



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Third Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, April 4, 2017

Day 15

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

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

Third Session

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

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Anderson, Hon. Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)  
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)  
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)  
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)  
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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND),  
Deputy Government House Leader  
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)  
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)  
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)  
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)  
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Progressive Conservative Opposition Whip  
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)  
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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)  
Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (ND)  
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)  
Gray, Hon. Christina, Edmonton-Mill Woods (ND)  
Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (W),  
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Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader  
Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)  
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Schneider, David A., Little Bow (W)  
Schreiner, Kim, Red Deer-North (ND)  
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (ND)  
Sigurdson, Hon. Lori, Edmonton-Riverview (ND)  
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (W)  
Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)  
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: 55      Wildrose: 22      Progressive Conservative: 8      Alberta Liberal: 1      Alberta Party: 1

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Richard Feehan	Minister of Indigenous Relations
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Christina Gray	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal
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Brian Mason	Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation
Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
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Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Community and Social Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

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

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## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 4, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon.

Let's bow and reflect or pray, each in our own way. Allow us to recognize the important work we do in the Chamber. Let us be inspired by our constituents as well as by our fellow colleagues as collaboration and co-operation are the keys to assuring people of our success and that future generations of our province are successful.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Airdrie.

**Mrs. Pitt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly students, staff, and chaperones from the great school of C.W. Perry in Airdrie. Now, this is group 1 of 3 this week because there are so many grade 6 students coming out of this school. I'm not sure if everyone knows, but Airdrie and Rocky View schools are the fifth-largest school division outside of Calgary and Edmonton. That's why you're going to see so many kids here.

I'll start by introducing – and please rise as I call your names – Mrs. Pamela Burke, Ms Krissa Donahue, Mr. Roel Suasini, and chaperones Mr. Jason Wiles; Mr. Brock Penner; Mrs. Melanie Mansfield, who's also a friend of mine; Mrs. Claire Barbieri; Mr. Dwayne Giesbrecht; Mrs. Tracy Minter; Tonya Leary; Crystal Adamo, a wonderful realtor from Airdrie; Linda Sefcik; Dawn Fallow; Mr. David Gerrard; and Tammy McTighe. Now I ask that the students rise as well and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you the parents and teachers and staff of Blessed Sacrament school in the awesome town of Wainwright. I feel really honoured to be able to introduce these people because, you know, I taught at Blessed Sacrament school back in the '90s. It's a great school, so I'm really pleased to be able to ask these people to rise when I call their names: Mrs. Hermanson, Mrs. Hedin, Miss McMann, Mrs. Cusack, Mr. Haun, and the students, too, please. Can you give a warm welcome to the students and staff of Blessed Sacrament school.

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

The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions to make today. First, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a class of inquisitive grade 6 students from Lendrum elementary school in the magnificent constituency of Edmonton-Riverview. They're accompanied today by their teacher, Crissy Andrews, and parent volunteer Violeta Stefanoska. I would ask that the students and their supervisors rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

**Ms Sigurdson:** It is also my honour to introduce to you and through you representatives of the Alberta Seniors Communities and Housing Association, or ASCHA. The association serves over 30,000 seniors, empowering them to have choice and lives of purpose where they're honoured, valued, and respected citizens of this province. In attendance today are President Raymond Swoneck, Executive Director Irene Martin-Lindsay, and a north region director, Wendy King. I ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups today?

**Mr. Schmidt:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce to you and through you to the entire Chamber the Council of Alberta University Students, or CAUS. Please stand and remain standing as I call your names: Dexter Bruneau, Carley Casebeer, Fahim Rahman, Mike Sandare, Stephan Guscott, Tristan Bray, Cam Howey, Cody Ciona, Shifrah Gadamsetti, Danika McConnell, and Josh McKeown. Most of this group have almost finished their tenures as CAUS executives, and I feel a great kinship with them as my first year or so as minister has run parallel to their year at CAUS. Together we've grappled with the issues that make a difference for Alberta students, issues like affordable tuition, mental health, and access to world-class education at world-class universities. Alberta students have been in good hands with their incredible leadership, and I know that this means that Alberta's future will be in good hands, too. Thank you. I ask that the Assembly give them the warm traditional greeting of this Chamber.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The Minister of Education.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great privilege to introduce to you and through you several people who have travelled quite a long distance to join us here today for the introduction of some legislation that I'm looking forward to speaking on. I would like to introduce President Gerald Cunningham of the Metis Settlements General Council; Ken Noskey, past president of the Metis Settlements General Council, and Ken is also currently on the Northern Alberta Development Council; Rita Marten, director of education for the Athabasca Tribal Council and member of Mikisew Cree First Nation; Beth Ann Auger, who has been working hard to develop a school council for Mistassinii school in Wabasca and is a member of the Bigstone Cree First Nation; and Lois Byers, who's the official trustee for Northland school division. I'd ask them all, please, to rise and to accept the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'm happy to introduce the staff of the Calgary-Currie constituency office, Signe Spence and Lizette Tejada. They are passionate about serving our constituents and have built many positive relationships in the community. They are here in Edmonton to help me with the consultations on my private member's bill. Without their help and dedication, I would not be able to serve the citizens of Calgary-Currie the way that they deserve to be served, which until 2015 has in fact not been the case. I ask that they please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. It's a privilege to be able to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Mr. Arif Khan from the Bangladesh Canada Association of Edmonton. They have been in operation since 1979, providing cultural and social events for Bangladeshi Edmontonians.

I would also like to introduce Mr. Sam Ghosh, president of the Edmonton Bengali Association, a nonprofit organization that organizes cultural events for Hindu Bengali people right here in Edmonton.

I would now ask that they both please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I have the honour of introducing guests who represent four different Bangladeshi organizations that are here in honour of Bengali New Year, which occurs on April 14. Representing the Bangladesh PressClub Centre of Alberta, Delwar Jahid, the president, and Asheque Chowdury, a visiting journalist. If they would please rise. Representing the Bangladesh Heritage and Ethnic Society of Alberta, Mohammad Bhuiyan, the president, and Ruhul Amin, the general secretary. Representing the Mahinur Jahid Memorial Foundation sports club and Bangladesh Heritage Museum, Ashan Ullah, the president; Anamur Rahman, the vice-president; and Mica Mohammad, member of the executive. Representing *Asian News and Views* publishing, Syfur Hasan, the editor, and Zulfiquer Ahmed, the assistant editor. I would ask them all, please, to rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

1:40

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Mr. Sabir:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your indulgence I have three groups of introductions to make. Today along with my colleagues I was honoured to welcome leaders from Alberta's Bengali community to Edmonton to celebrate Bengali New Year. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House representatives from three Bengali-Albertan organizations. First, from the Alberta Bengali society I welcome Mr. Halder, who's vice-president; Mr. Chanda, secretary; and Mr. Chowdhury, also secretary.

Second, from Amra Sabai of Calgary, a nonprofit cultural organization focused on hosting cultural events and social activities which provide exposure to Bengali heritage and tradition, I welcome Mr. Datta, who is president.

Third, from the Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association, an organization that represents a community language school teaching over 40 languages, I welcome Mr. Vinay Dey, who's president of that. I also want to add that Vinay Dey ran for the NDP in Calgary six times before I ran in 2015, so I thank him for his dedication, his contributions. Welcome.

**The Speaker:** Welcome. You're undecided whether or not you won or lost.

Also, hon. members, I hope that you help the Bengali community celebrate the new year by being joyous and constructive with each other over the next while here.

## Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

### Bengali New Year

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to represent the constituency of Edmonton-Mill Creek, which has one of the most prominent Bengali communities in Alberta. I'm honoured today to wish everyone Shubh Nav Varsh, which I probably mispronounced, which means Happy New Year. Bengali New Year, or Pohela Boishakh, is the first day of the Bengali calendar, celebrated on April 14 in Bangladesh and in many other South Asian countries.

Bengali New Year, a national holiday in Bangladesh, begins at dawn and continues with fairs, festivals, and singers performing traditional songs to welcome the new year. Traditionally businesses start the day with a new ledger, clearing out the old. Like other festivals of the region, the day is marked by visiting relatives, friends, neighbours, and people preparing special dishes for their guests. It's a tradition to enjoy a meal of fermented rice and hilsa fish on this day.

The festivities from the deep heartland of Bengal have now evolved to become vast events in the cities, especially in the capital, Dhaka, and other large cities, where festivals begin with people gathering under a large tree or on a bank of a lake or river to witness the sunrise. A huge part of the festivities in the capital is a vivid procession organized by the students and Faculty of Fine Art at the University of Dhaka, which has a different theme relevant to the country's culture and politics every year. Different cultural organizations and bands also perform on this occasion, and fairs celebrating Bengali culture are organized throughout the country.

Of all the major holidays celebrated in Bangladesh, only Pohela Boishakh comes without any pre-existing expectation. It's about celebrating the simpler, rural heartland roots of Bengal.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### Labour Legislation Review

**Mr. van Dijken:** Mr. Speaker, in a time of recession and layoffs the goal of government should be to do no more harm, but this government has been a disappointment for Albertans. Last year this government called its budget the Alberta jobs plan. The NDP at least pretended that their focus was on getting Albertans back to work even if they actually killed more jobs with their policies than they made. The coal phase-out, carbon tax, and increased minimum wage come to mind. There are many Albertans who have been without a stable job for a long time, but this government has already moved on much too soon.

No longer is the focus on jobs; it's about modernizing our labour laws. The laws are not inherently problematic because they have not been significantly changed in a long time. Our labour laws have served us well and provided a framework for a prosperous, peaceful province. With its labour review this government is being driven by ideology and allowing itself to be pushed around by organized labour.

This government will have a legislative committee review on the Alberta Standard Time Act, but it won't afford our labour laws the same due diligence. Ontario is taking at least two years to review its labour laws. This government wants to bulldoze through the process in five weeks, putting decades of labour peace at serious risk. This government is being deceitful by making it look like its review is a legitimate public consultation. In reality the public is

only being surveyed for its opinions on the employment standards portion of this labour review. The big questions about union certification and collective bargaining are being done in a secretive, unaccountable manner.

I urge this government to push the brakes on its ideological agenda. I implore this government to commit to providing a stable economic climate for investment and to return their focus to getting Albertans back to work.

Thank you.

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

#### AIMCo Governance and the Heritage Fund

**Mr. Ellis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the NDP took power, we've seen time and time again this government evoke the name of Peter Lougheed. We know the former PC Premier, a true visionary, set out a clear plan that helped lead to the Alberta advantage that our province was so well known for, well, until the NDP started driving the ship. As part of Lougheed's vision he created the Alberta heritage savings trust fund. This initiative has greatly benefited the province through investments in critical capital projects and medicine, protecting our environment, and the list goes on and on. But despite the proven track record for this trust fund, the NDP have other plans. We're seeing signs that the NDP are attempting to misuse the funds for political gain such as paying off their ridiculous debt.

Albertans have been concerned to see the interference permeate into AIMCo. First, the Finance minister meddled with the board appointments. Then the Premier's office attempted to influence media coverage on AIMCo. Now the latest reports reveal that there could be up to seven spots on AIMCo's board up for grabs.

Mr. Speaker, I want to warn this NDP government that Albertans are watching your next move. Do not stack the AIMCo board with comrades with an NDP world view. Do not misuse the heritage trust fund for your own political agenda. We know that the NDP have trouble listening to the priorities of Albertans, so I will remind them today. Albertans have been loud and clear in the past that the funds should be used to benefit future generations and focus on generating long-term investments. You would do well to hear these priorities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Gay-straight Alliances in School

**Ms Jansen:** Mr. Speaker, let me set the scene: a warm September day, the beginning of a school year, a parent at home washing dishes, cleaning up around the house. A family dog is barking in the background. And then the phone rings. The caller ID says that it's the school. That's odd. I hope nothing is wrong. Dad picks up the phone. It's the school principal. "I'm calling to inform you that your daughter is a member of the model parliament."

"Model parliament? Well, that sounds interesting."

"Well, it's certainly concerning. We thought you needed to know that your child is associating with kids who are interested in politics."

"Well, is there something wrong with that?"

"Well, that's not for me to say. There might be. There might not be. It could be a passing phase. But it's possible that it might lead to your daughter becoming an elected official and associating with politicians. We thought you needed to know."

"Okay, then. Have a good day."

"You too. And let me assure you that if your daughter becomes involved in any other clubs, we will be the first to let you know."

Mr. Speaker, I know that sounds absurd, but the implication of Jason Kenney's position when he says that parents should be informed if their kids join a GSA, that there is something wrong with children associating with their peers in a gay-straight alliance club, shows how profoundly out of touch our Progressive Conservative leader is with Albertans' basic common sense and their basic common decency. Mr. Kenney has tied himself in knots trying to explain his position. But the simple fact remains: Mr. Kenney thinks there is something wrong with young people joining a GSA, and the core of his argument is that it's not okay for gay kids and straight kids to hang out together. It's absurd, but for young people it is a problem. They deserve better, and so does every single Albertan.

1:50

#### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The Official Opposition leader.

#### AIMCo Governance

**Mr. Jean:** Another day and more news of mismanagement from the NDP. There's no doubt about it; the Premier and her Finance minister are meddling in our independent investment fund. Albertans know this government can't be trusted with a single penny of their money, but now the Premier is trying to interfere in how our pensions and heritage fund are actually managed. The fund is the result of decades of savings by Albertans, and the NDP, who only understand how to spend, want to get their hands on the billions of dollars that are invested in it. How can anyone trust this Premier to not drive our investments into the ground even further than she has?

**Ms Notley:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I answered this question yesterday. The fact of the matter is that the head of AIMCo has assured the members opposite repeatedly that our government is not doing what the member opposite suggests. That's really kind of the problem. I don't know exactly what else has to happen except for them to listen to the answer.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is true is that AIMCo actually had excellent investment returns last year. I think they were better than we expected, and that's because they're working just like we are to make life better for Albertans.

**Mr. Jean:** It's clear from new e-mails released to the *Edmonton Sun* that AIMCo, teachers, nurses, bureaucrats, municipal workers, and first responders are extremely worried about these choices that this Premier is making. It compromises the integrity of our investment fund. It shows that the Premier's office now sees AIMCo as a political tool and spin office as opposed to an independent branch of government to be respected. By the end of this month there will be seven vacancies on the AIMCo board. How can Albertans possibly trust this Premier to get any of these appointments right?

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

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have a process to bring appointments forward and get them done in a timely fashion so that the board of AIMCo will be fully staffed up. I'm not going to stand here and apologize for making the appointment process more open and transparent. All Albertans know that there are appointments available now on every agency, board, and commission. They know that they can put their name forward. Not all Albertans are going to be qualified. The best will get on the boards, and they will give back to Alberta and give their best.

**Mr. Jean:** Thank you for that answer, Premier.

The change to the appointment process should be immediately reversed. No politician in Alberta should have the power to interfere in AIMCo like this government now has the power to do. The fact is that this government brought in the biggest tax increase in Alberta's history without even campaigning on it. Last fall they tried to push AIMCo to publicly sponsor their ridiculous climate scheme. How can the Premier possibly expect anyone at all to believe that they won't abuse new appointments, with their government's record of broken trust with Albertans?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that the appointments to AIMCo have always been done by OIC. They've been done by OIC under this government, and they've been done by OIC by the new best friends of the Leader of the Opposition when they were in government. The difference is that we now advertise openly. We advertise to all Albertans, we tell all Albertans that we want them to be able to participate in the important boards and agencies that govern their lives, and we ensure that there is transparency in how that process goes forward.

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

Now we're all going to remember it's Bengali New Year, so we need to celebrate it together.

Second main question.

#### Executive Council Budget

**Mr. Jean:** While life in Alberta has never been harder, life in government under the NDP has never been better. The Premier's office continues to balloon this year: eight new staff, and her chief of staff is one of the best compensated in all of Canada. Actually, her chief of staff is better paid than the White House chief of staff. Meanwhile there are 100,000 Albertans on employment insurance, new carbon taxes on everything that Albertans pay, including on charities, families, and groceries. How can the Premier possibly justify this waste and excess while so many Albertans are suffering so much?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that the member opposite knows that the first statement that he made was patently untrue. It's clear on *Hansard*. He knows it, and he's misleading this House.

**Mr. Cooper:** Point of order.

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

**Ms Notley:** Secondly, he also knows that the person that he's talking about is paid in line with the general range of what people are paid and in fact less than previous chiefs of staff under their new best friend's previous regime. But you know what that staffperson doesn't get? A golf club membership. He doesn't get that. But you should talk to your new friends because they're really pleased with those kinds of plans.

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

**Mr. Jean:** Bad government in the past is no excuse for bad government now, Mr. Speaker. The truth is that Albertans expect leadership from the top. Instead, from the NDP they get bloated spending increases and wasteful spending. Here's one example. The Premier has somehow found nearly \$10 million to try and shore up public support for her own reckless and dangerous policies like carbon taxes and record debt and record deficits. Albertans are sick and tired of it. They are tired of surprises from this NDP

government. How much money does the Premier plan to spend this year promoting her own job-killing policies?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very excited to move forward this year, carrying on with our government's agenda to make life better for Albertans. You know how we're going to do that? We're going to go on with our efforts to make life more affordable for Albertans rather than trying to take money out of their pockets, we're going to move forward with protecting those important public services that Albertans count on, and we're going to move forward with those major investments in infrastructure that help Alberta communities and create job after job after job.

**Mr. Jean:** So far two years and zero jobs, Mr. Speaker. Actually, minus 81,000.

Albertans think that every single penny going towards these ads is an entire waste of money. Two-thirds of Albertans think that they should be thrown in the trash heap. I agree with them. Even the Premier's own Public Affairs Bureau, which this NDP government has used to stuff with partisan insiders, has seen its lowest approval for government communications in nearly 20 years, Mr. Speaker, an impressive feat. Bloated salaries, ballooning costs for the Premier's office, and millions of dollars wasted on shameless self-promotion. Does the Premier really expect Albertans to believe there's no room to cut spending at the top?

**Ms Notley:** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, to hear the member opposite speak, you would almost think that Executive Council didn't introduce a budget that had them spending exactly the same amount of money that we were spending the year before. So no increases. You know, the member opposite – there's hyperbole, and then there's what they're doing, which is way beyond it. That doesn't help the debate. That doesn't help us get our work done here. That doesn't help us make life better for Albertans.

**The Speaker:** Third main question.

#### Labour Legislation Review

**Mr. Jean:** The NDP government has mastered the art of pretending to consult after they have already made up their minds. The most recent example is the review of our labour laws here in Alberta, which has been given five whole weeks for Albertans to provide feedback on what many are worried will be a major overhaul. A similar review in Ontario took two years, Mr. Speaker. Even a backbench bill on daylight saving time is being given more consideration than this review of our labour laws. Why is the Premier putting decades of labour peace in Alberta at risk by allowing very little time for feedback from Albertans?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact, we are engaging with Albertans on these issues, and we have been since we've been elected. You know what? The last time the labour code was reviewed in Alberta, Rick Astley was in the top 10. You know, it is time for us to move forward, to modernize our labour laws, to bring Alberta into the 21st century when it comes to labour laws. We're going to do that in a balanced way that talks to people from both sides and moves the matter forward in a way that strengthens our economy and creates more jobs for Albertans.

**Mr. Jean:** Not only is the NDP government's labour consultation process far too short; it's also not asking the right questions. The public is only being solicited for its opinions on the employment standards portion of the review. Card check certification and rules around union dues aren't even up for public consideration. Will the



Premier admit that the fix is in on this labour review and that they are trying to overhaul a labour system that has worked well in Alberta for many decades?

2:00

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, let us begin by acknowledging that there are multiple components of the labour code, which, to be clear, hasn't been really amended since the late '80s, that have actually been challenged under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, so it's not actually working quite as well as they'd like everyone to believe. That being said, you know, our government has asked Andy Sims to engage in a fulsome, thoughtful engagement with employers and with unions, and that's because it's a very complex area and these are the folks that understand the issues. We're also looking at what's going on across the country, and we're going to make sure that we move forward.

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

**Mr. Jean:** Interesting answer, Mr. Speaker.

You don't have to take my word for that. The NDP minds are made up. Just look at the union notice put together by UFCW 401. It's no secret that they are close friends with the NDP, and their brief actually talks about eliminating secret ballots and replacing them with a card check and introducing sectoral bargaining that will remove differentiation between businesses in the same sector, ramifications of a serious nature. Why is the Premier refusing to listen to the serious concerns of workers and businesses in Alberta and pushing these labour measures in only five weeks for Albertans to have any feedback? It's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is identifying one set of proposals that has come from one group, and in fact there are other proposals coming from other groups, which would be the exact opposite from that, and other proposals from a broad range of groups. That is evidence that we are in fact consulting with people and the people who understand the issues are getting a chance to make their representations. That's exactly what the consultation is for, so I thank the member for pointing out that it's working.

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

#### AAMDC Convention Ministerial Forum Questions

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the NDP for not being booed at the spring AAMD and C meeting. One elected official there pointed out that their local seniors' home will have a \$25,000 carbon tax bill this year. He was told not to load that cost on the bill of seniors. Sounds good. He asked the minister if he should bridge the gap by giving the seniors less food or less heat. The minister said, "we are in partnership," and hinted at a whole list of initiatives. These words won't keep seniors fed, and it won't keep them warm. To the Premier: can you offer rural Alberta a better answer for your carbon tax funding gap . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.  
The minister of seniors.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're very proud to have those partnerships with the housing management bodies across this province. We work very closely with them. We meet with them regularly. We increased their operating budgets by 2 per cent, and we've invested \$57 million this year to support them

to do energy efficiency upgrades. We're committed to supporting them and working very closely together.

**Mr. McIver:** The carbon tax takes away more than the minister gave.

Mr. Speaker, another elected official asked about policing in rural areas. Crime is up, and the response is too slow. At a double murder in Chipman this week it took RCMP over 40 minutes to respond. The Finance minister could only muster a comment about fine revenues going to municipalities, which is nice but a drop in the bucket. It doesn't answer the question. To the Premier: since your Justice minister was not there again to answer the question and your Finance minister didn't know the answer, can you put rural Albertans' minds at ease today and actually give them an answer on crime and police response in rural Alberta?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I actually had the opportunity to deliver an address that AAMD and C had asked for the very day before, and we were able to discuss a number of issues, including rural crime and the upcoming legalization of marijuana. That's actually all been working very, very well.

In terms of rural crime rates we absolutely are concerned. We do hear concerns from our municipal partners. We are working very closely with them, and the province continues to provide over half a billion dollars in funding to policing throughout the province.

**Mr. McIver:** Cat's got the Premier's tongue today.

Municipal leaders need assurances that solar farm operators will be required to remediate land if solar farms fail or when they're just old and need to be removed. The Energy minister made it clear that landowners are on their own, and in the minister's words: it's between the landowner and the company, not my problem. While I have no reason to disbelieve your minister, Premier, the answer given did not sit well. Does your government plan to create a requirement for land reclamation on solar projects, or will they get a pass?

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

**Ms McCuaig-Boyd:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in the answer there, the renewables will be a contract between the landowner and the proponent, and there is information given to landowners for that on how to do the proper contract. Reclamation will be part of that, and that is what I said at the time.

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

#### Mental Health Services for Postsecondary Students

**Dr. Swann:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Advanced Education minister. Many of our postsecondary institutions have critically needed mental health services on campus. This government has said that it's committed to funding mental health but failed to increase the mental health budget, which now is shared between 26 institutions in Alberta. It chose to maintain status quo funding of \$3.6 million, and the minister called this, quote, a placeholder item. He promised to say more about this in the future. With the Council of Alberta University Students in the gallery can the minister tell us when and how we'll see postsecondary institutions with adequate, stable mental health funding?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Advanced Education.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the hon. member for his good work in supporting mental health work here in the province of Alberta. Of course, on this side of the House we're concerned about providing mental health supports for students as well, and the member, quite rightly, points out that we committed \$3.6 million. We also struck an advisory panel that is looking at how we can better provide mental health supports for students on campus. Our department is in the process of reviewing those recommendations, and once we've reviewed those recommendations, we will decide how those recommendations will be implemented and how the money will be spent.

**Dr. Swann:** Mr. Speaker, when you get down to it, this amounts to about \$14 per student per year, which does not stretch very far. However, not all postsecondary institutions receive the same amount. Last year, for example, the U of A received \$1 million and the University of Calgary, \$900,000. This is now going to be distributed between 26 institutions across the province. Can the minister tell us how the money is going to be allocated?

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

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the member, quite rightly, points out some of the inequities in the system that was established under the previous government, and we're of course committed to fixing those as best we can. That was one of the tasks that the mental health panel was given, and of course we're looking at its recommendations for how to better support the mental health programs that exist on campuses across the province so that students, whether they're going to school in Edmonton or Lethbridge or any other communities, have access to the mental health supports they need when they need them. We'll be working on that, and we'll have more to say about that in the future.

**Dr. Swann:** Well, I would like to see a little clearer indication of when, Mr. Minister.

The 2016 national college health assessment indicated that nearly two-thirds of Canadian students have feelings of loneliness, 13 per cent have considered suicide, and 2 per cent have actually attempted suicide on our campuses. It's getting worse. In the case of campus mental health funding, decisions are not just numbers; we're dealing literally with life and death. Given that the mental health budget was not increased and there's no indication of future commitments to allow planning, will the minister tell us which campus services we're going to cut: proactive care or crisis counselling?

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

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I'm very concerned about providing mental health supports, just as the member is opposite and just as the people on this side of the House are. As I said before, we've committed \$3.6 million to providing further mental health supports, and we're working with our colleagues in Alberta Health to continue to identify resources that are available to provide mental health supports to students on campus. What won't help mental health is the radical cuts that the members opposite want to make. That will only make students' lives worse, and of course that's not what we – we are here to support our students.

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

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

## Public Transit Funding for Edmonton

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Families in Edmonton-Meadowlark have long been asking for improved access to public transit throughout our city. I also know that the Capital Region Board has identified funding of the valley line LRT as a priority. To the Minister of Transportation: can you provide the House with details of the government's commitment to Edmonton's valley line LRT?

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

**Mr. Mason:** Well, thanks very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks very much for the question. Transit funding is important. It helps improve the quality of life of people. It supports safe, affordable, accessible, and environmentally sustainable transportation options for people. We're proud to support Edmonton's valley LRT line. We've committed \$424 million in funding for the line, \$275 million is under GreenTRIP, and \$150 million in provincial matching funds for the federal new building Canada fund. We're committed to assisting both our major cities with their LRT systems and transit throughout the province.

2:10

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

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As residents in west Edmonton require access to amenities across our city and with young families making decisions about settling into our community, can the minister please provide timelines for when we might see shovels in the ground for the west leg of the valley line LRT?

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

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government has announced funding related to design and planning related to LRT expansion. We're working with the city of Edmonton to get a better sense of how much provincial support may be sought to complete the next phase and when this funding might be required. I understand that the city of Edmonton is in the process of finalizing various aspects of their expansions and refining their project costs. We are committed to supporting Edmonton, Calgary, and all municipalities with their transit needs. This government is in favour of making sure that people have environmentally sustainable mobility for all of their needs.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that accessible public transit is critical to the growth and sustainability of our province, to the same minister: can you detail some of the other investments that you've made throughout the city to provide improved transportation options for our residents?

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

**Mr. Mason:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. We've committed \$216 million in 2016-17 for other transit projects, \$72 million for GreenTRIP, \$144 million in federal contributions under PTIF – and that includes funding the Metro Line from NAIT to Blatchford – funding for preliminary design of an extension to the Capital Line, safety improvements, and numerous renewal projects for buses and LRT stations. Unlike those on the other side, who would like to cut

capital budgets by \$4 billion, we're committed to improving the lives of Albertans.

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

A good transportation system so that they can get to the Bangladesh party.

### Energy Policies

**Mr. Barnes:** Mr. Speaker, Albertans are waiting for the NDP to take credit for AIMCo's recent acquisition of Savanna Energy's debt. The government compromised AIMCo's independence by admitting that a loan given to oil service company Calfrac was, quote, part of the NDP's climate leadership scheme. Albertans are worried about how socialist this government will go. AIMCo invests on behalf of Albertans. Does this government not understand that politicizing AIMCo puts Albertans at risk and only drives private investment away?

**Mr. Ceci:** You know, nothing could be further from the truth, of course. Mr. Speaker, we are involved with normal communications with AIMCo and other agencies, boards, and commissions all the time. When they're public-facing communications, we try and make sure that we're on the same page, and that's what we did.

Investment in this province: this province gets the most private-sector investment of any province in Canada. That's not at risk. We're not driving anything away. In fact, our economy will grow 2.8 per cent this year, if you listen to the Conference Board of Canada, and will lead the nation again next year. We're doing fine here. Those folks don't help.

**Mr. Barnes:** Mr. Speaker, we know that political staff have been bullying AIMCo workers when they talk to the media. Maybe ATB has some independence left. Given that ATB just released a report showing that energy exports and private investment are down across the province from January to February and given that they're calling this a disappointment, with oil prices ticking up and energy exports trending down, is the Premier ready to quit blaming low oil prices and admit that her bad ideas are holding back our recovery and dragging down our economy?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Ceci:** You know, maybe I'll put some facts on the table. While Alberta's exports declined 3.9 per cent in February, they're still up sharply so far this year, 26 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and year over year 37 per cent. Alberta's exports are highly volatile – we all know that – and highly influenced by changes in exchange rates and commodity prices. We're going to be doing fine if just that side would support Alberta for once instead of looking east to Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** The second supplemental.

**Mr. Barnes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government doesn't know good energy policy from bad. The Premier even declared the federal Liberal budget good news for Albertans. Given that Trudeau's overhaul of the Canadian exploration expense credit is just another kick in the teeth for Alberta's industry and given that CAPP president Tim McMillan said that this sends a bad signal, putting us at a disadvantage, can the Premier explain why she's

once again putting the interests of Justin Trudeau before the interests of struggling Alberta businesses and families?

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

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, you know, mature and adult conversations with our cousins to the far east in Ottawa is the work we're going to do. The other side would rather throw stones. The other side would rather sue. They've done that before. We're not doing that. In tough times we've got Albertans' backs. The opposition would make sure that the oil and gas roller coaster continued, that the boom-and-bust cycle continued. We're diversifying this province. They want to go back to the 1950s. We're going forward to the 21st and 22nd centuries.

### AIMCo Investments

**Mr. Gotfried:** Mr. Speaker, recent news articles highlight this government's interference in the independent operations of AIMCo. Notable was the director of the infamous out-of-province issues managers directing AIMCo executives to call the authors of the original exposé. Then political staff ironically directed AIMCo to massage public messaging in press releases and talking points to counter impressions that AIMCo's independence was compromised. To the Minister of Finance: can you please explain to Albertans how meddling in AIMCo's operations by the Premier's office preserves their independence?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I've stood up and said that there is no meddling with regard to the independence of AIMCo. The president and CEO of AIMCo has said the same thing to people at the heritage trust committee. I don't know how much clearer we can be. I'm going to be meeting later this afternoon with the chair and the president of AIMCo because we work together. That's what's expected. Albertans want their Crown agencies to work closely with government to make sure we all work in the best interests of Albertans.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Mr. Speaker, given that if AIMCo is truly independent, decisions and investments should not be guided by the NDP world view, nor should political credit be taken, and given that the interference highlighted in the articles indicates that the NDP tried to spin an AIMCo investment that was used for debt refinancing as somehow diversifying the economy and creating jobs, to the Premier: if AIMCo is indeed independent, why are you reannouncing their deals, spinning them for political gain, and treating AIMCo as your own green slush fund?

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

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I said, I'll be meeting later this afternoon with the president and the chair of AIMCo. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Quiet, please.

**Mr. Ceci:** We continue to have discussions about everything, Mr. Speaker, not about investment decisions so much because that's their operations ability. You know, it's more about: do AIMCo and the government align? Are we aligned? With regard to normal communications with government and public-serving agencies, we are aligned.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Mr. Speaker, given that that's aligned with the NDP world view and given that the articles note that the minister of economic development was fully aware that Calfrac had not signed off on government news releases and given that the minister's lack of due diligence caused the unnecessary confusion, prompting the Premier's office's demands for a briefing out no later than first thing tomorrow morning and direct involvement in drafting a press release blaming AIMCo for providing flawed guidance, to the minister of economic development. We all make mistakes. Why did you make AIMCo executives take blame for yours?

2:20

**Mr. Ceci:** I want to assure this House that I have great confidence in the people at AIMCo. I have great confidence in the independent decisions they are making on investments at AIMCo. They are doing a great job for Albertans and bringing money back to the treasury that we use to address the programs and services. That side would cut programs and services. That side would leave Albertans adrift, just like the Premier of Saskatchewan is leaving his citizens adrift.

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

### FOIP Request Process

**Mr. Cyr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a letter dated April 23, 2014, the NDP House leader demanded an investigation into FOIP processes. He accused partisan press secretaries of reviewing outgoing releases, adding that timely access to freedom of information is absolutely critical to a functioning democracy. To the Minister of Service Alberta: are partisan political staffers interfering with FOIP, and why are processing times increasing under your watch?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Service Alberta.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. Even though the number of information requests from Executive Council has tripled since 2015, we have been making a lot of progress in these processing times. In fact, the Privacy Commissioner highlighted that processing times are down from 12 to 15 months to just three to six months. We are making concerted efforts and putting resources on this issue, resources that the opposition is asking us to cut. They would prefer that we do not take openness and transparency as our number one priority.

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

**Mr. Cyr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans are watching this government. Given that there are dozens of rulings in 2017 alone where the NDP government has been found guilty of violating FOIP laws and given that every time Wildrose has raised this issue with the Minister of Service Alberta, she has either flat out dismissed this as a problem or devolved into absolutely absurd personal attacks, telling members to either read a book or read about it, to the Premier: will Albertans wait to have a 2019 government that will bring forward transparency, accountability . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.  
The Minister of Service Alberta.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take openness and transparency very seriously. That is why our government has been proactive in posting all of our employees' salaries in ministers' offices and the Premier's office, something that the Conservatives

did not do. We posted all sole-source contracts over \$10,000 online, something the prior government didn't do. I won't be lectured on transparency by the Conservatives, who are known for their backroom dealing. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Keep it positive, folks.

**Mr. Cyr:** What I'd like are the FOIPs I requested.

Given that today the Wildrose caucus made a firm commitment to transparency in government by presenting a 10-point plan to address FOIP and given that this system according to the Privacy Commissioner is broken and needs serious and immediate attention, will the Premier ensure that her cabinet is doing its job and following the Wildrose's lead and implementing our 10-point plan and addressing the FOIP problems that are currently facing Alberta? [interjections]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, please.

**Ms McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely rich, coming from the opposition, that they would refer to questions they've asked me around FOIP when they have failed to actually ask me what I am doing about FOIP. I am happy to report that a number of the recommendations that the opposition has proposed are already in place and already being enacted, so I'm surprised they didn't do their due diligence.

I am also happy to report that on March 30, 2017, we received a letter from Jill Clayton, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, stating, "As I commented publicly, I am pleased by the initial steps taken . . ."

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

### Unharvested 2016 Crops

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Many farmers in northern Alberta are facing a major decision, continuing to try to harvest last year's crop or destroying it so that they can get this year's crop in the ground. With mainly cereal crops in our area remaining, many farmers are finding crops contaminated with dead mice and deer feces, making even salvageable grain unusable. To the minister: what options are available through AFSC to declare these crops 100 per cent lost so that farmers can get on with it and get the 2017 crop in the ground and avoid another lost season?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. He's absolutely right. It's true that 90 per cent of the crops from last year are in the bin, but it's that 10 per cent that we are concerned with. I'm very proud of the public servants in AFSC for the good work they've done in being able to process those claims. The vast majority have been processed.

But that's only one side, Mr. Speaker. Those farmers, you know, get some support and financial support, but what they really want to do is put that seed in the ground and grow the crops for all Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that AFSC estimates that there are 975,000 acres of cropland still to be harvested and given that that doesn't take into consideration uninsured crops and

given that that is roughly 6,100 quarter sections of land to be monitored by AFSC over the next four weeks, to the minister: how much manpower does AFSC have on the ground, and will farmers be held ransom waiting for an agent to declare their crops usable or a 100 per cent writeoff?

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

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. I've been assured by AFSC that all their manpower is concentrating on the claims that are out there now. They've been doing a great job. There are only four claims that are still outstanding. I think you would agree that there have been great strides in that. I want to encourage all producers out there that before they pick any of the options that they have to get rid of the crops that are there now, they first contact their AFSC office or perhaps phone 310.FARM.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hanson:** I must have gotten lucky because one phone call found me a person that hadn't been approached by AFSC yet.

Given that there are close to 1 million acres of cropland that may have to be burned off to allow access for the 2017 growing season and given that most municipalities rely on volunteer fire departments, that could be stretched to their limits covering fires across vast areas of cropland, to the minister: is there a plan in place to assist municipalities in co-ordinating and financing in the event that any of these fires get out of control, or am I just fearmongering?

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

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the member has talked about burning off those crops. That is only one option that could be available. We've already heard in this House and in the media that there are some counties that don't even allow burning. So it is options. Again, I encourage all producers out there to make sure they contact their AFSC office before they implement any of the options that are available to them and continue to do so. Again, I want to repeat that number they can phone, 310.FARM.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Mental Health Services for Postsecondary Students** (continued)

**Mr. Rodney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In January 2013 the previous government committed \$3 million over three years to university mental health initiatives across Alberta, and in 2014 this funding was extended to two more universities. This funding was set to expire in June 2016, and I applaud the minister for continuing the great work into this year. However, we've heard from students and postsecondary institutional leaders that they're concerned about long-term funding. To the minister: when will we see a renewed multiyear commitment to postsecondary mental health initiatives?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Advanced Education.

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to talk about the supports that our government is going to provide for students' mental health programs on campuses. The member quite rightly points out that we've committed \$3.6 million. In my answer to the previous questions on this matter I also highlighted the fact that we're working with our colleagues at Health to identify more resources and supports that we can provide to students.

What won't help students is cutting \$600 million from the budget of Advanced Education like the members opposite are proposing to do in their draft budget.

2:30

**Mr. Rodney:** Given that the students deserve answers as to when so they can plan and given that mental health issues are not issues that are exclusive to university campuses only despite the focus that these institutions receive and given that students at vocational schools, technical institutions, and colleges are also affected by the same stresses which impact the mental health of university students, again to the minister: what specific initiatives are you undertaking to expand on-campus mental health programs outside the university setting?

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

**Mr. Schmidt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mental health advisory panel that we struck has made its recommendations. They were given the task of looking at mental health supports not just on university campuses but on the campuses of all of our colleges and technical institutes as well. I look forward to reviewing those recommendations and implementing them.

Again, I think that the member opposite, when he's speaking to students, should tell them what impact the \$600 million that they want to cut from Advanced Education budgets would have on mental health supports that are already existing.

**Mr. Rodney:** Given that although on-campus mental health supports have been increasing over the past four years and that when students experiencing mental health issues graduate from postsecondary, these issues do not magically disappear and given that we continue to hear that the transition away from campus-based mental health programs and supports can be very traumatic for those students who have come to rely on those resources, to the minister: what work are you doing with the Minister of Health to bridge the gap in services that can occur as students graduate from postsecondary?

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

**Mr. Schmidt:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the member raises an important issue with transitioning from a postsecondary world into the world of work. Our government is committed to supporting students in all of the difficulties that they face in making the transition, including supports for mental health. As I told the member in my previous answer, the mental health advisory panel has submitted its recommendations to the department, and in full course we will review those and implement them.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

### **London Road Gateway Housing Project in Lethbridge**

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Lethbridge Housing Authority has a long wait-list for affordable housing. Budget 2017 included funding for the London Road Gateway affordable housing project. Given that the city of Lethbridge has been waiting for this announcement for nearly seven years, can the minister tell us how this project was chosen and how many Lethbridge families will this move off the wait-list?

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

**Ms Sigurdson:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're pleased to follow through with our commitment to invest \$1.2 billion over five years for affordable housing in this province. In Budget 2017 our capital plan reinforced this investment for building housing units and renovating existing ones, making life better for all Albertans. I understand that Lethbridge had experienced a strong demand for affordable housing, and that's why I'm pleased to say that the London Road Gateway project is approved to proceed and, once complete, will offer 14 new affordable housing units for the Lethbridge community.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the project has been on the city's radar for so long, can the minister tell us when the construction of the project is expected to start and when we can expect completion of the project?

**Ms Sigurdson:** The London Road Gateway project is expected to begin construction this year. The building will be complete and ready to move into by the fall of 2018. This project will provide more affordable housing for Lethbridge residents, and we're pleased to work with the Lethbridge Housing Authority and the city of Lethbridge to make this happen. Our government is protecting and improving the things that make a difference in the lives of Albertans, like having a safe and affordable place to call home.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Ms Fitzpatrick:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that those living with disabilities often have a difficult time finding accessible and affordable housing and they deserve to live with dignity and with access to green space like everyone else, can the minister tell the Chamber how the London Road Gateway project will be accessible for those living with disabilities?

**Ms Sigurdson:** The London Road Gateway project will have three barrier-free studios that will be suitable for residents living with disabilities. The location is close to downtown, close to public transit, and close to the regional hospital. The project will also be built to LEED platinum requirements for energy efficiency, with larger windows for natural light and good air quality. As an infill project the London Road Gateway will be designed to fit within the character of the community, and I look forward to its completion.

Thank you.

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

### Provincial Debt

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the Premier has taken the tack of going after Saskatchewan for their budget. Let's look closer to home, shall we? The NDP will amass over \$70 billion in debt in four short years. The recurring cost to Albertans in order to service that debt will be over \$2 billion, which, incidentally, works out to a burden of over \$1,200 added to every household in Alberta each year. To the Premier: does she not recognize that adding debt is tantamount to piling taxes onto the backs of future Albertans?

**Mr. Ceci:** You know, in tough economic times this government has the backs of Albertans so that we can get through this recession and into positive growth. The Saskatchewan budget was brought up. Should I just remind people that the Saskatchewan budget had huge tax increases on everything from children's clothing to construction, Mr. Speaker? We've kept taxes flat this year. We did

not raise taxes. We are bringing in support for Albertans in every respect. You know, in Saskatchewan they had massive cuts to education, health care, and hundreds of millions of dollars are gone from their economy.

**Mr. Hunter:** A levy is a tax.

Given that some fairly competent bean counters told me that it will take a generation to pay off this government's reckless four-year spending spree and given that I have talked to university students who are happy about the government freezing their tuition but fear that jobs when they get out of school will not be there, to the Premier: what will those students think when they realize that it was you who sold their future by indenturing them to a staggering provincial debt with no jobs to help pay it off?

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

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, this side cares about Albertans, both current Albertans and in the future, and what their lives are going to be like. We're prudently and thoughtfully taking down the deficit as we go forward but will not throw Albertans under the bus like that side would. I want you to know that the Conference Board of Canada said that the budget for Saskatchewan won't be stimulative to that province. We are doing things that stimulate our economy. Saskatchewan is doing the opposite thing, and they're going to suffer for it.

**Mr. Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, given that the Premier says, quote, you're living in a fantasyland for believing you can balance the books without impacting front-line services or hiking taxes, end quote, every time any of the opposition parties propose cost-cutting measures for the NDP to get their spending under control, can the Premier square the circle and help Albertans understand the NDP world view on how the budget will balance by 2024? Or do budgets balance themselves, as her new BFF in Ottawa believes?

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

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we're thoughtfully working with Albertans and bringing the programs and services forward that they require. They require good health care. They require good education. We are doing everything in our power to make sure those are solid so that our economy continues to fire on all cylinders. Investment is coming back to this province. We have the highest weekly wage earnings of any province. Things are pretty good here. I just wish they would notice it and be cheerleaders for Alberta instead of Saskatchewan.

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

### Age Discrimination and the Human Rights Act

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A January court ruling directing the province to include age in the Alberta Human Rights Act as prohibited grounds for discrimination could have repercussions for the population it is meant to protect unless the province takes action. Recognizing this, the court has given the province one year to deal with the unanticipated issues. Minister, how and when will you consult with Albertans about these upcoming legislative changes?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the very important question. As he quite rightly notes, there was a lawsuit filed, and the province agreed to include age in the legislation. We asked for some time to determine what the

ramifications would be for a number of industries, including the insurance industry, and to determine, you know, what the impact might be on things like affordable housing projects designed specifically for seniors. When we have finished that analysis, we will have more to say.

2:40

**Mr. Gill:** Given that in Ontario age is already prohibited grounds for discrimination and, as a result, adults-only housing is no longer available in that province and given that the Alberta court ruling was prompted by a seniors' advocacy group which benefits the most from options for age-restricted accommodations, to the minister: what is Alberta's plan for dealing with the legal quandary of residents currently living in adults-only housing complexes?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member quite rightly points out, there are concerns around the inclusion of age and adults-only buildings, particularly those that are aimed at vulnerable senior populations. You know, we will be working forward to consult with those groups. That is why we asked for that year, to take those things under advisement and to make sure that we're continuing to protect those populations.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the judge provided the province with a one-year delay in complying with the court ruling to allow the government time to introduce exemptions for unforeseen consequences and given that prohibiting age-restricted condominiums is one of those unforeseen circumstances, Minister, is your ministry considering exemptions that will continue to let Albertans choose adults-only housing or, at the very least, grandfather in the existing ones?

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

**Ms Ganley:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, a very important question. This is, of course, one of the issues that we are working on considering. Going forward, we will be speaking to Albertans on this issue, and we will be ensuring that we are able to protect the private decisions of individuals in terms of where they live as well as buildings that may be specifically targeted at populations who may otherwise be vulnerable. Once again I'd like to thank the member for the important question.

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, in 30 seconds we'll go to Members' Statements.

### Members' Statements

*(continued)*

**The Speaker:** The Member for Calgary-East.

### Refugee Rights

**Ms Luff:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Refugee Rights Day. In Canada Refugee Rights Day marks the anniversary of what is known as the Singh decision. In its 1985 decision the Supreme Court found that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protected the fundamental rights of refugee claimants. The court decided that the term "everyone" in the Human Rights Act included refugee claimants. The decision marked an important moment for refugee protection in Canada and provided the right of refugee claimants to have an oral hearing.

I meet refugees nearly every day in my job, some who are brand new to Canada and some who have been here for decades. What I think is important to remember about refugees is that they did not come to Canada by choice. They came here because they were fleeing war, violence, or persecution for religious or political reasons. They came here because to stay in their home country could have meant death.

I want to take the time today to address two incorrect perceptions that I often hear from Albertans, too often. The first is some version of the story that refugees in Canada are entitled to more resources than Canadian pensioners. This is false. Government-sponsored refugees receive a one-time settlement allowance, around \$1,800, then approximately \$700 a month for a year. A privately sponsored refugee gets nothing.

The second concern that I hear from Albertans is that refugees will continue to live off the system indefinitely, taking resources away from working Canadians. This is also false as within a year of coming to Canada, 80 per cent of adult refugees are working full-time. This is comparable to the nonrefugee population. If you take into account that the folks often have to take English classes, upgrade workplace skills, and pay back transportation loans, that statistic becomes even more impressive. I trust that all members of this House do everything that they can to dispel these inaccurate facts when they hear them.

Refugee rights are under attack around the world. While Canada is a leader in protecting the rights of refugees, we cannot take our support for refugees for granted. Racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic messages surround us daily. It's imperative we call out these acts when we see them.

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

The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

### Battle River-Wainwright Constituency Events

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a great weekend in Battle River-Wainwright. It was victorious for both the village of Irma and the Wainwright junior B Bisons hockey team. Because of the hard work and determined people in these communities, that's why we had such a great week.

First, I would like to acknowledge the committee, the village of Irma, and all who played a part in working tirelessly to put together a reasoned, responsible argument that ensured that the school of Irma met the criteria for a new school build. On Saturday the Irma school gymnasium expansion fundraiser was held, and I was honoured to have been part of that. The motto was Bigger is Better, and boy, from a town of 521 people they went big. About 450 people attended that fundraiser, that included a live band, a scrumptious banquet, a live and silent auction. By the end of the evening they had raised \$212,000. That's big and impressive.

Another victory this past Sunday was for the Wainwright junior B Bisons. They also went big. The Wainwright junior B Bisons had their sights set on a provincial gold medal, and they met their ultimate goal, winning the gold medal in St. Paul on Sunday, April 2. During this gold medal game against the Cochrane Generals the two teams played a highly competitive and clean game. Schubada opened the scoring for the Bisons and got the Bisons out in front early. The Generals took the lead near the midway point of the period; however, McKinley would tie it back up in the final minute of the first period. At the end of the third period: tied at four. In the overtime period Mackay scored the final goal of the tournament to win the Bisons their first-ever provincial gold medal.

So to those who worked tirelessly for our new Irma school and to the parents and the coaches of the junior B Bisons, they're the real

winner, not just because of how well they did but because of the hard work and determination that got them there.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, I think there might be an opportunity for a good poem there as well.

### Introduction of Bills

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

#### Bill 6 Northland School Division Act

**Mr. Eggen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge that of course we are on the traditional territory of Treaty 6 as I rise today with great privilege to introduce the first reading of Bill 6, the Northland School Division Act.

This legislation will set us on a path to restoring a democratically elected board of trustees in Northland school division. Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the House I would like to inform you that the division provides education to approximately 2,700 students in 23 schools spread across the northern half of our province. Ninety-five per cent of the students learning in Northland are First Nations or Métis, and the division has been without an elected board since 2010. We are changing that and taking an important step to improve student learning, attendance, and supports in the region.

I am joined in the Legislature today by Northland community leaders who helped to develop the important bill through an ongoing engagement process with some of my ministry officials who worked very hard over the last number of months and years to get the job done. I could not be more proud of our government for stepping up to improve education for our students in this unique region and for making life better for Albertans in the process.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 6 read a first time]

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

#### 2:50 Bill Pr. 1 Calgary Jewish Centre Amendment Act, 2017

**Ms Kazim:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being Bill Pr. 1, Calgary Jewish Centre Amendment Act, 2017.

I would like to table the bill as well.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 1 read a first time]

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake.

#### Bill Pr. 2 Paula Jean Anderson Adoption Termination Act

**Mr. MacIntyre:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce a bill being Bill Pr. 2, Paula Jean Anderson Adoption Termination Act.

[Motion carried; Bill Pr. 2 read a first time]

### Tabling Returns and Reports

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

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the privilege of tabling a letter I wrote to the Government House Leader on the 9th

of March, 2017. It is from the current Premier, who was actually making a tabling on behalf of the now Government House Leader, where she tabled “copies of a memo from the acting manager . . . of the Public Affairs Bureau to bureau staff directing them to use overtly political messaging in all the supposedly nonpartisan government communications they produce.” This is a tabling of a tabling.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of a WCB advocate in Calgary I would like to table the requisite five copies of a document entitled *Principles of Administrative Law*, Jones and de Villars, fifth edition, Carswell, 2009.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Cyr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’ve got two tablings. The first one is a letter that I had mentioned in question period from the hon. Minister of Transportation back when he was in opposition dated April 23, 2014, that refers to the Alberta government at the time possibly violating section 10(1) and section 11(1) of the FOIP Act.

The second tabling is the new 10-point plan that Wildrose has created and authored, which is working to fix the FOIP process.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to table five copies of an article, referenced in question period today, in the *Financial Post* by Kevin Libin dated March 27, 2017, entitled Emails Show Rachel Notley’s NDP Meddling Further in the Running of Alberta’s Heritage Fund.

**Mr. Mason:** Point of order.

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

Hon. members, I am tabling five copies of a memo from the Clerk to the Member for Calgary-Hays concerning the receipt of \$500 in conjunction with the passing of Government Motion 16.

I believe we have two points of order today. The first one was by the Opposition House Leader.

### Point of Order Allegations against a Member

**Mr. Cooper:** Well, I thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to rise today and speak to a point of order. Just for the Government House Leader’s reference and for yours I’ll be speaking specifically about Standing Order 23(h) and (i). At approximately 1:54 during question period today the Premier made an allegation against another member and she may have also imputed false motives to a member of the Assembly when she either said – well, I might add that I’m without the benefit of the Blues, Mr. Speaker – that “the member is misleading this House” or that “he’s misleading this House,” referring specifically to the Leader of the Official Opposition when he had just previously asked a question.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it wasn’t that long ago inside the Chamber when we had a fairly robust discussion around whether the word “misleading” was inappropriate use of language inside the Chamber, and I made a case that certainly it was. I laid out a number of Speakers’ rulings, and subsequently you didn’t entirely see the world as I did with respect to the use of the word “misleading.” On March 16 you ruled that the Energy minister wasn’t out of order



when she said that the Official Opposition was misleading the House, but you went on to say in your ruling that if she had cited an individual – in fact, it says:

In the instance before the Assembly now, the same observation made by my predecessors [is] also . . . made here [today], which was this broad use of the word.

The Minister of Energy referenced the opposition and not a member in her response to the question.

Now, today we saw a very different circumstance. While I don't entirely see the world exactly as you, because I think it could lead to some abuse of the word "misleading" inside the Chamber, the Premier clearly has said that this member is "misleading this House." She has made allegations about what the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition was or wasn't doing, and I think it would be very reasonable and prudent for her to withdraw and apologize so that we can all move on with the estimates of the day.

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

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to make a few comments with respect to this matter. Now, during question period today the Leader of the Official Opposition asked the Premier and made an allegation that the number of FTEs in Executive Council had increased by eight staff. The Premier responded that that was not true, that it had been discussed in the estimates, and that the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition knew it was not true.

I've got the *Hansard* Blues here from the Executive Council estimates last night, and it quotes the Leader of the Official Opposition saying:

Madam Premier, I'm also wondering, according to your fiscal plan it shows that you're estimating an additional eight staff for Executive Council. I have a few questions . . . if you don't mind. I'm wondering if you could tell what positions those are, what vacancies they're going to fill, how they affect the budget obviously.

It goes on, but these are the main questions.

The Premier responded that the number effectively – she says:

In fact, if you go back to estimates, and neither of us were here for obvious reasons . . .

She's referring to the previous year.

. . . in the last time that we had estimates, but at that estimates the Deputy Premier reported to your House leader that in fact the number effectively should have been 179 not 178 because the budget was printed as we were adding an FTE.

So the Leader of the Official Opposition says:

So seven instead of eight new employees?

The Premier says:

That's right, right there. So that was what happened there, and then in my office we've been doing some reorganizing. What has happened this time around is that we ended up reporting both the outcome of that reorganizing as well as the vacancies that have existed for a while that it is not our intention to fill. So it's not actually seven new positions. It's three new positions.

The Leader of the Official Opposition says:

Thank you, Premier.

And the Premier goes on to say:

And the other four will not be filled.

**3:00**

So, Mr. Speaker, it's clear from the record that during estimates the Leader of the Official Opposition asked about the number of positions in Executive Council, that the Premier provided the information, and that the hon. Official Opposition leader knew that there were not eight new positions. That was clarified and made

very clear last night by the Premier. That's what the Premier was referring to, that she had discussed this with the Leader of the Opposition in estimates and that she had made it clear that there were not eight new positions. Yet that was what he was doing, repeating that number, that allegation, which he knew was not the case, in the House. The Premier then accused the member of misleading the House.

Mr. Speaker, it is my submission that the Leader of the Official Opposition did in fact provide information to the House that he knew not to be true, and that gave direct rise to the Premier's response. I know the rules of this place, more or less, after all the years that I've been here, and I am aware that misleading the House is a serious offence which requires a motion of privilege to be brought at the earliest opportunity against the member who may have misled the House. That is not my intention at this time. In not doing so, I also understand that the rules of this House are that one ought not accuse a member of misleading the House unless you're prepared to bring a point of privilege, but I don't believe there's any benefit to doing that at this point.

I believe that we've set the record straight. The Premier made a true statement; however, that statement is contrary to the rules. Therefore, on behalf of the hon. Premier I will apologize and withdraw her true statement.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, I think.

**Mr. McIver:** I thank the Government House Leader. He leaves out a couple of things, the possibility that the Leader of the Official Opposition may not have believed the answer that he got from the Premier last night or indeed believed that she was mistaken, but *Beauchesne's* section . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, the hon. Government House Leader has withdrawn the comment, and I've accepted that. I think the matter is closed.

I think we had a second point of order by the Government House Leader.

#### **Point of Order**

##### **Referring to a Member by Name**

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A timely reminder to the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek that one ought not use names even if one is reading from a document one is tabling.

**The Speaker:** Hon. member, that point was raised on both sides of the House today where names were used. I would remind all of the House to reinforce the statement made by the Government House Leader. It's not on one or the other; it is both.

Hon. members, the daily Routine is now concluded. Pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b) the House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30.

The legislative policy committees will convene this afternoon and tomorrow morning for consideration of the main estimates. This afternoon Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Justice and Solicitor General in the Rocky Mountain Room. Tomorrow morning Resource Stewardship will consider the estimates for Environment and Parks in the Rocky Mountain Room, and Alberta's Economic Future will consider the estimates for Advanced Education in the Parkland Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:05 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]



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