandparents, parents, and children all learning and passing on the culture of the dance. To fund raise, many times these groups cater, and in fact then we get to enjoy Ukrainian food again and again. In fact, it's a disappointment in our area if you go to a wedding or an event and there isn't Ukrainian food, which is a rarity.

I, too, have had the pleasure of hearing some of the stories of our pioneer people who came, the Ukrainians who came, and lived in granaries, as was described earlier. One lady in our community lived in a granary for two years. They raised two children in that granary until they were able to build their house and establish their farm. Again, when we talk of strong women, my goodness, she was one of the strongest women I've ever met.

I have a friend who is from Andrew, Alberta, who used to import up to Fairview. She had a Mundare sausage connection and would share that with all of us. In her words, that's the best sausage around.

I was often envious of people who had that Ukrainian connection because I don't in my family, but I got my wish four years ago, when my daughter-in-law, Andrea Kotylak, married my son. Her family came in the 1900s. They were one of the first, and I believe – and I was trying to text her to see if it's true – she's related to the Stelmachs. They certainly settled in that area. I see the pride in her in talking about things she's learned from her baba, and she and her dad to this day prepare Ukrainian food, the 12 dishes, the night before Christmas. To our delight, we have our own little Ukrainian cook in the family now, and I hope one day that I'll get to learn from her how to make borscht. Her mother makes the best borscht I've ever had.

I look forward to us passing this bill because then on September 7 we'll have another reason to celebrate with my daughter-in-law and have one more reason to eat Ukrainian food. Thank you.

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

Mr. Barnes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the privilege of being able to speak in favour of this bill, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act, and recognize the significant and tremendous contribution of Ukrainian Canadians to the fabric of our society here in Alberta. I'd like to take a brief moment to acknowledge the dignitaries and guests here in the gallery today and to thank them for coming out to support this.

I've heard my colleagues here recognize the many unique connections that we have to the Ukraine to this day: the shared culture, the partnerships we have fostered, and, of course, the demographics of our province, where approximately 1 in 5 Albertans can trace their family tree back to Ukrainian roots. But on this 125th anniversary of the first Ukrainian settlers to this land I'd like to take my focus back to the history.

There is a rich and fascinating story to tell about how we became the province we are today, and our Ukrainian heritage forms a large part of that. We enjoy many blessings and comforts and conveniences today, but it's always good for a sense of perspective to respect the past. One of my favourite stories comes from an elderly gentleman in my constituency who recounted how his family first arrived in the first half of the 20th century, just shortly after the railway was built. Mr. Speaker, his family got off a train and promptly walked 20 miles to their new, empty plot of land, which they had never seen before.

4:10

Of course, there was no Google Maps or GPS or anything we now take for granted. They came anyway, and they did so for the promise of peace, prosperity, and freedom in Alberta. They also carried with them all of their belongings and their entire young family, including a newborn baby. Mr. Speaker, that newborn baby was my constituent.

Now, I know that a great deal of Ukrainian immigration was focused on the north end of Alberta, a little more so than in my home riding in the southeast, but I'm absolutely sure that most of these people of Ukrainian heritage have a story like this in their lineage, Mr. Speaker, a story of arriving with little and building a lasting legacy for all of Alberta. In some cases entire communities were moved from the Ukraine to Alberta, with new towns emerging almost instantaneously.

Of course, unfortunately, there were hardships along the way. The opportunity that the land provided came with many challenges and difficulties in the cold, untamed wilderness. There were some very heartbreaking and tragic stories from this time in history as well. It is with sadness that I say that many settlers were not as

fortunate as my constituent and his family. But, Mr. Speaker, these bonds, the bonds of community that sustained the Ukrainian settlers, are a source of continual inspiration for all of Alberta today. Our early communities thrived because of these strong bonds and the understanding that these challenges could be overcome together.

All told, the story of our Ukrainian heritage is a story of hope and optimism, of struggle and hardship but of resilience and strength also. Much in our world has changed in 125 years, but the lessons of the past continue to guide us today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Ukrainian community and all Ukrainians for the heritage that is such an important part of Alberta today. I look forward to voting in favour of this bill, recognizing this part of Alberta's unique heritage.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to have Ukrainian roots on my maternal side. My grandfather, Sergi Mike Draginda, and my grandmother, Anna Oleniuk, came from Bukovina, Austria, as teenagers more than a hundred years ago. Shortly after getting married, they moved to southern Alberta, where my grandfather worked for a while in the mines in Drumheller, and they lived in the Lethbridge area. But as soon as they had earned a little bit of money, they moved and got a farm near Hairy Hill, where they settled and raised their five children: Donna, Dave, Bill, Renee, and my mom, Mary. They had some really tough times, of course, in those early years, and they really set the standard for hard work. I'm proud to say that Draginda family members have maintained that standard, and they've contributed to this province as teachers, musicians, artists, engineers, nurses, doctors, even politicians.

One regret I have is that I never did learn to speak Ukrainian. I think part of that was that they were so focused on learning English and adapting to their new country that they really didn't see it as a priority to teach us. My grandfather's most treasured possession was a very tattered, well-worn English dictionary, and he used that book every day to learn more English and look up new words that he learned. But I think they also didn't teach us Ukrainian because that gave the adults a way to speak about private things without us kids understanding.

One thing I did learn about the culture, though, was the food – it was a good part – and it's something that I've been proud to pass on to my children and grandchildren. I've taught them all how to make *pedaheh*, *borscht*, *holopchi*, and *nachynka*. Even the littlest ones get to sit around the table and squeeze dough together.

It's something that I think is really important, when we have this bill, because it does help to shine a light on the history and the heritage of Ukrainians like my family. By having this recognition, we are going to have an opportunity for all of us to learn more about Ukrainian culture and to celebrate this together.

I'm really pleased that this was brought forward, and I thank the minister and thank all of you.

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

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a first-generation new Canadian and an oil and gas professional I rise to also add my voice in support of making September 7 Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day. We all know how Ukrainians in Alberta have contributed to the development of the energy industry in Alberta. My career before being elected was in the energy industry in Calgary, where there are

thousands of Ukrainians. That's where I'll focus my comments today.

Ukrainians in Alberta joined the energy sector once the industry got fully under way in 1947 with the discovery of Leduc No. 1. It's the Ukrainian spirit of community, dedication to innovation, and focus on the strength of our families that has helped make our province one of the best places in the world. I saw it during my time as an engineer with Suncor as I travelled across the province. Our Ukrainian people and their descendants have defined Alberta and Alberta culture and our industries for generations.

As Albertans our energy sector has much to share with modern Ukraine. Ukraine's proven oil resources are 400 million barrels. That's relatively small compared to Alberta's reserves. It is the natural gas that has a lot more potential. Ukraine is believed to have 29 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and the largest shale gas deposits in Europe. So fracking, which has been used in Alberta for 50 years, will bring the gas on stream. Low-cost, plentiful natural gas will take Ukraine off energy dependence on its neighbours. Maybe Ukraine could even become an energy exporter.

I believe that with Alberta's incredible technology and workers we have a chance and an opportunity to share our expertise with Ukraine in the years ahead. It will take work and dedication. It will also mean that Albertans and all Canadians continue to stand with Ukraine and Ukrainians, who to this day are still fighting for their freedom. Canada is not a silent actor. With so many citizens of Ukrainian descent Canada will be a significant actor with Ukraine as the country reforms and moves forward.

The Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement was signed on July 11 this year, creating new opportunities for businesses in both countries. Free trade has been a boon to Canada since the signing of the original Canada-United States free trade agreement in 1989 and later augmented by NAFTA in 1993. The same can be true of Ukraine. Just as Ukrainian Albertans have worked so hard and developed such skills to develop Alberta's natural resources and make it strong and free and independent, we need to encourage the same thing in Ukraine.

Today's events have their roots in history, and that history needs to be celebrated. That's why I'm pleased to support Bill 26 to declare September 7 Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day. Mr. Speaker, I also enjoy vegetarian perogies.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any other members who wish to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: I've just got a few things to say, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I rise to speak in support of Bill 26, Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. As with a number of other speakers, I don't have Ukrainian heritage myself, but I've had the opportunity to share in this rich culture in a number of ways. I went to school in northeast Edmonton, and at the time I was in school there, there was a very large Ukrainian population. One of the results was that when we got to junior high, instead of the usual things that you might learn in your standard home ec class, we learned how to make cabbage rolls and perogies, and it was wonderful. So when we left junior high, everybody knew how to cook good, basic, solid meals. We went on from there.

4:20

Later on as an adult I taught in the Parkland school division, and again there was a large Ukrainian population. What I found, to my delight, is that there were many, many people quite happy to continue cooking the traditional dishes for every social occasion.

We had a few custodial staff that everybody worked hard to keep very happy and not overworked because as a special treat they would make us a meal. So there are a lot of linkages there and a lot of benefits.

I was thinking when I was listening to people today that it was so common where we were living for people to cook Ukrainian food as part of meals and celebrations, and my children were grown up before they discovered that not everyone in Canada had cabbage rolls and perogies at wedding receptions. This was unheard of to them.

Thank you to all the Ukrainian people and people of Ukrainian heritage for the wonderful gifts you've given us all. Thank you.

The Speaker: Any other members who wish to speak? I might need to look to experience to guide me.

Do you, Member for Edmonton-McClung, wish to speak?

I seek the guidance of the House. You will have heard the motion. Is there anyone who'd like to bring closure to the debate for second reading?

[Motion carried; Bill 26 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 26 Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act

The Chair: Are there any amendments, comments, or questions with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Mr. Smith: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to stand today to speak to Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. Like many of the people here, I'm sure that we've all understood and recognized that modern-day Alberta would be a very different place if it wasn't for those Albertans that have Ukrainian heritage. You know, I wish I could say that I did, but I can tell you that in one of the first classes that I ever taught, one of the students in my class was named Smithinski, so I don't know if that's sort of getting there or not, but I have hope.

You know, as a part of my past, as I look at the teaching side of my life, it was a pleasure to be able to bring to the attention of my students that we have a long history of immigration in this country, and it started, basically, after Canada became a nation, with Clifford Sifton, the minister of the interior, who was responsible for seeking out those that could help to open up the west in western Canada. Of course, like so many that came to the west, to the North-West Territories in the 1890s and, moving on, into the early 1900s, these individuals came seeking land, that quarter section for a homestead. Many of them came from the Austro-Hungarian area of Europe or the Ukraine, and they made their way to this foreign land that looked maybe familiar in some ways, and they had to try to carve out a living.

You know, I think that like so many of the early homesteaders, those that were of Ukrainian background realized very quickly that their neighbours often had to become their family, that when they came here, they were a long way from home. Like, I think, so much of the flavour of western Canada, we find that we want to maintain our traditions, our family traditions and our cultural traditions, but at the same time we embraced the families and the neighbours that

were around us regardless of where they came from, and it's created a really unique western Canada and Alberta.

The early Ukrainians came, and they tilled the fields. They created the property lines, and they built the roads and the infrastructure of this province. Today Ukrainian Canadians have continued to build this province in all of the areas of our economy, and we are just so grateful that they have come and become a part of the fabric of this great province. You know, every day that I drive back to my constituency, I see evidence of Ukrainian contributions to our province. I see the churches that dot my constituency, and every time I see them, the Ukrainian Catholic or the Ukrainian Orthodox churches with their iconic domes, I just feel at home. It's a part of who I am and a part of who we are as Albertans.

You know, modern-day Ukrainians in Alberta offer up some of Alberta's most notable tourist attractions. I know that as my wife and I have toured this province with our family, she has often wanted us to stop, like so many Canadians, at the various tourist attractions that dot this province. Whether it's the Glendon perogy or the Vegreville pysanka or the Mundare sausage, I think we have seen them all. As we've toured around Edmonton, we've been a part of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. I can remember some of the students in my classroom actually having jobs at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. We are just so blessed in this province to have access to this heritage, even if I can't claim it to be part of my own.

You know, those sites that we've been talking about here, while they provide opportunities to experience Ukrainian cultural heritage first-hand, there are things that I haven't experienced yet. I understand that there are cossacks from Vegreville, and while I know that this past New Year's I had the opportunity to watch one of the Ukrainian dance troupes in this great province, I'm beginning to think that perhaps my days of being able to try out Ukrainian dancing are pretty much over, and I'm not sure that my knees could really take it any longer. I know that my jaw dropped to the floor as I was probably no further than from you, Madam Chair, as these Ukrainian dancers were going across the floor and jumping to heights that I'm not sure I've ever been able to jump and landing in ways that look so graceful, that I will never be able to do any longer.

You know, I'm just so happy and so pleased that we've taken the time today to take a look at the Ukrainian heritage we have but also the vibrant Ukrainian community that's here in this province as we speak. It's everywhere we go. You know, every Sunday morning on CTV Two you can watch the show Kontakt, which showcases Ukrainian news from Ukraine. You can watch musical vignettes and dancing and crafts. Businesses are highlighted both in English and Ukrainian, and even the commercials are in Ukrainian.

4:30

In addition, there has been a Ukrainian folklore program at the University of Alberta since 1987. In my own field of education we are just so blessed to be able to have the Ukrainian language and cultural education in this province and to have had it since 1902. The first provincial curriculum for Ukrainian as a second language was introduced in 1956, and Ukrainian has been offered as a language of instruction in Alberta public schools since 1974.

The Alberta we know today would not be the same without so many of these Ukrainian institutions, without the landmarks that dot our country and our province, without the leaders, without the language, and without the culture. So let's join together and make September 7 the day to celebrate the arrival of the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada, in Western Canada, and in Alberta.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is definitely a great honour to be able to rise today and speak to Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. I must first thank the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for bringing forward Bill 26 and for all the hard work that was involved in advocating for this very long overdue recognition. As well, I would also thank the government for its swift action to support this piece of important legislation and for allowing me as well to bring the voices forward of my constituents in its creation.

Madam Chair, I'm not a descendant. I don't have any heritage that goes back to Ukraine. I guess the closest I can come to would be sort of nearby in Denmark, but I'm definitely very delighted to be able to represent a constituency that is made up of quite a few Albertans of Ukrainian heritage. Because of that I've had the privilege to attend many Ukrainian events, and I was even informed a little bit earlier that I've been blessed with a bit of a designation of an honorary Ukrainian. It's something that I will hold in very high regard going forward.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the arrival to Canada of the first settlers from Ukraine, and since that time Ukrainians and Albertans of Ukrainian heritage have made countless contributions to the province of Alberta in all aspects of our lives including academia, the arts, education, civil society, government, industry, economic development and prosperity, and I could probably continue to go on.

Ukrainian culture is simply an integral part of the Alberta culture. Their community, their spirit, and their many accomplishments can be felt across our province and for me personally in north Edmonton. I can't even begin to express the gratitude I have for the Ukrainian community and how they have welcomed me with open arms. And I must say, Madam Chair, that there is nothing like good Ukrainian perogies, something that I've been able to have a part of since I was even a boy and some family friends were Ukrainian, so I've enjoyed that very much.

Madam Chair, I would first of course like to thank the settlers who left their homeland in Ukraine to journey thousands of miles to a new country and to set up their lives right here. I would also like to recognize the many Ukrainians who through the last century and even up until today have chosen Alberta as their new home. Finally, I would like to thank all Albertans of Ukrainian heritage for keeping their vibrant culture alive and for sharing it not only with me but with all Albertans. To all my friends that are in the galleries today, I hope that Bill 26 serves as a small token of appreciation for everything that you have given us, including some really great perogies.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm very pleased to speak to Bill 26, Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. I, too, echo the sentiments that have been expressed before about the tremendous history and contributions of our Ukrainian Canadians. The premise of the bill, of course, is to recognize the 7th day of September each year, commencing in 2017, as Alberta Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day, the 125th anniversary of Canada's first recorded Ukrainian immigrants. Alberta shares a special connection with the people of Ukraine. Thousands of Albertans trace their roots back to Ukraine, and their community has been a strong and integral part of our democracy, both in Alberta and Canada at large.

Lured by the promise of land and a respite from troubles in Europe, Ukrainians first came to the prairies in the late 1800s. Many found Canada to be familiar and recognized in her landscape and

her peoples a second homeland. Settling predominantly northeast of Edmonton, more than 250,000 Ukrainians had immigrated to Alberta by 1914. That's an amazing – amazing – influx. The next few decades were difficult. Many were incarcerated as enemy aliens during the First World War, and then the Great Depression took a large toll on a community composed primarily of farmers. In the aftermath of the Second World War another wave of Ukrainians found homes in Canada, settling in the urban centres of Edmonton, Calgary, and predominantly Lethbridge.

The Ukrainian community has never forgotten their heritage, and one of their most treasured contributions to Alberta are the customs and traditions that now permeate our society. It never ceases to make me smile when at festivals across Alberta I see new Canadians from many different nations smiling and laughing and participating in the dances, food, and celebrations of Ukrainian forebears, some of whom are now my cousins in the Vermilion and Vegreville area.

It should not be said, though, that the Ukrainian-Alberta community's most important contributions are cultural. They're teachers, doctors, lawyers, judges, and, yes, even politicians. There are several right here in this Legislature who identify with their Ukrainian ancestry, one of whom I just met outside, former Speaker Zwodzesky, a former Liberal. [interjections] Very, very former.

An Hon. Member: But he got better. He got the cure.

Dr. Swann: Somebody gave him the cure. Yeah.

Of course, I would want to highlight one of our favourites of Ukrainian ancestry, Laurence Decore. Many of you might not know that he was president of the Ukrainian-Canadian professional and business federation as well as the mayor of Edmonton and the leader of the Alberta Liberal Party. During his time as chairman of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism he actually led a national lobby resulting in the constitutional change which acknowledged Canada's multicultural nature. He was also, as I said, leader of this illustrious Alberta Liberal Party.

I'm pleased that this government has brought forth this bill and heartedly endorse it. Ukrainian Albertans have contributed and continue to contribute immensely to our province and deserve all the recognitions we can bestow upon them.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, it's an honour for me to rise today in this Assembly to speak in favour of Bill 26, Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. As we all know, this bill will make September 7 an official day of celebration of the arrival of the first Ukrainians in Alberta in 1891 and will officially recognize 2016-2017 as the 125th year of Ukrainians in Alberta. Ukrainian people have played a crucial role in shaping the colourful tapestry of Alberta's culture and heritage.

In the 1890s Ukrainians immigrated en masse to Alberta for the promise of prosperity, freedom, and opportunity. The Ukrainian people, with their determination and hard work, turned tough quarters of unsettled soil into the prosperous farmland that we now see in our province today, and I can't imagine how tough that would be, to have to go with the plows that they used by hand and turn the soil like they did 125 years ago. It's amazing when I think about it. It is in large part because of their dedication to the land that our agricultural industry is now the second-greatest contributor to Alberta's economy.

4:40

But Ukrainian people didn't just contribute economically, although their contributions helped develop the province. They also brought their rich culture, traditions that can be seen today in Alberta and through various cultural centres, museums, choirs, dance troupes, and historical sites. Everywhere you look in Alberta, there are elements of Ukrainian culture that the early immigrants brought with them along the way across the Atlantic and the Canadian prairies and used to help to build the province that we now see today.

One in 5 Albertans can claim Ukrainian heritage, including many of my fellow caucus members. In fact, one of my colleagues shared with me his family's story about the great trials and triumphs of their family as they worked tirelessly to till soil riddled with rocks and trees, the trials of cutting hay by hand, clearing land one small patch at a time, and learning to grow foreign crops in a foreign land. They moved to a foreign country, far from any other settlements, where they did not know the language, how to farm the local land, or what their futures would hold. Life was hard and uncertain. They brought with them only hope for a better future. There was no end to the hindrances that Ukrainians faced in our province, yet they persevered and created homes and communities, all the while preserving their tradition, culture, and community.

I know that growing up in the province I was surrounded by the dynamic culture of the Ukraine, and I'm a better person for being exposed to it. Our Ukrainian ancestors' impact on this province is undeniable. They have helped to develop our industries, enrich our history, and shape our culture. They were pioneers of the west, and I could not agree more that their contributions should be honoured with this bill. I have boundless respect for the spirit and determination that encompasses their pioneering legacy and will always be grateful for the sacrifices that they have made to this province.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've very proud to rise today and speak in support of the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act and bring forward a few stories of my own family's immigration to this country. I know that my father never spoke English until he was about seven years old. He told a story often about his first day at school in a one-room school north of Thorhild, where they were taking attendance for the first time. His English wasn't all that good. The teacher would call out the names of the people who were there, and Mary would say: present; Steve: present; Mike: present. When it came to my father, Vladimir Dach, as he was then known – I later knew him, of course, as Walter Dach – he didn't want to be greedy, so he said: no, thank you. He always chuckled telling that particular story.

Lots of other stories abound about how my baba and gido first came to the country in 1913 on what was said to be the last boat that was allowed to leave the old country before the First World War broke out. They arrived here basically with nothing. In fact, they had gotten rights to a homestead, but they switched homesteads, and they ended up finally in the Thorhild area. I'll have to share stories with the Minister of Health and find out exactly what friendships might have happened between our relatives in the Thorhild area because I learned today that her relatives come from that area as well.

With that, my father's English did grow. He went to grade 7. That was the end of his schooling. The teacher gave him the option to go to dances or go to school, and he chose dancing, so that was the end of it in grade 7. The musical tradition amongst the Ukrainian

community is something that's still very, very alive today. Most families had somebody who played an instrument of some kind, and the dances and entertainment were those that they provided themselves. I know that my dad's brothers and, actually, one of his sisters played music and sang in a band, and they were called upon many times to perform at country-hall dances. It was probably one of the most fun times of my father's childhood, growing up in the Thorhild area.

One other thing I wanted to say before I forget. I wanted to ensure that our gratitude was expressed to Mr. Speaker for allowing us to wear our traditional Ukrainian shirts today, the men in the House, without wearing a tie as traditionally is the custom in the House. So our gratitude to Mr. Speaker for allowing us to do that today.

I also wanted to say thank you, I guess, is the basis of what I'm saying today, to my great-grandparents and grandparents for having the courage to make that big jump, get on a ship, and come to an unknown land, which sometimes was overpromised to them as being the land of milk and honey. If you look at CP Rail posters from that era or even Canadian government posters from that era, talking about what they'd find when they got to the Canadian prairie, they were a little bit hyperbolic, to say the least. Because when you get to the Canadian prairie in the middle of winter and you get dumped off a train and you're looking at all those trees and stumps that have to be removed and you don't know how you're going to get to them without tools, you realize the posters weren't telling the whole truth. But they did get those stumps and those trees moved and crops planted little by little, usually living in a sod hut and then maybe a log house later on.

I know of early Christmases that my father recounts, that a few peanuts in a pile of straw beside the wood stove was a luxury. That was really the only Christmas presents he ever remembers as a child, just a handful of peanuts. Other than that, Christmas was a regular day, other than the celebration that they did and perhaps the prayers that they said.

I hope that today's new immigrants eventually receive the same warm welcome and integration that the Ukrainian community now has in our society. There's a bit of a backlash, and there's definitely some discrimination that's going on in our society right now that is similar to what immigrants of every wave of immigration suffered in our country. I think it's incumbent upon us to reflect today upon how the Ukrainian immigrant population was treated, in many respects very badly, by the established population here in this country and to try to apply that knowledge to what we sometimes see in our society today as a negative attitude towards immigration and the new waves of immigration that are taking place in this country right now.

I know that my baba never spoke English in her whole life. She was made fun of when she tried, so she finally just said: to heck with you; I'm not going to bother. I know that I never got to communicate with her in English or Ukrainian because we didn't know each other's language, but I know that the love and kisses and the "Oy, oy, oy, oy" were universal as we walked up the wooden sidewalk to her house. [interjection] Absolutely. There was always something beautiful cooking on the stove. It was a wood stove. She didn't have electricity. You could smell the crock of sauerkraut and kapusta downstairs, that she always made beautiful holubtsi out of. The love in her heart was true no matter what language she expressed it in. So I have very, very fond memories of her and of going to her house. She lived until I was about 10. She really gave me memories of the strength and commitment that has to be in the hearts of everybody who makes the big decision to emigrate to a new country. I'm very, very grateful that that decision was made.

I'm very proud to wear this shirt today and to be a member of the Ukrainian ancestral community here in this fantastic province of

Alberta, and I'll continue to support and be hopeful that I'll be allowed to express this Ukrainianness forever and hope to celebrate this every year in this House on September 7.

Thank you.

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

Members, it is getting a little loud in here. If you could just keep it down. Thank you.

Go ahead, hon. member.

4:50

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Chair. While I do not have Ukrainian heritage, I do have immigrant grandparents with much the same stories and experiences as we've heard today. What I'd like to actually add to the debate is a current and ongoing part of the Canadian-Ukrainian story. In 2014 an endeavour called through the eyes of the children began with an individual in Lacombe and continues today. It's a Ukraine-Canada educational partnership involving students from Lacombe, Alberta, and students in Ukraine.

Students from approximately 12 different schools in Ukraine and 400 students in the Lacombe area have had some cross-cultural discovery through this program. There have been two trips to Ukraine so far, and there's another one planned this coming May, in 2017. One Lacombe student travelled to Ukraine with the adult sponsors. One Ukrainian teacher, Helena Romanov, from Lviv has come to Lacombe to speak to the students. The main focus has been on robotics education. On the first two trips the team took five robots. Not enough. In May they will be taking 10.

I have provided through my constituency office a Canadian flag and a substantial number of Alberta pins which have gone to schools in Ukraine. Just yesterday the first steps of a scholarship foundation for underprivileged students in both Lacombe and Ukraine was begun with a significant donation from a Lacombe resident. This is a wonderful program, and I'm proud to have a part in encouraging and supporting it. I am sure that it will ensure that the future of Ukraine-Canada relations will continue to enrich us all.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It's a pleasure to chat on this. I want to talk a little bit about this bill and about my Ukrainian heritage. We've heard so much about where Ukrainians came from. For me, my family has gone back four generations in Canada with family names like Paluck, Pankew, and Siska immigrating here to Canada and spreading out amongst all three prairie provinces. My grandfather, for example, was born a farmer, and he tells me about how he was born and grew up in a one-room farmhouse out in Manitoba.

However, each successive generation of my Ukrainian family has aimed to succeed, to be better. As a result, my family has had a great number of successes here in Canada. We've been businessmen in the plumbing and sporting goods businesses. We have been teachers. We have been bankers. We've been serving Canada in a tank division after World War II, going on various NATO missions. We've been lawyers. Now in my family we have been MLAs. Well, one MLA. There's always time for more Ukrainian MLAs.

An Hon. Member: How would you rate that in comparison to the others?

Mr. Malkinson: Excellent.

However, you know, we've talked at great length about the food and culture, and I want to talk specifically about my family because

at the end of the day that is how I know my Ukrainian heritage, through my family. Over those four generations that my Ukrainian family has been here, we've tended to merge our culture with the best of our new-found home, which has created some peculiar family dynamics. Specifically, my grandparents have had a great appreciation for the outdoors, fishing, camping, even when they lived on the prairies, and also has somewhere along the way picked up at least a three-generation-old affinity for dachshunds, not the lapdog kind but the large ones that hunt gophers and squirrels with great enthusiasm. I'm not sure where they got that from, but perhaps it was from their fellow German immigrants.

Of course, like any family, you always get that good farmhand advice that is sometimes so unwelcomely given to your girlfriends, perhaps. One of my relatives always had a great affinity for telling any girlfriend I'd had for over six months that the best thing that she can do in a relationship is to never make her boyfriend choose between his truck or his dog because she will lose that choice any day of the week, which always made for a very uncomfortable conversation with my girlfriend after that happened. But what good is family if they don't make it awkward for you?

With that, I mean, I am so glad that I'm here to be able to vote in support of this. For all my relatives and to my baba and gido, who provided me with so much love growing up, I am going to be voting in favour of this bill, thinking of them.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move that the committee rise and report.

The Chair: We have to take a step back. Before we do that, I gather there are no more amendments, comments with respect to this bill.

Are you ready for the question?

Hon. Members: Question.

[The clauses of Bill 26 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

Mr. Bilous: Now I would like to move that the committee rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Ms Sweet: Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill: Bill 26.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur with the report?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

Mr. Bilous: Madam Speaker, I rise to seek unanimous consent to waive Standing Order 77(1) such that Bill 26 can proceed to third reading immediately.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Government Bills and Orders

Third Reading

Bill 26

Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act

Mr. Bilous: Madam Speaker, I rise to move third reading of Bill 26, the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act.

Madam Speaker, there are a couple things that I wanted to do while we're here on this very, very historic day as the Assembly is debating the Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act, which is a very historic bill recognizing contributions that Ukrainians have made to our great province over the past 125 years. I first want to thank all of the men and women that are in our galleries, from the Speaker's gallery to the members' gallery to the public gallery, who have taken time out of their busy day to join us today and witness this historic passing.

I should say, Madam Speaker – and this is a thank you to all members of this Assembly – that today is the fifth time in Alberta's history that a bill is moving through all readings of the Assembly in one day. Now, I appreciate that we're still in third reading and it hasn't been passed as of yet, but the fact that we've had unanimous consent to move it into third reading and we introduced it today is still historic. On that, I do want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all members of this Assembly, to all parties for agreeing to move this bill forward and for their participation in this debate. On behalf of the government it's greatly appreciated. I also want to thank the MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for moving this bill, sponsoring this bill, and all of my colleagues on this side of the House.

5:00

Again, I want to give a special shout-out to Ambassador Shevchenko, who has joined us especially today for this bill, the Ambassador to Canada from Ukraine. His presence is very appreciated.

As well as other members, we have members from the board of the UCC Alberta chapter. We have men and women from the Ukrainian community who have contributed so much to our province in the form of volunteer hours to move – I was going to say their causes – to make sure that Albertans are educated on the contributions Ukrainians have made, and they continue to make significant contributions to our great province.

Madam Speaker, I will take my seat but want to invite all members of this Assembly, all members in the galleries, all of our guests – that at the conclusion of today's sitting everyone is invited to a small reception up in 512 to celebrate this day and this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Just to clarify, hon. minister, you are moving third reading on behalf of the hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville?

Mr. Bilous: Correct.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Next on my speakers list to third reading I have the hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to join my colleagues and to rise to support Bill 26, Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. Today all parties and members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta are collaborating to unanimously pass a bill which will commemorate the 125th anniversary of the first Ukrainian settlers in Alberta by dedicating September 7 of every

year to these great founders of Alberta and marking 2016 and 2017 as the Year of the Ukrainian-Canadian.

The hardships and extreme challenges these settlers endured were great. Despite their struggles, they settled the land in many areas of Alberta. They came to start a new life. Their work was long, but the reward they sought was freedom. Their drive, their rich history, their determination has resulted in some Ukrainians playing a prominent role in Alberta. Former Premier Ed Stelmach is a proud Ukrainian, and of course in my riding former MLA Genia Leskiw was the first woman and the first Ukrainian to ever hold a seat.

There are countless examples of Ukrainian contributions to this province, and I think it's wonderful that many of those will be recognized here in this Assembly today. Canada is home to the second-largest Ukrainian population in the world. It's estimated there are 3 million Canadians of Ukrainian heritage, and Ukrainian Canadians make up almost 10 per cent of our country's population. Today is about honouring the past and extending our gratitude to the future.

I urge all members of this Assembly to join me in passing Bill 26, Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act. Thank you.

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and to take a moment to comment on the wonderful diversity in Strathcona-Sherwood Park, and I know that it's made up of a lot of members of the Ukrainian community. I would also like to take a moment to thank the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville for being a champion of this legislation and working alongside community members to do it. I feel that she cooked her way into this and won awards and won the hearts over in a very authentic style. I know that you'll continue as the MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville to get things done in the best interests of your constituents.

I'd like to also recognize the Ukrainian members of Strathcona-Sherwood Park and their countless sacrifices to grow our community. In fact, the very high school I went to in Sherwood Park has an aspect of this, as Archbishop Jordan high school has a really great program called the Ukrainian bilingual program. Over the summer I was able to attend a meet-and-greet with Ruslana. As many of you know, Ruslana is a famous Ukrainian superstar and a social justice activist, and it was an honour to witness her authentic energy. It moved the crowd with songs and with inspirational messages to maintain connection to their authentic roots of Ukrainian heritage. I know that this program does that continuously, and I learned a lot about the Ukrainian heritage through a lot of my friends that were in this program growing up.

As an immigrant I feel like I have a lot to thank of the Ukrainian community, and I would like to thank them for their dedication to building this province. For the sacrifices, thank you; for your knowledge and opportunities that you have created for generations to come, thank you; for your food that you have shared, thank you; and for your continual commitment to growing this province, thank you. I know that when community members of mine come to Canada, one of the first things that I go to show them is the Ukrainian food and the heritage here.

It is my honour to support this bill here today, and I thank all of the dignitaries for coming out, for making a long trip here, and for all of the work that made this day possible, for the collaboration between parties, for the championing by the MLA, and for the ability to have this debate and to have many witnesses for the debate here in this House.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, there are a few times in this place that I'm sure we'll all look back upon with the circle on our calendar. From time to time this place can be a little adversarial. It has its moments where politics breaks out, but every once in a while it's great to be part of a day that isn't quite as adversarial, where we celebrate the best of things, where we celebrate the best of our province, and this afternoon has certainly been that.

I'd like to thank everyone, and I know some of you have stuck with us all afternoon. I'd like to thank you so much for being here in the gallery. I know that many of you have done so much for our province and for your community and for us all collectively. I'd like to thank you for that.

It's been so wonderful to have the ambassador, His Excellency, here with us, in his own right a superstar. In Ukraine after a successful media career he was elected three times, something that many of us aspire to do. He served as chairman of the Free Speech Committee, the youngest-ever committee chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament. He sponsored 60 legislative acts that were adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament, including laws on access to information. Sounds like he'd fit well in the caucus here. In many respects we all can aspire to a life of public service like he has had and continues to have. It's an absolute pleasure to have you with us.

Our great province of Alberta in our great country of Canada has been a beacon of hope for so many immigrants from so many parts of the world. Our province has a rich diversity that we are all proud of. Today I'd like to spend just a few minutes underlining the contributions of a particular group of Albertans, Ukrainian Canadians.

5:10

In Alberta 1 in 10 of us have Ukrainian roots. It's not unusual to meet Ukrainian students from the Ukraine, in fact, at the world's largest Easter egg in the small community of Vegreville. I practised saying the word, like, 15 times and just got scared by it: pysanka.

We're so blessed in Alberta with beautiful Ukrainian agriculture, art, dance. I feel like we could start a dance troupe of MLAs who have such a rich history in Ukrainian dance. Surely that would be led by the Premier and Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Tied in with the members from this side of the House, I think it would be a wonderful opportunity that could unite us around an important thing like Ukrainian dance, poetry, food, and the other cultural blessings in Alberta of this very special community.

Ukrainian Canadians are strong and resilient, often as a result of hardship that has swept that nation over the last 120 years: famine, oppression, Russian meddling in Ukraine dominated life in Ukraine. Many, many were forced to flee their land for lands of hope around the world, and many of them arrived here in Alberta. Under some of the worst oppression that we have ever seen, through famine and oppressive governments, such atrocities have taken place. Even today Ukraine faces aggression from the Russian leader, Vladimir Putin. Throughout all of this hardship Ukrainians kept coming to Alberta to prosper in both urban and rural Alberta.

So many incredible Ukrainians have made an incredible impact on the fabric of Alberta. We salute them. Of course, we salute the first Ukrainian-Canadian Premier, Ed Stelmach. We salute the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council, which has been active for a very long time in the province, putting on cultural events, raising money for so many important causes, including most recently supporting medical service for those in eastern Ukraine.

Over the past number of years, three open, transparent elections have taken place in the Ukraine, and Ukrainian Albertans have been there to observe as part of the elections observation missions, to ensure that those elections are done in a democratic way. In fact, one of those observers, who spent time on two separate occasions as an observer, had worked for me personally. I'm very proud to have supported him in his ability to go and be of assistance where needed.

Perhaps the most amazing thing to me about this incredible community is their commitment to three things: faith, family, and community. We all could be well served to look at the incredible amount of commitment that this community has to each other, to their faith, to their family and be reminded of the things that are truly important in each of our lives. To that I say thank you. Thank you for your efforts in our communities. Thank you for your efforts in building the very fabric of our province. Thank you for caring so much. May God continue to bless you, and may God bless Alberta.

The Speaker: I make the assumption that there's no 29(2)(a) request.

Hearing none, I would recognize the Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, if I might just very briefly ask for unanimous consent of the House to go to one-minute bells.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Miranda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is indeed a very special day as we come together to remember and celebrate Alberta's rich Ukrainian heritage, a heritage and culture that has been woven into the identity of this province for generations. As we mark September 7 as Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day, we also do it on the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. As Minister of Culture and Tourism I appreciate the importance of this milestone and the value of keeping this history alive.

I had the chance to celebrate one of those living pieces of history this summer when we opened Stelmach House at the Ukrainian Village. The building served as a safe place for Mykola and Dora Stelmach, who came to Canada from the village of Zavydche, Galicia, in 1898 with the dream of a bright future. They were eventually followed by the 170,000 Ukrainians who eventually immigrated to Canada by 1914. They were faced with the realities of a harsh Canadian climate and unfamiliar territory, but despite those challenges they not only adapted and prevailed; they thrived here. As an immigrant myself I value that determination in a personal way.

Like so many of those who we are here to celebrate today, I too started my journey elsewhere. I came to this country in 1988 as a refugee from Nicaragua, and I made my home in this beautiful province. My family left our country, our home in search of a better life, in search of a safe place to be, and we found it here, just like our Ukrainian pioneers did. We found that safe place in this province, and we are here today celebrating that history.

Most Albertans of Ukrainian ancestry can trace their roots back to the earliest pioneers who arrived in Canada during that time. Days like Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day will ensure that the stories of Alberta's Ukrainian ancestors continue to be told and continue to live on today.

As Minister of Culture and Tourism I am so proud to be able to stand here with all of the members of this House in celebration of this beautiful history. Thank you.

The Speaker: Any other members who would wish to speak to third reading of Bill 26, Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act?

Seeing and hearing none, I would recognize the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville to close debate.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand today and close debate on what has been a lovely conversation, where people have talked about their families, their experiences, their histories. To be able to bring forward this bill and have something that is titled Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day Act, I think, is really important. Like I mentioned before, Ukrainians were here tilling the land, building the economy for a province that had not even come into this country.

But, of course, I want to recognize that amongst the many contributions that were brought by Ukrainians to Alberta and Canada to help build this province, it came with a lot of sacrifice. It came from families who took that chance to have mothers and children be separated for periods of time from their fathers and from their brothers and their sons, where they went to Canada and took a train to Alberta to see what was here, with the promise of a new life. They heard that there was good land for cheap prices, and it was something better than where they had come from. It was the opportunity to build something of their own. So with tears and sharing kisses, they said good-bye, but they were ultimately reunited here, and they built the farms that we have now.

If you look at the maps of who owns the different sections out in a constituency like Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, you see Stelmach, you see Warawa, you see Toroshenko, you see Kurulok, you see Gargus, you see Anaka, and those are the stories that have been so long a part of our province and that I'm so proud of.

5:20

Just a few people that have worked to help grow our culture and our economies in Alberta. We have people like Olesia from the UCC, who works all of the time. Whenever she is somewhere, she always enjoys a standing ovation because she works tirelessly in everything that she does.

Hazel Anaka brings people out to the town of Andrew, a town that only has about 300 people at a given time, and fuels the local economy by holding events like Babas and Borshch, where people come out from Smoky Lake and across Alberta, with many people from Strathcona county. Maybe I'll take first place in the borscht cook-off next time. We'll see.

Jars Balan is not here, but he's part of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta. It's a prized part of the university, where they do good, scholarly work to look more into what our history is.

Daniel Warawa, you know, not only is a deputy reeve and a councillor, but he's a farmer. He's one of the people that works to feed us on his 3,000 acres of land, and he welcomed me not only into his home but into his combine to take the flax crop off last year. I know that the peas were tough this year, but maybe next year it'll be better.

I want to thank Myron Kruk, who I didn't mention before. He's the president of the Vegreville Cultural Association, that actually puts on the Pysanka Festival. People just lend so much to the quality of life that we enjoy here.

There were four waves – and we're currently in the fourth wave – of immigration. In the first wave of immigration we had 170,000 Ukrainians come here in a very short period of time, between 1891 and 1914, and then we saw many more generations come after that. They were part of building our democracy, part of building our economy, part of building our identity, and also they were incredibly important with our labour movement here in Alberta. We had the sugar beet farm workers in the '20s and '30s. You know, they came here to do the work that the people here didn't want to

do. We see these stories time and again, that people come here for a better life, and we know that if they're good enough to work here, then they are good enough to be part of our communities and live here.

I just would be so remiss in not recognizing the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians. Even though I know that they enjoy a different sort of reputation among some circles, they have long-standing roots in Alberta and in organization, and they worked really hard to make sure that the Ukrainians that were here and working were taken care of. I am just so proud of them and of everyone else who has really raised the profile of Ukrainians. There was a time when Ukrainians were seen as a lesser people, when they could not speak their language, when they could not sing their anthems in various places, when they were persecuted in Alberta.

We have come such a long way, but we know and have recognition days like this because we need to constantly remind ourselves that we are a province that is built of many, many different kinds of people, many backgrounds, many socioeconomic factors, and it's these differences that we embrace because we are ultimately united. I think that it speaks volumes when we have so much support – unanimous support, it looks like – in the House to do this and to recognize this. It's incredible. I'm so proud of all of us here in the Legislature today. I think we have done all of our guests from across the world very proud, and I look forward to seeing this pass.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 5:25 p.m.]

[One minute having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Hinkley	Notley
Anderson, S.	Hoffman	Orr
Babcock	Horne	Panda
Bilous	Hunter	Payne

Carson	Jabbour	Piquette
Ceci	Jansen	Rodney
Clark	Jean	Rosendahl
Coolahan	Kleinsteuber	Sabir
Cooper	Littlewood	Schneider
Cortes-Vargas	Loewen	Schreiner
Cyr	Loyola	Shepherd
Dach	Luff	Sigurdson
Dang	MacIntyre	Starke
Drever	Malkinson	Stier
Drysdale	Mason	Sucha
Eggen	McCuaig-Boyd	Swann
Feehan	McIver	Sweet
Fildebrandt	McLean	Taylor
Fraser	McPherson	Turner
Ganley	Miller	van Dijken
Gill	Miranda	Westhead
Goehring	Nielsen	Woollard
Gray	Nixon	Yao
Hanson		

5:30

Totals: For – 70 Against – 0

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 26 read a third time]

The Speaker: Congratulations to all of you. It's a historic moment. The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Seeing as how today is truly a historic day, it now being five pieces of legislation in Alberta's history read and passed all in one day, passed unanimously by this House, I will thank all members and invite all members and guests to join us in 512 for a reception, and I now move that the House stand adjourned until 9 tomorrow morning.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:32 p.m.]

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